

Design and Denomination

The first set of Gandhi stamps were issued on the first Anniversary of India's independence. Originally intended for issue on Gandhi's 80th birthday (October 2nd 1949), this was released prematurely six months after Gandhi's assassination, on the first anniversary of India's independence. Until today, these are the only Indian stamps to contain descriptive text both in *Devanagiri* (Hindi) and Arabic (Urdu) script, reflecting on Gandhi's relentless struggle for communal harmony and religious tolerance. Both languages refer to the late leader as all Indians knew him- "father".

There were three lower denominations in this set. The first design in single colors was used for the 1½, 3½ and 12 As. values. Instead of completing the set with another common postage rate, the second design in two colors was used for an exorbitant face value of 10 Rs., the most expensive commemorative issue from India until then.



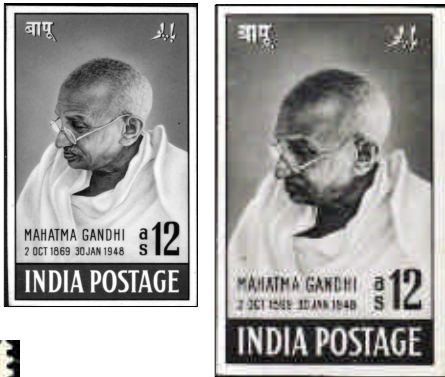
India (1948): Lower three values of the set in single color and higher value in two colors (shown in lower margin plate block of 4).

To break away from precedence even more, the Governor General's office authorized these stamps to be overprinted for official use. This is the only known SERVICE OVPT of an Indian commemorative issue. It was used only from the Governor General's Residence.



Since the Governor General's Residence was the former residence of His Majesty's Viceroy, official stationery of British India continued to be used (see part of "Majesty's Service" on piece of envelope).

At some point during the review, the two-color design was also considered for the 12As. denomination. This is evidenced from the printer's die proofs of the two-color design in that



India (1948): [Printer's Die Proof](#). [Only known copies of these items](#), discovered in two sizes, the original and magnified 20%.



India (1948): Examples of Service Provisionals of the two lower values.

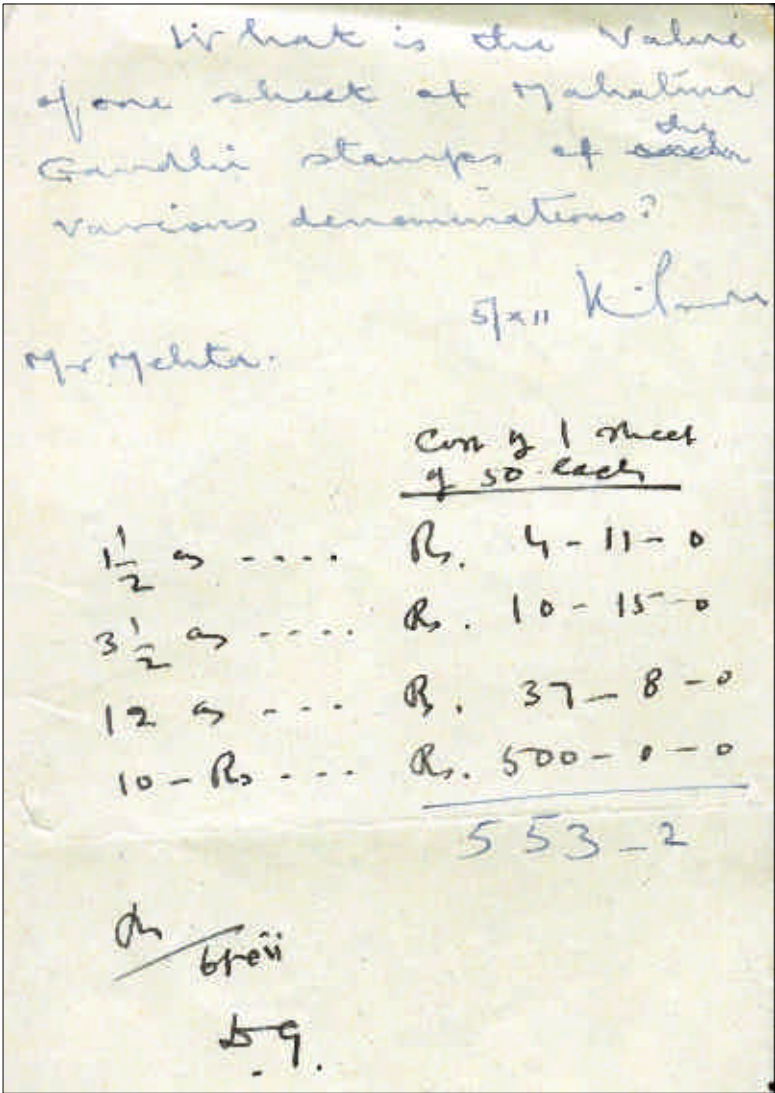
Note the cancellations on items "on piece" to the left that read: "Governor General Camp P.O. New Delhi".



