

# Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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**Frank Joseph Vignola**

**Born: April 19, 1919 at San Francisco, California**  
**At Rest: March 30, 2007 at San Ramon, California**



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Secretary: Mr. Colin T. Hepper  
12 Charnwood Close  
Peterborough  
Cams. PE2 9BZ  
England  
Phone 01733-349403  
email: colinhepper@talktalk.net

Editor: Mr. Richard M. Hanchett  
6 Rainbow Court  
Warwick, RI 02889-1118  
USA  
Phone (401) 738 0466  
email: editorofpostalhimal@cox.net

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### **Officer's Corner**

Scanning all the thousands of my slides on CD, I found one of particular importance for my "career" as a philatelist.

Let me tell you what happened the first time I was in Nepal in the Spring of 1983. Having been interested in stamps since I was a young boy, my stop in Kathmandu was a good reason to find out if there was a philatelic desk at the Kathmandu Head Post Office. There was one at the left side of the building and the clerk, sitting behind bars, offered me about 50 modern stamps for 3 or 4 dollars. He also gave me a small business card of a Nepalese philatelist named Bishnu Lal Shresta (also see page 6 - ed.) who lived in the center of Kathmandu only a few steps away in Durbar Square.

With the help of a policeman, I found the house situated under a small teahouse. After I used the doorbell, a window above me opened

and a man invited me to come in. I opened the door and in the darkness I was the stairs and went up into a very small room in which two gentlemen were playing cards. It was clear which of the two must be Mr. Shresta as one of them was sitting in a Buddha-pose. The other gentleman introduced himself as Hans Wittmann of Wiesbaden, Germany.

In a mixture of English-German-Dutch we tried to discuss Nepal and its modern stamps. At the end I purchased some more stamps from Mr. Shresta.

That afternoon was the beginning of my Nepal collection and also of my development as a serious Nepal philatelist.

I always retain the best memories of (the now late) Bishnu Lal Shresta, whom I visited so many times and with whom I have corresponded so frequently over so many years.

Dick

### **Editor's Ramblings**

I am pleased to welcome a new author this month - Mr. Bo Olsson of Sweden (please see pages 8 and 11).

As I will be away the end of August and the beginning of September, the next issue of PH will be mailed September 29th, instead of September 15th.

Word has been received from Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl that a second edition of *The Postal Markings of Tibet* will be published early next year. He would like Tibet collectors to inform him of any types and/or dates not covered in the first edition. Please email Dr. Hellrigl with any information at [hellrigl@tin.it](mailto:hellrigl@tin.it).

One of our members, William Jansen, is interested in publishing a reference book containing all known 1881 Nepal first issue covers. If you have such a cover, containing either single values or any combination of values or multiples, or know of someone who

has such a cover, please send a color copy to Mr. William Jansen, 16384 Marvene Drive, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 USA as soon as possible.

After Mae Vignola died, WESTPEX created an award to be given to the outstanding WESTPEX volunteer at the annual meeting. After Frank died, the WESTPEX committee approached to family and asked if the award could be renamed the Mae and Frank Vignola Volunteer Award. Permission was received and the new award was presented for the first time at WESTPEX 2007. As any of you who have ever volunteered for a show of this magnitude will realize, there is a tremendous amount of work which is done on a voluntary basis to put together such an outstanding show, and WESTPEX is done yearly. It is a fitting tribute to both Mae and Frank that this prestigious award has been named for them.

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

Armand E. Singer who won Gold and the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle award for his exhibit '250 Years of Tibetan Philately' at WESTPEX 2007

## In Memoriam - Frank J. Vignola Jr Wolfgang Hellrigl

When one learns of the death of an old friend, fond memories return of the times spent together, of the exchange of thoughts, of the common interests shared.

By the time that I started to study the stamps and postal markings of Nepal, Frank Vignola was an accomplished collector. His magnificent collection had been exhibited both nationally and internationally, and had been awarded several gold medals.

I first met Frank in Florence, when he visited Italy with his wife, Mae, in the 1970s. He told me the story of how he got interested in Nepal, and how he had finally acquired the great collection formed by Dr. Way. From the moment of our first encounter, Frank was most helpful, supplying advice, photocopies and information. He took interest in Colin Hepper's and my first publication, *The Native Postmarks of Nepal*, which contained a number of rare types discovered in Frank's exhibit.

