

From the Stamp Specialist:

China

By James Starr (From *The Stamp Specialist Red Book*, #8, published in 1942, with new images)

It is generally conceded that it is no longer possible to make a collection of the stamps of the world which will be anywhere nearly complete, except at an expenditure of many more thousands of dollars than most of us have for philatelic purposes.

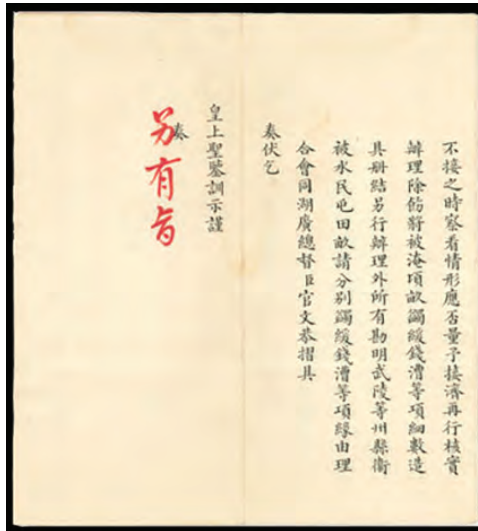
Most collectors are, therefore, confining their efforts to a general collection of a small group of countries, or a specialized collection of one or two countries which they find of most interest to them.

This article is addressed to those who are standing at the crossroads deciding upon which of the countries they will concentrate their efforts with a desire to call to their attention the advantages which China presents.

China possessed two systems of postal facilities from time immemorial, the "Ichan," which was the official courier service conveying mail between the Emperor, the Mandarins and other officials over all parts of China. Marco Polo found it in full operation in his time. The other, known as "Min Sin Chu," meaning Public Letter Office, was a system of private companies that carried mail throughout the Empire at no fixed regular rates.

The latter service is supposed to have started over a thousand years ago. Before 1929 it operated without any Governmental control whatever. The person sending a letter went to the office, bargained for the price of its delivery, paid one-half of the price and gave the letter to the Min Sin Chu who transported it to the destination, and the remainder of the postage was paid by the recipient. Time was not an essential for the delivery of this mail, it was passed along from office to office until it reached its final destination.

1881 Hwa Yang Letter Agency native letter from Tientsin to Peking with ornamental Dragons handstamps, and example of a letter handled in the private post Min Sin Chu system before being turned over to the Customs service. The script running along the left side states "Capital Hwa-Yang letter office outside...the gate, Ta Mo Chang central, shang..."



China, I-Chan 1857 (22 Sept.) submission to the Emperor Xianfeng regarding flood damage in Wuling and a request for tax relief, with the Emperor's notation in red ink.



A selection of covers c. 1840-early 1900s, primarily commercial covers carried via private companies in the Min Sin Chu system

These Companies bitterly opposed the opening of the regular Imperial Post and gave the newly instituted service severe competition for many years. After the success of the Revolution, they again renewed their attack on the Government Postal System, and although finally suppressed, in general, they continue to this day in some sections of China, cooperating with the regular service in restricted lines, largely carrying bulk parcels of letters and postal matter from remote parts of China to post offices on the coast. This is known as "Club Mail" and this mail is responsible for the large blocks of cancelled Chinese stamps of higher values which from time to time come on the market. Since 1929 postage stamps are required for the forwarding of Club Mail and these are obtained under Government regulations.

About 1860 the Customs Maritime Service was inaugurated in Shanghai with branches at the various ports. Originally only official correspondence passed between these offices, but in the course of time they carried Diplomatic correspondence, and finally more or less general mail. No stamps were used.

When the Legations of various countries were established at Peking, the importance of the Customs Post was greatly increased. Most of the mail passed through Tientsin which, however, was ice-bound during the winter months, and mail had to be carried overland to Shanghai. Hence, the origin of the Maritime Customs Post which was established by Robert Hart (afterwards Sir Robert Hart) in 1878. This Post accepted letters from the general public between the various ports at which Custom Houses were maintained, and to Peking, and operated until January, 1897, when, by an Imperial Edict, long sought for by Sir Robert Hart, the Imperial Postal Service was inaugurated.