Specimen Overprints



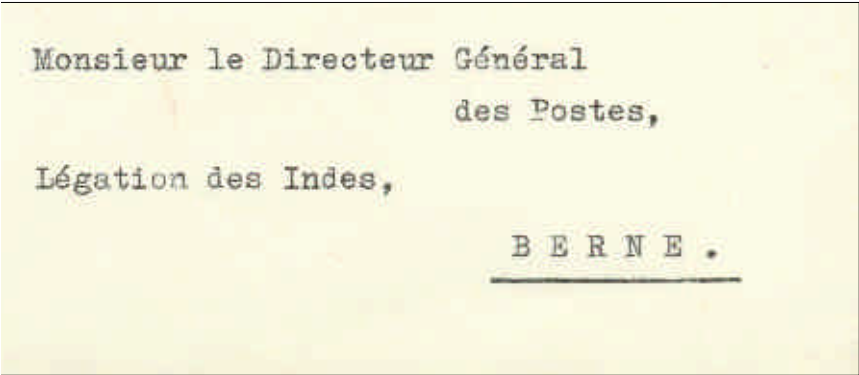
This is the suede presentation folder that the "specimen" overprinted stamps were mounted in.



The values in fractional annas to full rupees was complicated enough for the common man to add up. But the Director General of the Postal department? In typical bureaucratic flair, he delegates the calculations to his assistant, Mr. T.N. Mehta. Un- Gandhian, one would think!



The folder was inside an envelope from the Swiss Printer [printer's address on back flap] addressed to the Director General of the Indian Post Office and was discovered in a collection presented by Mr. Krishna Prasad, India's first "Indian PMG".



First Day Use Covers

The value of 10 Rupees in post-war India can be illustrated with this example.

This collector mailed a full set to a dealer in New York [who probably paid for them], but could not afford to get one set for herself!

Philatelic cancels with the special *Jai Hind* cancel on the first day covers are common. Regular CDS cancels of the stamps used on the first day are not.



First day use-
Regular CDS from
Ludhiana in the
Punjab province.

Also from Samastipur in Darbhanga, where
Gandhi started his first civil disobedience
movement in India for the Champaran farmers.



Many expected
Assam province to
join Pakistan, except
that the Muslim
League did not win
majority votes in
provincial elections in
the late 30s, despite
large Muslim
populations.



Stamps are often used to seal
flaps in India, making that form
of usage interesting to collect.

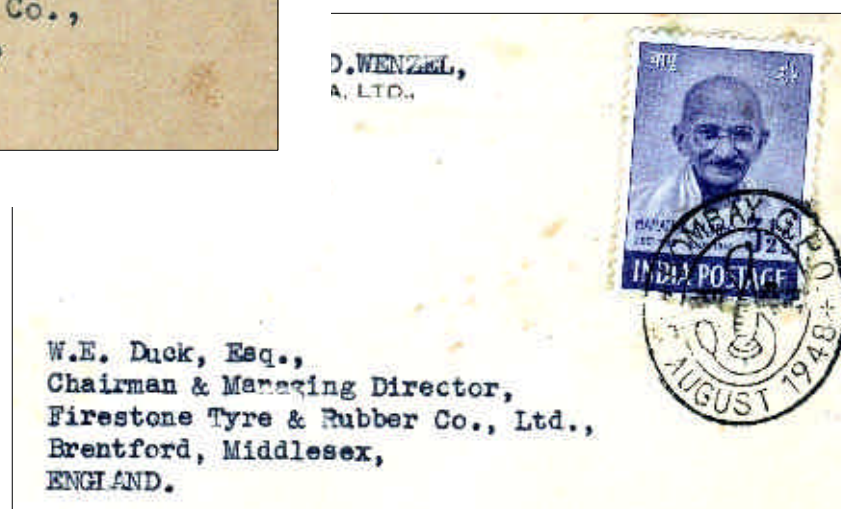
First day use in Ghoom in
Assam [north eastern India].