Since Frank was most knowledgeable in the classic issues, and since his collection was absolutely essential for my research work, I invited him to join me in a publication on the classic issues. In his typical modesty, Frank replied that, while he would give me every possible assistance, I should remain the sole author. In the end, however, I managed to persuade him to accept the co-authorship. Subsequently, "Garry" Garratt-Adams requested to become the third co-author, but by then the

manuscript was so far advanced that Frank and I preferred to go it alone.

So, after many years of research, *The Classic Stamps of Nepal*, by Hellrigl/Vignola, was finally published in 1984. "H/V," as it is commonly referred to, became a milestone in the philatelic history of Nepal, obtaining over a dozen gold medals in the literature classes of the major World Exhibitions. Many of its illustrations were taken from Frank's exhibit. Moreover, without his help, it would have been impossible to obtain full information on several important American collections, notably the "ex-Haverbeck" rarities. I am proud and honoured to have had Frank as the co-author of this work, and I believe he was equally proud to be so closely associated with this publication.

We kept corresponding for many more years – he always signed his letters to me as "your friend Frank" – until such time when anyone who did not use an e-mail address, could no longer keep up the pace of instant enquiries, information and transmission of illustrations. Frank remained true to his long, hand-written letters, and I do not think he ever used a computer. As a matter of fact, he never even typed his letters, or the write-up of his exhibits.

With Frank's death, the philately of Nepal loses one of its foremost specialists. I shall always remember him as an outstanding collector, a successful exhibitor and, above all, a true friend.



This photograph, taken at the London International Exhibition in 1980, shows from left: Colin Hepper, Pierre Couvreur, Wolfgang Hellrigl and Frank Vignola.

## In Memoriam - Frank J. Vignola Jr Alfonzo G Zulueta Jr.

I first met Frank Vignola in 1974 at the BECKPEX stamp show in Fullerton, California. He was judging that show where I had entered my Nepal exhibit. A few months before, I had just shown my Nepal for the first time at SANDICAL in San Diego. Jack Carter, an APS recruiter in San Diego, told me that Frank was a well-known Nepal collector and that I should meet him. That was 33 years ago.

Thus, began Frank's mentoring of me as an exhibitor. During those years in the 70's, he would give me advice, frame by frame, stamp by stamp, and cover by cover, of what to do, or not to do. The encouragement was always positive, never judgmental. It was good advice, culminating in a reserve grand award with gold medal at WESTPEX in 1979. But, then again, what would you expect from someone with the

character and integrity of a Frank Vignola? (At the awards banquet, by the way, his wife Mae Vignola presented me with my awards!)

What I learned from him and the exposure I got from exhibiting, led to a short professional career in the stamp auction business in southern California and San Francisco. As time passed, my stamp interests changed but I still looked forward to seeing Frank at local stamp shows so we could talk about our mutual collecting interests and "catch up" on other things. In the end, I hope some or all of his Nepal collection comes up for sale, not for selfish, collector reasons, however. I just want to own a souvenir of Frank's life, something "ex Vignola."

Vaya con Dios, mi Amigo,  
Alfonzo G Zulueta Jr



Frank Vignola and Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl viewing a Nepal exhibit at AMERIPEX 86.



Frank Vignola viewing a Nepal exhibit at AMERIPEX 86.

## In Memoriam - Frank J. Vignola Jr

Armand E. Singer

There are obituaries and there are tributes. I have the sad but most rewarding task of penning the latter. Our hobby has just lost a wonderful colleague and I an intimate friend of some fifty years. If any joy can be wrung from a loss it must be the chance to tell any who read these lines just how much Frank Vignola will be missed. He was truly San Francisco's Dean of Nepalese Philately. Individuals somehow live with their grief but our hobby cannot easily make up for its loss. Frank knew just about all you could ask for his field and was so generous sharing it. He will remain, with a small number of contemporaries, part of the golden age of Nepalese philately. The Hellrigl-Vignola treatment of the classic issues of Nepal, with its knowledgeable placing of the succession of the khukri design printings will not be surpassed. There can be no argument, say, as to whether the eleventh printing of the one anna may possibly actually precede, not follow the tenth. And while we may come upon a new printing or a new shade the basic facts have nevertheless been established for all time, elegantly and definitively.