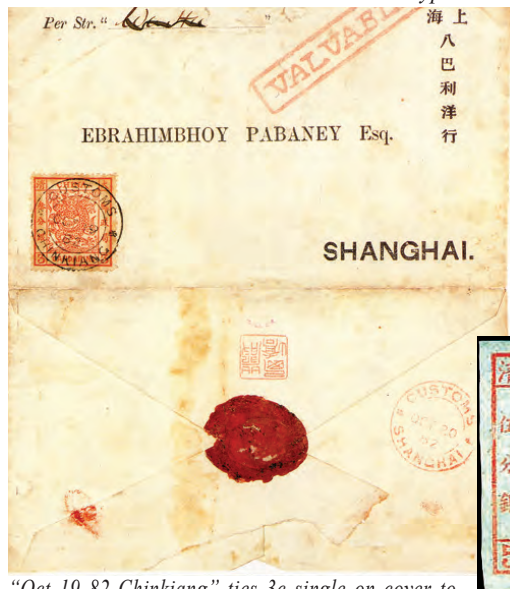


1897 (15 Feb.) cover to Tientsin (16 Feb.), showing "Chinese Imperial Post Office/Peking/Postage Paid" circular handstamp in blue, with matching "I.G. of Customs/Peking" double-ring origin date stamp of "Feb 15 97", with "Customs/Tientsin" double-ring arrival date stamp (16 Feb.) on reverse.

The first issue of stamps (page 22) did not occur until August or December of 1878 (there seems to be a question still in regard to the date), and the numbers issued from that time to date are not at all numerous. They occupy about 11 pages in Scott's 1942 Catalogue, including stamps overprinted for use in the various Provinces. Moreover, there exist very



The first issue of China (Sc. 1-3), the 1, 3 and 5 Candarins of 1878. The center illustration shows a reproduction of the original proof of the 3 Candarin value—the others are the issued types.



"Oct 19 82 Chinkiang" ties 3c single on cover to Shanghai, also with "Valuable" boxed handstamp on face and "Customs Oct 20 82 Shanghai" receiver cancel.

few dangerous counterfeits in the straight issues, although quite a few dangerous ones may be found among the surcharges. We exempt from the former class the



An essay for the 1878 5c (Sc. 3E)

Japanese counterfeits of the early issues, which are exceedingly numerous and which anyone, with any knowledge of the stamps, could tell were counterfeits ten feet away.

Another recommendation is that, with the possible exception of the Northwest Scientific Expedition Issue of 1932, and the undoubted exception of the Miniature Sheet of Thrift Stamps issued in 1941, all other issues were made strictly for postal purposes and not for sale to collectors. It is true that a number of short sets of Commemorative Issues were made in later years but they are not by any means as frequent as similar issues of the United States, and it is highly probable that they were issued for purely patriotic purposes and not with intent to sell to collectors.

The final advantage is that, as a rule, the stamps are not at all expensive. Although there exist a number which run up to \$10 or \$20, and a few which are really high-priced, it is quite possible for anyone to make an almost complete collection of the country for a sum easily within the means of a limited purse if spread out over a period of years. It would be necessary to make such a spread as, while some of the stamps are very cheap, they are by no means easy to find, and this again provides a very interesting field of endeavor in tracking down and finding the elusive items.

Chinese philately can be divided into several distinct sections, viz.: Issues of the Maritime Customs Post; Issues of the Imperial Post; Provisional Overprints on the Imperial stamps; stamps issued under the Republic; Express Letter stamps, and issues overprinted for use in the Provinces, and it would be possible to collect the country generally and specialize in only one or two of the divisions in case it was not desired to specialize in the whole country.

As stated, the first issue of Chinese stamps was made in August or December 1878, by the Statistical Department of the Maritime Customs Post. This consisted of a set of three stamps, 1, 3, and 5 candarins (page



1883 3c perf 12-1/2 in a vertical pair; imperf between (Sc. 8b)

were all in the collection of John Agnew of London.

The second issue of the Customs Post was made in 1885. It resembles the first issue but the stamps are smaller. It has the same three values and is usually divided into two parts, ac-



1885 second issue: left, 1c, Sc. 10; right, 3c margin single imperf vertically at left. Horizontal pairs imperf between are Sc. 11a, 2021 SCV used \$24,000.

According to the perforation. Very little work has been done on the plating of this issue, and to a careful student, familiar with reentries, etc., there is an immense field for research which has never been touched.