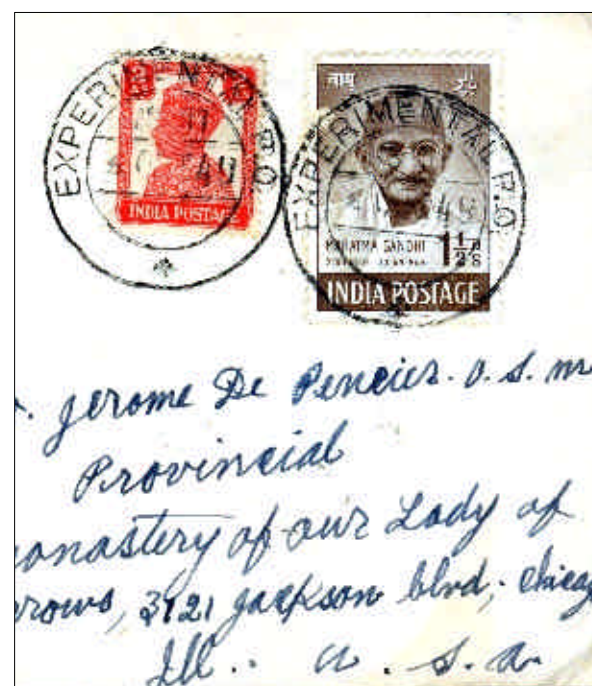
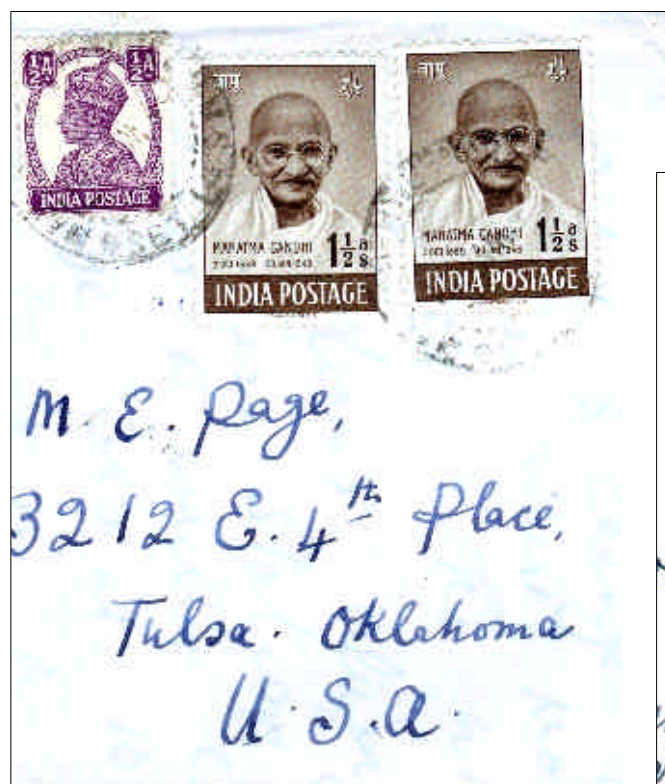
3 1/2 anna Sea mail Rate



Single stamp- sea mail to USA from Madras.



Single stamp- sea mail to England from Bombay. First Day use.



Multiple stamps use for the sea mail rate to USA. Lower value stamps augmented with British India remainders, which were still valid for postage without any overprints.

Airmail Rates to Various Regions



Shown here are the following usages"

- ▶ 12 anna basic airmail rate to England
- ▶ 16 anna basic airmail rate to USA
- ▶ 18 anna airmail rate to USA for higher weight
- ▶ 13½ anna 6 pies airmail rate to Kenya

The last usage is interestingly from Pondicherry, which was still a French Enclave in India.

Cancellation is also mixed; with Indian first day cancel on the Gandhi stamps and French PO's CDS on British Indian definitives.



Registered Airmail Rates to Various Regions



Shown here are the following interesting rates and destinations:

- ▶ 10½ a rate to Sweden
- ▶ 27½ a rate to Bermuda
- ▶ 17a rate to the UK
- ▶ 22a rate to US

The Sweden and USA registered covers have additional postage in the back.

Note that the cover to Bermuda is not just an interesting destination. The source is equally interesting- Porbandar, Gandhi's birthplace in western India.



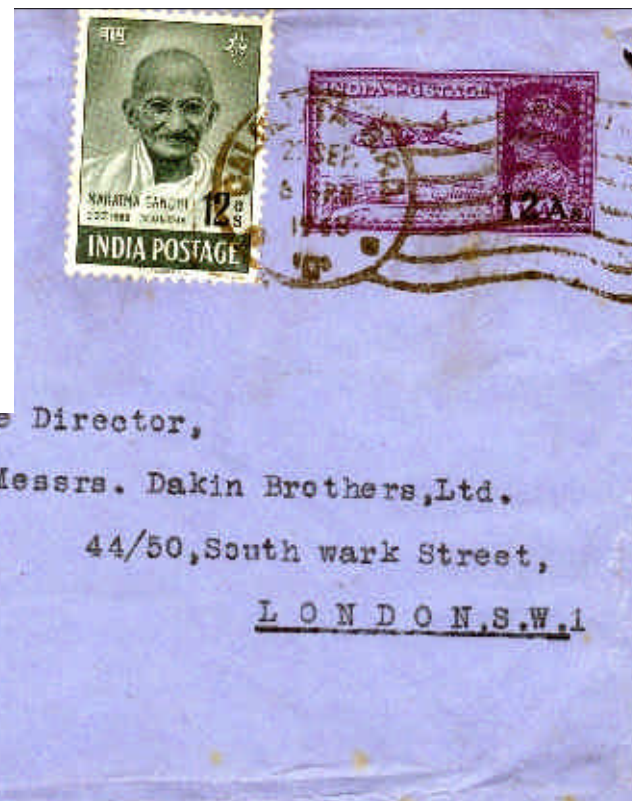
Postal Stationery Surcharge and Usage Abroad