The classic-issue bible must pretty well be known to all. But are you familiar with Frank's equally definitive study of the covers emanating from the Anglo-Gurkha War of 1814-16, a smaller through still much collected area? George Alevizos published the actual pages of Frank's extensive collection as the *Postal History Collection of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16*, in 1981. The edition was limited to twenty hard-bound copies and for some odd reason does not bear the author's name. The illustrations - one for each of some 135 unnumbered pages - are copiously described, all in Frank's usual handwritten all-capital script; they are actually the pages of his collection, since disposed of, I understand. Alevizos also brought out a much-shortened version, *A Philatelic View of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-1816*, this time under the names Frank Vignola and O. R. Sanford Jr., F.R.P.S.L., the latter helping Frank with the mounting and

organizing of the collection (also 1981), which you are more likely to recognize. The bigger volume is the one to consult, both for the Nepal side of the war and for many examples of the much rarer British correspondence.

If you have been particularly blessed, and I was, you will remember letters from Frank or talks on the phone (he was really good on that instrument, so superior to today's e-mails) or even visits to his home near the Golden Gate Bridge in the NW corner of town, just a block or two distant from Ansel Adam's famous residence (an added bonus for a mountain lover like me). In Vignola's home, he and his equally gracious wife Mae would show you their trophy room - not some tiny open closet sort of space - chock full of his awards (ribbons, glassware, plaques, medallions, pictures and Mae's many own trophies from her Latin American exhibits: regional, national, international).

He was justly proud for both of them. How often do you find a couple, both dedicated philatelists, plus their son Frank (E.), the molecular science professor up in Eugene, Oregon, carrying on the Nepal tradition, as visitors to WESTPEX and elsewhere are well aware? We are all diminished by his passing and that of his wife not so long ago. A sad farewell from their many friends.

Having just finished a richly deserved encomium, I got to thinking: there is a good side to match depression. Frank played a major role in his era, but is was (and still is) a remarkable era on its own. I call it a Golden Age and it really is; not set in some half-remembered, half mystical far-off past - it is now. Let's date our coming of age more or less at the start of the second half of the twentieth century. Standing on Holmes's short account of Tibet's postal history (1941), followed by Haverbeck's two similar volumes (1952, sec. ed. 1958), we segue to the Waterfall bible (1965, sec. ed. 1981). Wong's work in progress updates Waterfall and adds entirely new chapters on eastern Tibet (three short parts of which have been in recent issues of *Postal Himal*). (Please see *PH* issues

123, 124, 125 - ed.) The three immaculate Bibbins plating studies on the 1912s (1992), the 1914s (1998), and with Flack, the 1933-1960s (1993) are a pure work of art. Let me mention, on behalf of my co-author, Bob Gould, our catalog of Himalayan mountaineering covers (2002, sec. ed. 2006). Hellrigl's catalog of Tibet's postal markings (1996) is indispensable. Across the street, Nepal has proved perhaps even more active. Major Evans started a pre-Golden Age era with a long article on what was known in 1906, more in 1941, to be followed by Smythies and Dawson's little study of the Nepalese classic khukri issues, updated by bringing in Haverbeck's own Nepal volume based on the two earlier versions, but under his name alone (1962). Then comes the Hellrigl-Hepper pioneer listing of the native postmarks of Nepal (1978). Hellrigl redid the classic postmarks (1879-1935) in 1982, and in due course Hepper enlarged his modern postmarks (2005). Hepper has to his credit the basic volume on the Pashupatis (1982) as well. If 1982 was a big year, 1984 is worth calling the heart of our research movement, celebrated with the Hellrigl-Vignola study of the classic khukri issues that I have already claimed will never become outdated (nor will many of the others, I will also claim). 1984 did not prove the end and climax for the studies. Hellrigl's beautifully researched account of the British-Indian Post Office in Kathmandu, that has gathered its share of gold awards, marked 1991 as another banner year. The Werner-Wateren volume on postal stationery (1993) solidified what the catalog by Higgins and Gage just started, and then Wateren, who self-published his work with Werner, bought out two years later, also self-published, the definitive edition of his postal stationery research. Undaunted by this considerable effort, he added what has now become the standard catalog for Nepal revenues (2002).

What is left? Hellrigl has been promising an accounting of the native post offices of Nepal. Wong is well along with his volume mentioned above. When you fill in the cracks with countless articles on both Tibet and Nepal -

articles, like Garret-Adams's (1947) and Congreves's (1951) on Nepal's WWII typographed Pashupatis, or Symthies's on Tibet 1912-53 (a set of four, 1954), pioneer work that led to the books we consult, or George Russell's monumental series in *The China Clipper* (1951), we understand how research builds on itself.