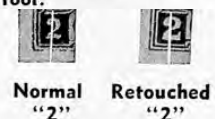
In 1894 to commemorate the 60th Birthday of the Dowager Empress a commemorative issue of nine values was made. The stamps were lithographed in Japan and their designs contain a wealth of symbolism. Many errors exist, and again there is ample room for study and specialization.



1894 Dowager issue, Sc. 16-24

Illustration shows the normal and recut "2" of the 1897, so-called retouched plate of the 2c light green. The retouched figure of value "2" has a straight foot.

In 1897 China was considering joining the Universal Postal Union and as a preparatory step changed the coinage from candarins and teals to the silver dollar unit, and a new set of stamps was ordered, also to be prepared in Japan. The delivery of these stamps was greatly delayed and the stock was running so low that something had to be done about it. In consequence, a second issue of the Dowager Empress Set was prepared from the original stones by local printers in Shanghai for the purpose of surcharging them with the new values. A few of this second set, unsurcharged, were placed on sale but



Normal "2" Retouched "2"

21), and it is an intensely interesting issue. It is usually divided into three settings in the catalogues which make note of the division, but this is erroneous as there were nine settings of the 1 candarin, nineteen of the 3 candarin, and about eight or nine of the 5 candarin. This issue will provide a lifetime of specialization to anyone who chooses to interest themselves in it. The writer has been working on the plating for 20 years and it is by no means near complete. New discoveries are continually being made of the greatest interest, such as the fact that the Wide Spaced 3 candarin stamp sheet contains only 15 stamps instead of 25 as had been universally believed.

Prior to the plating of this issue several trial essays were made. Some got as far as die proofs and one is known in perforated plate proof. The last is the only one collectors can hope to get as but one copy is known of all the others. They

the number is very limited. Some of them are extremely scarce and they are very difficult to tell from the original issue.

This second set with its varieties of surcharges is very complicated and affords the utmost interest to students of Chinese stamps. In addition to the surcharges on the Shanghai printing, stamps of the 1888-1894 issue were surcharged with the new values. The scope of this article is too limited to go into details in regard to all these.



30c on 24c surcharge (Sc. 37)

暫作銀角
2 cents.

暫作銀角
2 cents.

Illustration of second and third type of surcharges. In type at left the spacing between the figure of value is 2½ mm. while in the type at right it is 1½ mm.

Numerous errors of printing and perforation occur. There are also double and inverted surcharges. One setting of the surcharges is found on some of the original Japanese printings as well as on the Shanghai reprints. In addition to the two printings mentioned; there is a third, a Presentation Set, which was prepared for distribution to high officials and diplomats on the occasion of the Dowager Empress' birthday, and a reserve set of retouched plates from which black proof was printed.

The arrival of the new issue being still delayed, further Provisional supplies became necessary, and for this purpose the authorities proceeded to surcharge the so-called Red Revenue stamps, which had been held in stock for some years. These revenues were engraved by Waterlow & Sons. They had been prepared to be used for revenue purposes, but as this was an innovation in China, furious protests arose throughout the country and they were never put into use. These were now resurrected and surcharged with various values, of which there are several printings. This set also includes a number of errors, double surcharges and inverts. There are also a few copies of the unsurcharged Red Revenue on the market.



\$1 on 3c Red Revenue, Sc. 84

大清國郵政
壹分
one cent

大清國郵政
暫作銀角
2 cents

大清國郵政
當壹圓
1 dollar

大清國郵政
暫作銀角
2 cents

大清國郵政
暫作銀角
4 cents.

大清國郵政
當壹圓
1 dollar.

Types of surcharges as used on the so-called Red Revenue, which was never used fiscally.

The new issue of stamps finally arrived and were placed on sale in August of 1897, and this constitutes the first regular issue of the Imperial Chinese Post. [These were lithographed in Tokyo. JFD.]