Shown here are the following examples:

- ▶ 8 anna rate on air letter to the USA
- ▶ 24 anna rate on preprinted envelope to the UK

The latter is a highly unusual rate for a regular air letter with no additional service (like registration). The cover was mailed to London from Calcutta.



Recorded examples of use abroad for the Gandhi memorial issues include Tibet and Nepal.

Some collectors also consider the use in Pondicherry and other French enclaves in India as "use abroad".



Gyantse P.O. CDS.



Yatung P.O. via Siligudi CDS.

British Indian POs had been operating in Tibet for several years. However, use of commemorative stamps on covers from Tibet are rare, particularly the Gandhi Memorial issue.

Shown here are the following examples:

- ▶ 12 anna from Gyantse P.O.
- ▶ 12 annas from Yatung P.O. via Siligudi in Bengal.

The Indian Memorial Issue [1948]

India Used in Nepal

British Indian POs had been operating in Nepal at the British Legation and later the Indian PO at the Indian Embassy in Katmandu.

Below is an example of a sea mail rate cover (from a land-locked country!) with a different Indian Embassy CDS mailed from Nepal to the USA.



Above is an example of high value usage for a registered and insured (see "INS." In CDS) cover from the Indian Embassy in Nepal to Bombay.

This is an example of a high value usage for a registered cover from the Indian Embassy in Nepal to the USA.

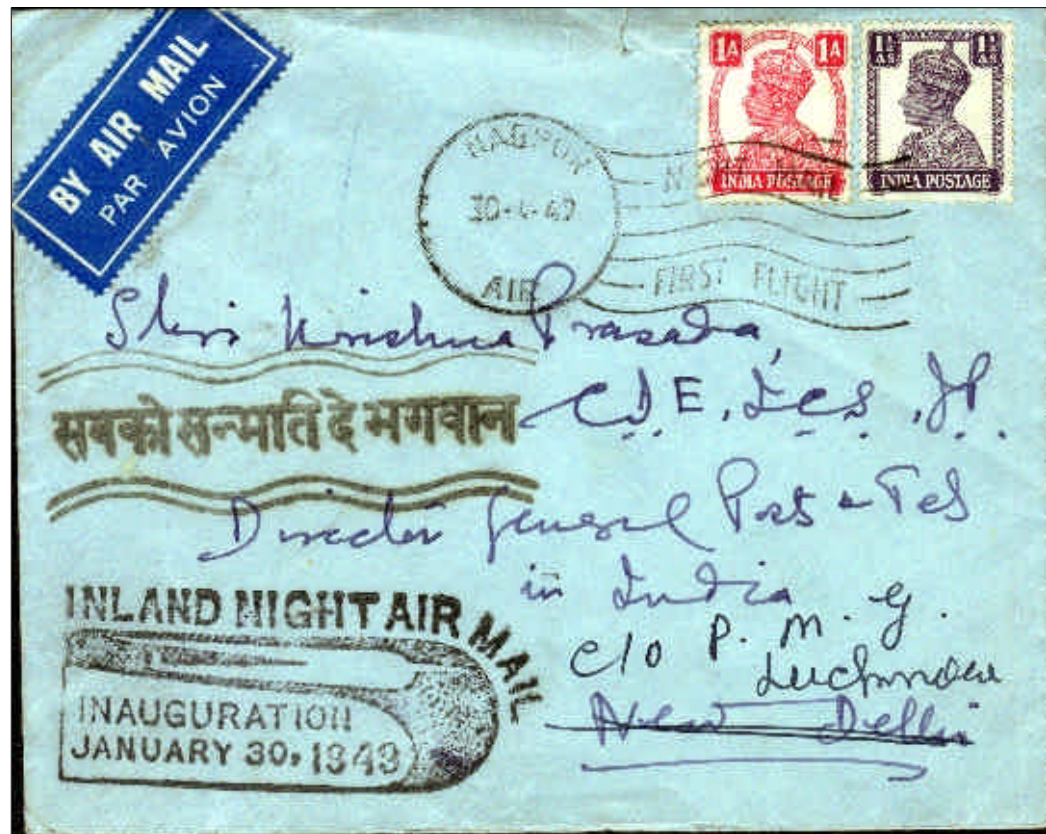
First death Anniversary

On the first anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, post offices all over India used a line from a popular hymn sung by Gandhi and his followers.