Is there another area limited in scope and of necessity, in interest as well, that somehow has produced such a wealth of data? I must add that what I have cited here has almost all appeared in English. Hellrigl and Wong, for instance, not native to our language, have adopted it, and successfully as well. But let's not forget a Chinese manual and Dahnke's German volumes on Tibet for one instance. A completer, fairer picture is presented in Hellrigl's bibliography for Tibetan philately, now getting fated (1983) but an example on another of his much-needed contributions to our Himalayan field. There are, as well, more specialized works and articles, on war covers, for example, and I won't swear I haven't unintentionally omitted mention of good research.

Finally, not everyone has contributed books or articles. There is the matter of service. Our own NTPSC has paid for book publications and helped disseminate their findings, and cemented the contacts that keep us going. A tip of our collected hats to Pierre Couvreur from Belgium, who, along with Hepper, Hellrigl, and Vignola himself got us into orbit in 1975. Another tip to the succession of *Postal Himal* (and its predecessors). We can be justly proud of a journal that started (1976) almost as soon as its parent organization, and has flourished under the late Lester Michel, Leo Martyn, and our current incumbent Richard Hanchett. I mustn't forget Dr. Professor Mac Ricketts, many years ago a dealer in Tibet and Nepal, now no longer collecting or dealing, but a scholar who did so much to stir up interest in our hobby and actually discovered the Nepalese blue postal cards.

We owe them everything, Frank Vignola and company. We can grieve for Frank while rejoicing for the presence of all his and our other fellow contributors.



Bishnu Lal Shresta in his shop (left) and his Nepal Philatelic Society card (below) courtesy of Dick van der Wateren (see also Officer's Corner, page 1 -ed.)

बिष्णुलाल श्रेष्ठ फिलाटेलिस्ट  
११३/१ मरु प्याफल  
काठमाडौं-१४



Life Member, Nepal Philatelic Society

**APS**

100873

**BISHNU LAL SHRESTA**  
Philatelist

**113/1 MARU, PYAPHAL**  
**KATHMANDU-14**

## Equipment for Tibet

When he had set out, Kintup\* had been issued with the usual secret service agent's equipment. In the pilgrim's prayer wheel, in place of the rolled paper inscribed with the sacred formula 'Om Mani Padme Hum', were a prismatic compass and a roll of paper for making notes. In place of the Tibetan rosary of 108 beads was one of a hundred beads for counting paces. But

in addition to these normal articles of equipment, Kintup and the monk had been given a number of small metal tubes containing written papers and a drill with which to make holes for fixing the tubes into the logs they were to float down the river.

Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Bailey

\* A Sikkimese agent of the Survey of India who travelled in Tibet in the 1870s.

The above item appeared in *The Spy's Bedside Book* (The Folio Society, London, 2006) on page 221. Credit for the article is cited as Lt.-Col. F. M. Bailey: *No Passport to Tibet* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957).

## New Colours in addition to Waterfall's Colour Shades in his Handbook Bo Olsson

For those of you who are not familiar with Waterfall's colour shade scheme, it consists of a number, a letter and another number (such as 4A10). The first number is a page in Methuen's *Handbook of Colour*, the letter refers to the column (A to F) on that page, and the final number refers to how dark or light a shade is (8 is very dark and 1 is extremely light). There are other systems in use, but Waterfall's is the system used by most Tibet collectors and it is a very good working system.

The only problem with using the Waterfall system is that most collectors use a colour name (such as Orange-Vermilion) to describe a stamp colour and not a colour shade scheme.

Therefore I have given a colour name to each of Waterfall's colour shade scheme numbers. I compiled this listing from information Rainer Fuchs got from Waterfall and later supplied to me. I was confused by the information for the 2 tr. values and have tried to make an intelligent solution. Any suggestions for improvement would be greatly appreciated. I can be reached postally at:

Bo C. Olsson  
Munkebackgatan 24B  
416 53 Goteborg  
SWEDEN  
or by email at: [cfx987z@tninet.se](mailto:cfx987z@tninet.se)