These lithographed stamps were found to be unsatisfactory by the Chinese authorities so a second [engraved] issue was ordered from Messrs. Waterlow & Sons, and was put on sale in January, 1898. Watermarked paper for this printing was supplied to Waterlow & Sons by the Statistical Department of the Chinese Imperial Post. It is stated that 110 reams of such paper, sufficient to print 13,000,000 stamps, was sent and

the manufacturers were ordered to print the stamps without regard to fitting the watermarks. The watermarks are indistinct and copies of the issue may be found without any watermarks at all, these chiefly coming from the edges of the sheets. When the watermarked paper was exhausted, the issue was continued on paper without watermarks, Numerous



Comparisons of the 1897 first and 1898 second issues. Stamps on left are first issues (Sc. 94, 96), those on right are second issues (Sc. 106, 109)

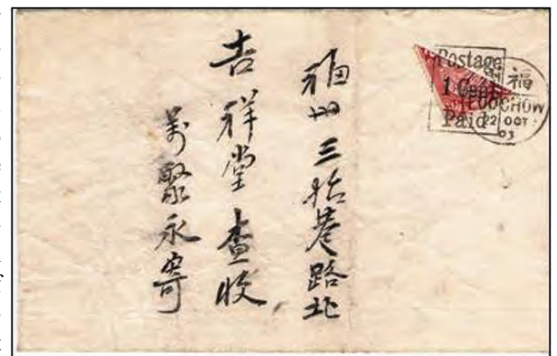
part-perforate pairs, both vertical and horizontal, are found in this set. What is usually cataloged as the second issue of this set began to come out in 1902. It is exactly the same as the set previously described except that the paper is unwatermarked, thicker and more opaque. Many straight edges and part-perforates exist.

Between 1907 and 1910 changes were made in the postal rates, which necessitated the addition of the 3c, 7c and 16c values to the set. The color of the 4c was changed to scarlet or vermilion, and the 10c from green to blue, and a beautiful range of shades may be found in this value.

It is in this set that the plate of the 1c value was damaged. A crack is found in the margin of the sheet, and the upper right corner of two stamps has been retouched. This damaged stamp is exceedingly scarce in this set, but in the later overprinted stamps it is much more common.

During 1901, after the Boxer Rebellion, the 1/2c stamp was surcharged 5c for the use of the Occupation Forces, The surcharge occurs in black and green and is found inverted in both colors.

We now come to a series of Provisional Issues of 1903-1906 in which the stamp was cut in half diagonally and used at one-half of its face value. The first



of these is the Foochow Provisional which received a special black oblong chop and is said to have been used on October 22, 23 and 24 of 1903. It is generally asserted that the use of this bisect was occasioned by the scarcity of stamps caused by the non-arrival of the boat bearing the new supplies, which was delayed by a typhoon, hence the issue is sometimes called the "Typhoon Stamp."

Many counterfeits of this bisect exist and the reader is referred to H. F. Bowkel's article on the subject. This is the best known of these splits.

To Be Continued

From the Stamp Specialist: China, Part 2

By James Starr (From *The Stamp Specialist Red Book, #8, published in 1942, with new images*)

Continuing with the Provisional Issues of 1903-1906 in which the stamp was cut in half diagonally and used at one-half of its face value. At Chungking in 1904 the 2c was again diagonally bisected and used as 1c. This is said to have been used on August 22nd and 23rd. This bisect was used without a special chop. On February 19, 1905, the Postmaster at Kweifu in Szechuan Province bisected the 4c stamp and used it as 2c, and on April 10, 11, and 12, 1906, the 2c stamp was cut diagonally and used at Changsha.

In honor of the first year of the reign of the Emperor Hsuan Tung, one of the most beautiful sets of Chinese stamps was issued in September, 1909. It consists of three values and depicts in the center the Temple of Heaven and the Altar of Heaven in front of it. The borders of the stamp consist of dragons and scroll work. This was the last set of stamps issued by authority of the Chinese Imperial Post, and completes the issues of that section of China.



Sc. 131

We now come to the Interregnum. The Revolution broke out in late 1911 or early in 1912, and the Postal Authorities immediately declared their neutrality in order that the postal facilities might be maintained without interference by the contending armies. To indicate this situation, in February of 1912, the Foochow Postal Administration overprinted the 3c, \$1, \$2, and \$5 values of the current issue with four Chinese characters in a horizontal line. These characters are translated "Provisional Neutrality" and are known as the Foochow Provisionals.



\$1 "Provisional Neutrality" overprint, Sc. 135

Immediately an outcry arose in regard to this wording as it was stated the stamps could not be neutral, although the Post Office was, and the Postal Commissioner ordered the withdrawal of the set from sale and that the stamps should be surcharged with four characters meaning "Chinese Republic." After three days' sale they were accordingly withdrawn. They were only on sale at Hankow, Nanking and Changsha. The dollar values of this set are among the Chinese rarities.