The line was printed in Devanagiri script (Hindi), in a variety of designs.

Shown are two covers with the slogans, one first-flight cover from Nagpur to Delhi and another local mailing in Poona (near Bombay).

The first cover, personal mail from the town of Nagpur, is a first flight cover commemorating the inaugural flight of Inland Night Airmail from Nagpur to Delhi



The second cover, local mail in the town of Poona (near Bombay), was clearly mailed by a Gandhi admirer to himself. This is obvious from the fact that he used the two lower values of the Gandhi stamps, six months after they were issued..

The slogan "Sabko Sanmati De Bhagwan" is in the front of the cover, in Devanagiri Script (Hindi)- in indigo ink.

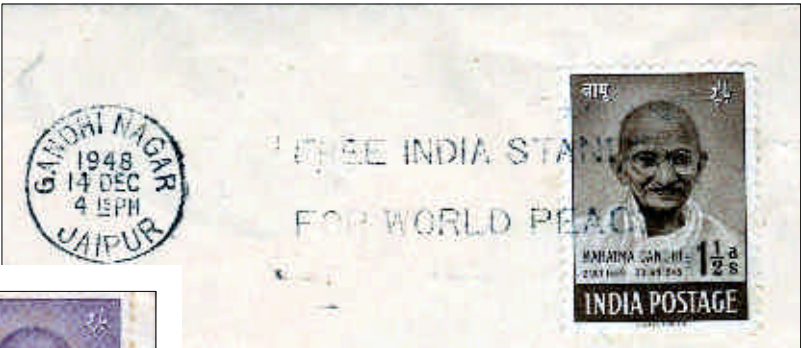
From Standing for World Peace to Mutual Annihilation

At the 55th Meeting of the Indian National Congress in the newly named “Gandhinagar”, a slogan cancellation was used. The slogan “FREE INDIA STANDS FOR WORLD PEACE” was taken from a speech Gandhi made about the place India would carve for herself as an independent nation:

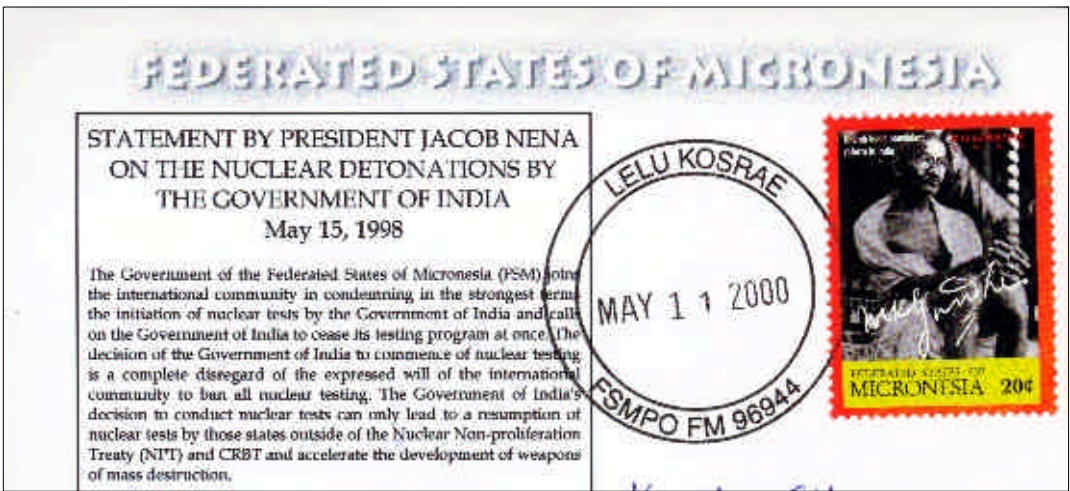
“Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all wars. The way India can promote peace is to offer successful resistance to exploitation... Free India stands for World Peace”.

Covers mailed from Gandhinagar during the 55th AICC meeting, with the slogan cancel.

The cover below is registered mail, with an unusually high postage for domestic registration.



Turkmenistan (1997): Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi.



Micronesia (2000): Postcard from the island of Lelu Kosrae to the USA, with the printed text of a statement by Micronesia's President at the United Nations. Micronesia was one of the many smaller nations that was shocked and condemned the recent overt testing of nuclear weapons by India.

Many have mistaken her for Gandhi's wife or daughter. She's neither.

Indira Gandhi, who married another Gandhi unrelated to the Mahatma, served as Prime Minister of India for almost two decades and single handedly led India in an arms race with Pakistan that led to the development of Nuclear weapons.

The Modest Attire

It is not by accident that Gandhi suddenly started to shed clothes. As a young professional, he took pleasure in sporting western attire. Upon return to India from South Africa, he wore traditional Indian clothing that covered most of his body. What changed?