½ tr.	Setting I	Setting IIb	Setting III	Setting IV
	Change of Identification: 5A8 perf. to 5A6 perf. 5A8 to 5A6	4A10 Bright Chrome	4B7 Dark Yellow-Bistre	3A7 Dark Greenish-Yellow
	New: 6A8 imperf. Orange 6B8 Light Brownish Orange		4C8 Dark Yellow	4A9 Chrome
				4A7 Dark Lemon
				4B7 Yellow-Bistre
				4B8 Dark Yellow-Bistre

1 tr.	Setting III	Setting IV
	9C8 Deep Salmon	6B9 Brown-Orange
		6C8 Deep Orange-Brown
		8C8 Brownish Red

4 tr.	Setting Ib	Setting II
	27D9 Blue-Green	27E8 Deep Green
	29B7 Pale Yellow-Green	28C8 Deep Yellow-Green

2 tr.	Setting Ib
	8BC8 Orange-Vermilion
	8C8 Orange-Red
	9E8 Dark Reddish Brown
	10B8 Deep Red
	10C7 Carmine Red
	10D9 Dark Brownish Red (this is probably the same as 10D8)
	11B9 Dark Carmine-Lake

## Letters to the Editor

I have received the following two letters via email. If you wish to reply to the authors, please correspond directly with them - ed.

Dear Sir

I am a first time starter to stamp collecting and from INDIA.

Would your good office help me in getting few stamps of NEPAL so that I can start a collection?

If possible please do send me some stamps of your country also

K. Krishna Kumar

T-6 Apex Nivas

Behind Bangalore International Public school

Chikklasandra

Uttarhalli

Bangalore-61

INDIA

+919448042468

Dear SIR:

### NAMASKAR! GREETINGS FROM NEPAL!

I have been a member of the NTPSC since 1983 or so. During that period, we the members of the Nepal Philatelic Society to receive one of the great personalities of Nepal philately, Mr. Colin Hepper, in Kathmandu. Mr. Hepper had given us suggestions on how to develop a philatelic society and the result was very encouraging. Our Society at that period was much appreciated and developed with very little criticism, for which we are very grateful to Mr. Hepper.

After some years, I was quite fortunate to extend my hospitality to my "uncle", Mr. Dick van der Wateren. From that time I began collecting Dutch philatelic items.

I am trying to find out who are the collectors in the NTPSC, what are their interests and what are they looking for, and who are the philatelic dealers?

At the present time it is very easy to solve this problem due to today's internet. Therefore, I request our members to email me with their email addresses so that I can directly contact them. My postal address and email address are given below.

Punya R. Sthapit

GPO Box 1079, Kathmandu, NEPAL

Email address: [purast69@hotmail.com](mailto:purast69@hotmail.com)

## Aachhape (अछापे) 'No Postmark'

Colin Hepper

Illustrated on page 141 of 'The Modern Postmarks of Nepal' are two manuscript cancellations from Bouvina and Deurali Post Offices. Most modern cancellations have the name of the post office written over the

stamps and in some instances the date, but the writing across the three 1980 issue stamps commemorating King Birendra's 36th birthday has the word 'Aachhape' which translates as 'No Postmark'.



The Deurali postal official has written the name of the post office across the stamp, but to the left of the stamp has been written on the envelope 'Aachhape'.



I have a further example of this of this manuscript cancelled cover from Sinam P. O. in 1961 where the postal official has written

both the date and the name of the post office on three of the stamps and on the 2 pice local printed stamp has written 'Aachhape'.



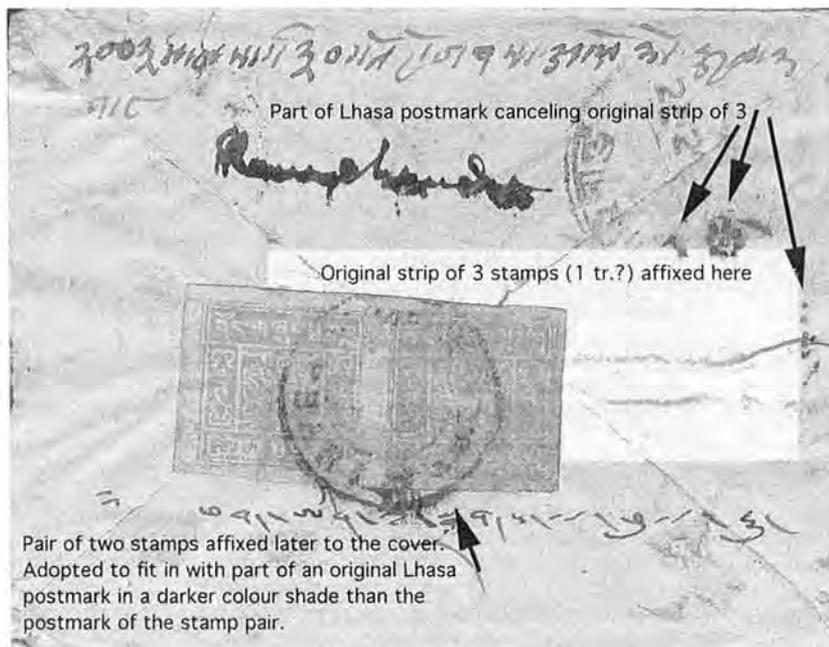
## Manipulated Tibet Cover Bo Olsson

It appears that the person who manipulated this Tibet cover had very little knowledge of release of the various color shades. He used 2 x 2 trangka stamps from the "Orange period" (1950-1954), but the British Indian Pharijong postmark from Gyantse says 1946! Also note the Lhasa postmark which was used

to cancel the original stamps which were affixed to the cover (probably a strip of 3 x 1 trangka stamps) which would have been sufficient for ordinary postage. The 2 x 2 trangka stamps would have been sufficient for a registered letter, but the cover does not bear any notation that it is registered.



Front



Back

प्रथम दिनको प्रयोगको लागि



प्रथम दिनको प्रयोगको लागि  
*Orchid Series-2007*



प्रथम दिनको प्रयोगको लागि / First Day Cover



प्रथम दिनको प्रयोगको लागि  
*Orchid Series-2007*



### Technical Details

- Subject: Orchid Flowers: Miniature Sheet
- Denomination: Rs. 10.00
- Color: Four colors
- Composition: 16 stamps per sheet
- Size: 40 x 30 mm
- Process: Offset Lithography
- Quantity: One million
- Format: Horizontal
- Paper: High quality stamp paper
- Designer: Mohan N. Rana
- Printer: Cartor Security Printing, France

Thanks to the Government of Nepal Postal Services Department for supplying the FDCs

Nepal Post Offices - A Continuing Series  
 Colin Hepper - photos by Jaya Hari Jha

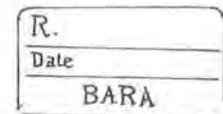


R L NO...  
 RUPANDEHI D.P.O.  
 DATE...