Antigua (1998)

Records indicate that during a visit to a remote region of Madras Presidency, several villagers who were scantily dressed, only in what is commonly referred to as "loincloth", met Gandhi. Gandhi chastised them for being dressed indecently and they replied that this was all they could afford to wear.

The incident made a strong impression on Gandhi. He questioned if a true leader could represent his people if he did not live and feel like them.

Stamps of Gandhi from several issuing entities have featured the Gandhi who was referred to as the "half naked fakir" by Winston Churchill.

It is unusual that stamps of Gandhi from India often have featured him clothed, many times with an artificial cover that was the stamp designer's construction!



Turkmenistan (1999):
Progressive color
proofs showing the
"scantily clad" Gandhi.



Chad (1997)



Madagascar (1999)

Gandhi had always said that Independence was not replacing a few rich lawyers from London with a few rich lawyers and businessmen from Delhi and Bombay.

He insisted that India lives in her hundreds and thousands of villages and made every effort to live like the common Indian.

It was natural for him, then, to adopt the simplistic clothing of his fellow peasants. In his later years, Gandhi never changed his appearances even when he traveled overseas.

His favorite retort was that he'd do that only if he "lived" in the other land, instead of just visiting.



Somalia (1969)



Panama (1971)



Yemen (1969)



Mali (1999)

Lasting Impressions.....

The Spinning Wheel

More philatelic material on Gandhi has represented the spinning wheel than any other subject. Besides using the spinning wheel as a tool to organize and energize the boycott of machine made yarn from England, Gandhi believed that handloom would lead to social upliftment in the rural economy.



Comoro Islands (1991)



Brazil (1969)

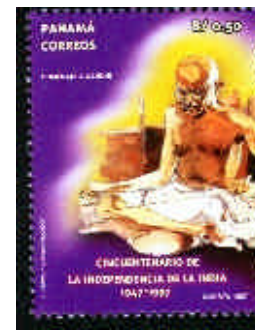


India (1998)



Venezuela (1970)

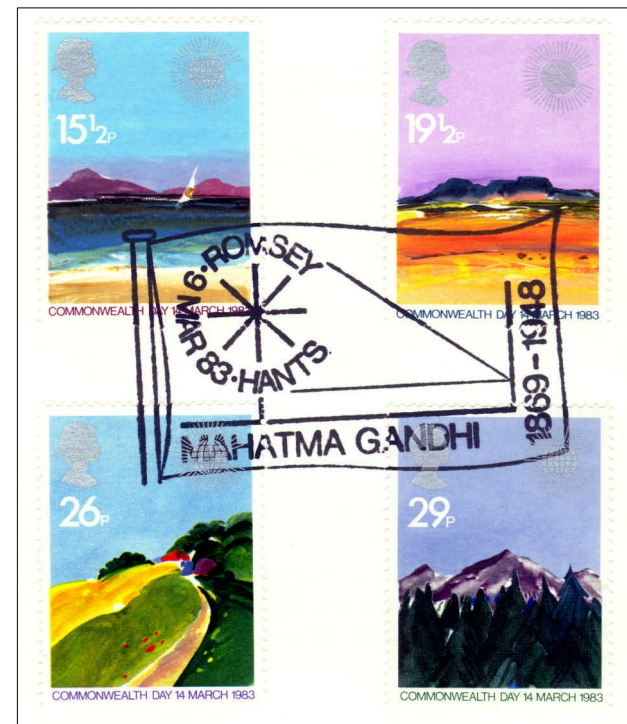
Grenada (1998)



Panama (1997)



Dominica (1998)



The spinning wheel was the special pictorial cancel for the first day of the US Champion of Liberty issue, as shown in this PMG corner card.

It was also used in the special cancel for the commonwealth conference in the UK (1983).



Guyana (1969)

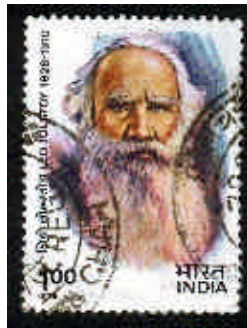


India (1969)