R. No. ....  
 Date ...  
 Rupandehi District Post Office

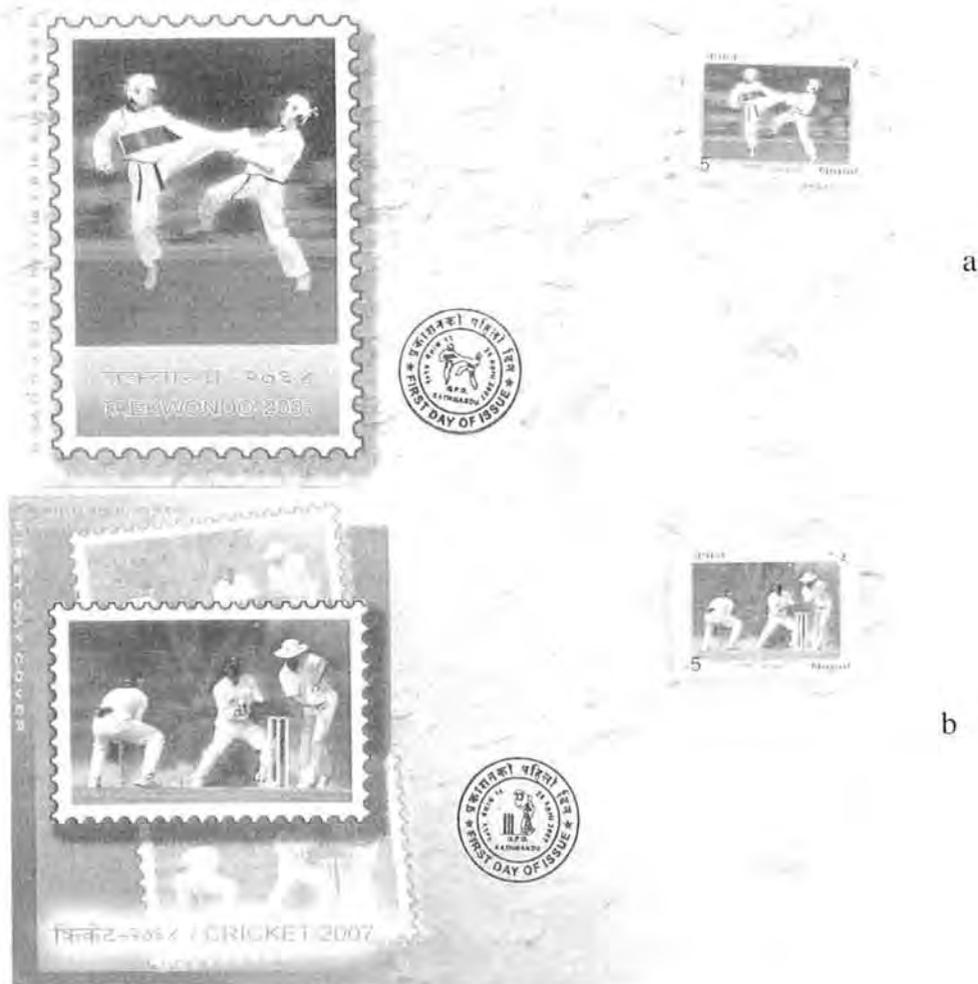
Rupandehi District Post Office

The Rupandehi District Post Office is one of ten district post offices in the Lumbini Zone.



Bara District Post Office

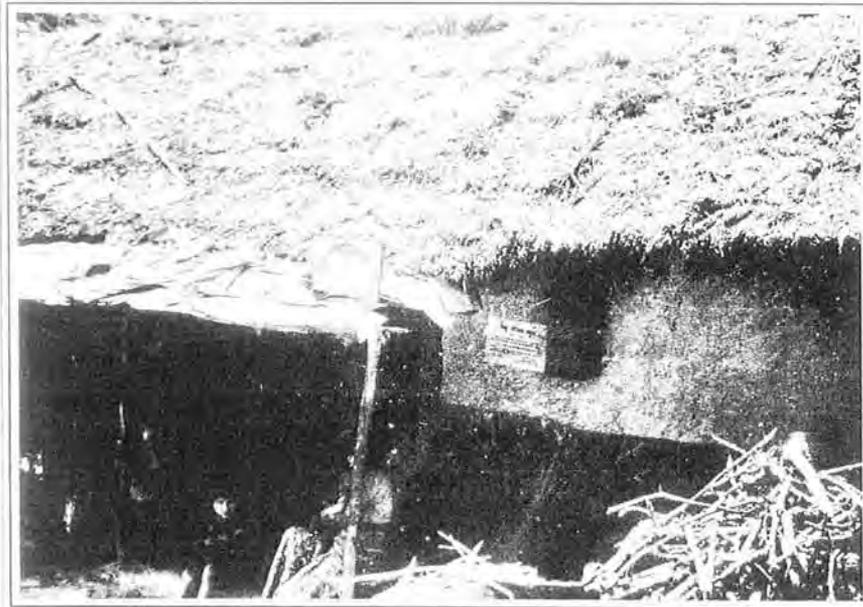
The Bara District Post Office is one of five district post offices in the Narayani Zone.



Technical Details

	a	b
Subject:	Taekwondo	Cricket
Denomination:	Rs. 5.00	Rs. 5.00
Color:	Four colors	Four colors with Phosphor print
Composition:	20 stamps per sheet	20 stamps per sheet
Size:	40 x 30 mm	40 x 30 mm
Format:	Horizontal	Horizontal
Quantity:	0.5 million	0.5 million
Process:	Offset Lithography	Offset Lithography
Paper:	Security stamp paper	High quality stamp paper
Designer:	Mohan N. Rana	Mohan N. Rana
Printer:	Cartor Security Printing, France	Cartor Security Printing, France

Thanks to the Government of Nepal Postal Services Department for supplying the FDCs



Boudha Atirikta Hulak

Boudha Atirikta Hulak is in the Narayani Zone and comes under the jurisdiction of the Parsa District Post Office.



R. L. N. ....  
DATE .....  
A. D. Nagar



Adarshanagar Chhoti Hulak

Adarshanagar Chhoti Hulak is in the Narayani Zone and comes under the jurisdiction of the Parsa District Post Office.