No Man is an Island

Those Who Shaped His Thoughts

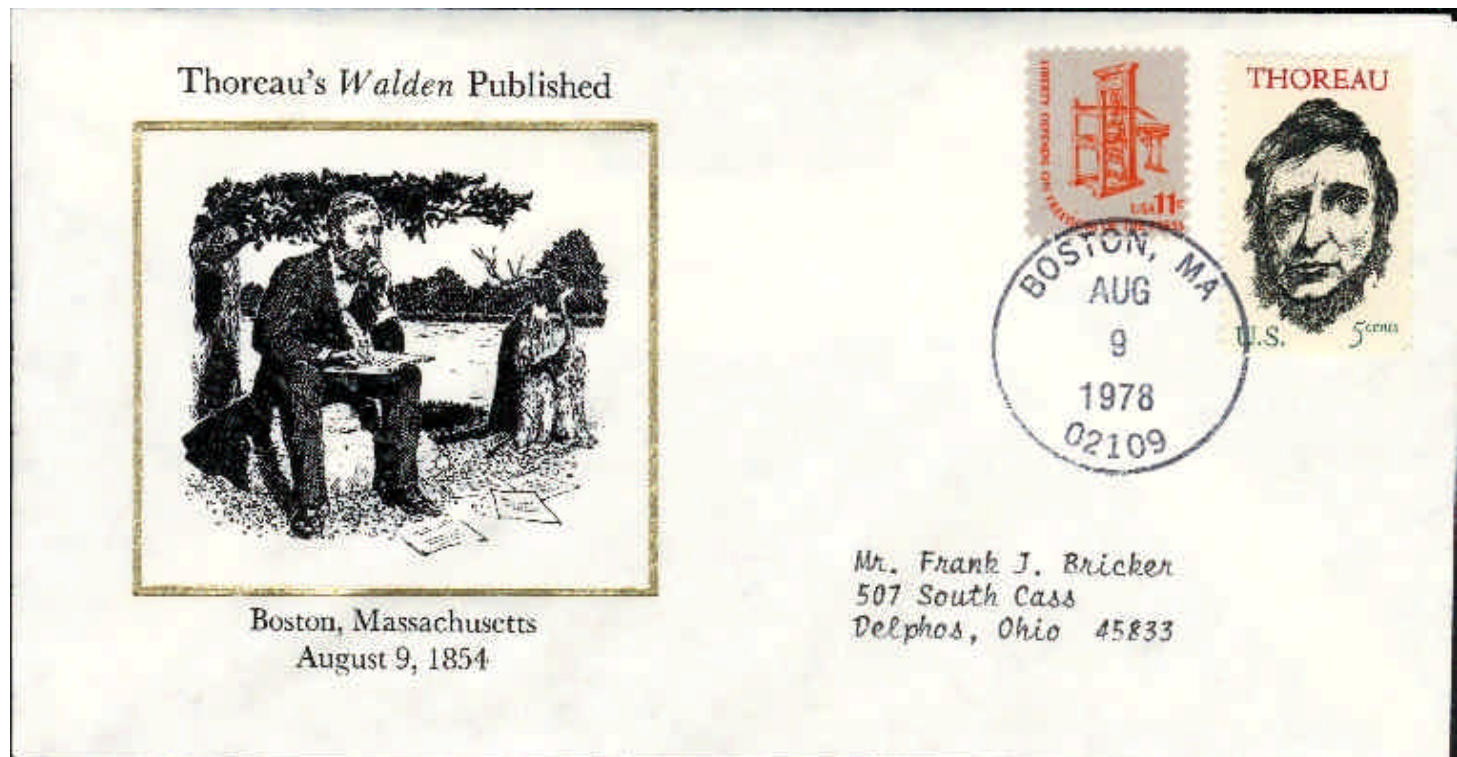


Count Leo Tolstoy was a living spiritual influence on Mahatma Gandhi.

The two corresponded frequently and Gandhi named his second Ashram in South Africa "Tolstoy Farm".

Gandhi's legal assistant Polak speaks of giving him a copy of Thoreau's writings to read.

It has been said that Gandhi's "satyagraha" concept was influenced by Thoreau's essays on "Civil Disobedience".



More recently, a letter from Gandhi [written in 1935] to a member of the Servants of India Society has surfaced which seems to refute that assumption.

In that letter, Gandhi states specifically that the resistance to authority in South Africa was far advanced before he read Thoreau's essay.

He did state that the actions of Indians was referred to as passive resistance.

To coin a more dynamic expression that would inspire the masses, he came up with Satyagraha.

As the word did not mean much to English speakers, he caught on to the title of Thoreau's essays when communicating with western audience about his effort.

And so, it appears that Gandhi's inspiration from Thoreau was in the "name" not the actions themselves.

No Man is an Island

Adversaries and Associates

Gandhi had more associates and friends amongst India's Muslim leaders than adversaries. Those who were prominent among them are shown here.



Khan Abdul Gafar Khan. Known as the "frontier Gandhi" from the Northwest frontier province, this *Pathan* warrior was the strongest proponent of Gandhi's ideals. Like Gandhi, he stayed home and mourned the partition, instead of celebrating Pakistani independence in 1947.



Commercial cover from Pakistan with Jinnah and two other prominent Indian Muslims—Muhammad Iqbal and Liaquat Ali Khan.

Syed Ahmed Khan. Cast in history as the founder of Muslim separatism on the subcontinent, he was one of the earliest to warn the Indian National Congress that many of their actions could lead India's Muslims to equate Congress rule to Hindu rule. And Gandhi often shared his sentiments.



Abul Kalam Azad. Born in Mecca, an accomplished poet and author in his teens, eloquent in Arabic and Persian and proud of his nom de plume (Azad, or "free" - since he had "felt free of all conventional ties"), he met Gandhi for the first time in 1920.

He spent several years in jail with Gandhi and Nehru and had twice served as President of the Indian National Congress, first in 1923 as its youngest President.

"Maulana", as he was called by many including Gandhi, was one of the Mahatma's closest lieutenants during the final years of the non-violent nationalist struggle.

Gandhi met **Churchill** in London when he was part of the Transvaal Indian Delegation in 1906. Churchill gave Gandhi the famous title "half naked fakir" and was furious that such a man could negotiate with a representative of the Crown! Biographers have stated that Churchill could not help "but foam in the mouth"



Swedish "Local" (1974): [Churchill Centenary]. Progressive Color Proofs of the only issue to show Gandhi with Churchill.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah had personally welcomed Gandhi on his return from South Africa in 1915 and invited him to address the Muslim League's session that year. A strong link between Jinnah and Gandhi was Gopal Krishna Gokhle, a man they had both come to know, like and respect. Of Jinnah, Gokhle said: "He has true stuff in him, and that freedom from all sectarian prejudice which will make him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity". And Jinnah has stated that it was his "one ambition to become the Muslim Gokhle".

No Man is an Island

Friends and Admirers

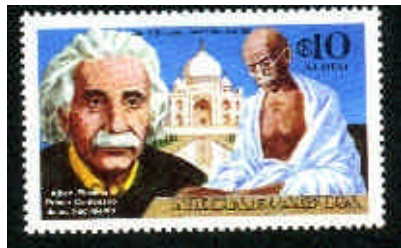
Rabindranath Tagore is probably the only other Indian contemporary of Gandhi who had garnered the admiration and attention of the rest of the world. Tagore was a close associate of Gandhi in the nationalist movement between 1919 and 1939 and coined the title "Mahatma".



Their association dates back to the period when both were experimenting with ascetic community life in Ashrams in South Africa and India.

Tagore and Gandhi disagreed on several issues- a "national language" being one. Congress' rejection of militant tactics of fellow Bengali Subhas Chandra Bose led to their parting of ways in 1939.

Albert Einstein was a great admirer of Gandhi. When Gandhi was in England attending the Round table Conference in 1931, Einstein specifically invited him to come to America. As a fellow pacifist, Einstein expressed amazement at how Gandhi managed to "move the masses". Interesting that Einstein and Gandhi ranked as the two most prominent individuals of the Millenium!



This set from Nicaragua was prepared for issue under the Somosa regime by an agency in New York. When the Sandanistas took control of the country in 1979, this issue "slipped through the cracks". By the time it was detected, it is reported that some unissued sets made it to the market. Nicaragua sued the agency and recovered the remainder of the issue. Some unissued sets made it to collectors when Format Security Printers went bankrupt. The recovered stamps were overprinted on three different occasions and were issued with overprints in 1980.



As the founder of the Theosophical Society in India, **Annie Besant** was closely associated with Gandhi and the rest of Congress.



Gandhi's closest associate who was English, "Charlie" was a pastor who followed Gandhi to South Africa, upon hearing about his activities there. He has written several books on Gandhi and later served as his emissary to the Indian community in Fiji.



Tagore, who visited Bucharest in 1926, commemorated in this stamped cover from Romania.



Mountbatten's association with Gandhi and Nehru was strong enough for them to pick him as the first Governor General of Independent India. During the partition riots, Mountbatten referred to Gandhi as his "one-man security force" better than all armies he commanded.

No Man is an Island

Followers and Adherants

Gandhi even disagreed with Nehru when it came to his first principles. Nehru was in England as a student in 1911 and was impressed with the Irish nationalist movement. Gandhi, while he sympathized with the Irish, always reminded Nehru *“there is no room for Shin Feinism in Indian politics”*. No dual track approach with a political path and a militant path.

As President of the African National Congress, Luthuli upheld its goal of non-violent resistance. In the tactics he pursued against the apartheid government, he was compared to Gandhi.



Togo (1970): Gandhi and Luthuli stamps with the Charles Degaulle overprint.



Gandhi and Martin Luther King in an issue from Burkina Faso.

Registered cover from Belgium with Gandhi and King stamps.



Irish stamps of Gandhi and Nehru, including a gutter pair from 1969.



Luthuli was a lasting symbol of Gandhian values in Africa that has manifested itself in the likes of Nelson Mandela.



Tanzania (1996) Gandhi and Mandela.

Registered airmail cover to US from Belgium, with Gandhi and Mandela stamps.