The parties in charge of the withdrawal felt it was a shame to waste all the stamps that had been overprinted, but to carry out the Commissioner's order, resurcharged the issue vertically with the four characters required, and this set, consisting of seven values, is known as the Nanking or Cruciform Set. In English the overprint now read "Chinese Republic Provisional Neutrality," and the protest in regard to this overprint, was worse than the first. These stamps were put on sale at Hankow, Nanking and Chang-sha only, and were withdrawn after about three hours. The 1c, 3c and 7c values are quite common, the others are scarce, the dollar values being rarities.



\$2 "China Republic Provisional Neutrality" Foochow cruciform overprint, Sc. 144

This set consists of eight stamps the 1, 3, 7, 16 and 50 cents and the 1.00, 2.00 and 5.00 values. The full set was used at Hankow; all except the 7 and 50 cent values at Nanking and 120 of the 1 cent value only at Changsha.

Many forgeries of both sets exist, some of them very dangerous ones, and collectors should be very careful from what source they obtain copies, and should require a guarantee with their purchase.

With the withdrawal of these two issues, the third lot of overprinted stamps was issued. This consisted of the whole set with the "Chinese Republic" vertical surcharge. These were overprinted by the Statistical Department of the Customs Post at Shanghai, but there is a second overprint on the 1c and 2c values which was made at the office of the Commercial Press in Shanghai, which differs from the first largely in the shape of the last character. In both printings, retouches of the broken corner are found on the 1c, also quantities of errors of various types.



"Chinese Republic" overprint on 3c strip of five imperf vertically, Sc. 149f

In addition, which fact is not generally known, there are two settings of the Statistical Department, which differ in the space between the characters. Here is a chance for any specialist to endeavor to collect the two different printings.

中
華
民
國

中
華
民
國

"Shanghai Overprints."
Final native overprint "Chinese Republic." Illustration at left produced by the Statistical Department, that at right by the Commercial Press.



Left to right: Statistical Department overprint, Sc. 159; Commercial Press overprint, Sc. 161; Not mentioned in the article are the Waterlow & Sons overprints, here Sc. 163

These four overprints are considered official, and we now come to those which are known as "unauthorized issues." The Postal Authorities had directed that all postal stationery should be surcharged with the four characters meaning "Chinese Republic." The postmasters at several towns claimed that they understood this to mean they were also to overprint their stock of stamps and therefore proceeded to do so. Later, all these issues were disavowed by the central authority and they are not as a rule catalogued, although, unquestionably, many of them actually did postal duty and plenty of them are found cancelled, both on and off cover. Seven of these issues are known.



Unauthorized local overprints which did actual postal service. These overprints were later disavowed by the central authority.

During 1914 the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Peking prepared a commemorative issue which consisted of 13 values. The central design of this stamp was a map of China with the characters for "Great Chinese Republic" printed across it, reading from left to right. This set never was issued. It is understood that the objections against it were that the inscription in the map read from left to right instead of right to left, and second, that the adjective "Ta"—"Great" in the inscription was a particular attribute of the Imperial Sovereignty, and third that the use of the word "Memorial" in the lower label was usually employed to recall to memory the departed and was not appropriate to record the birth of the Republic. The issue was ordered burned, but a few sets evidently were retained by some of the officials. Also, some of the burned stamps were rescued from the fire. The writer has copies of the 1c and 2c values more or less damaged, and of the 3c and 5c values badly singed. He also has a 3c imperforate, un gummed stamp of a chocolate color which is probably a proof or trial printing, as the regular color of the printing was green.

A set of proofs of this stamp exists on which the values are left vacant, and other sets of the completed stamp exist gummed, perforated and ready for use, but which are overprinted with an oval enclosing the characters "Tso Fei" and the word "cancelled" in violet ink. These two sets are extremely rare.



From the National Postal Museum: Proof set of the unissued stamps; magnified view of the 3c; one of the few stamps retrieved from the fires.



Republic Issues

The first un surcharged issue of the Republic consisted of a double set of stamps of 12 values each, the first showing a portrait of Sun Yat-sen, commemorating the Revolution; the companion set commemorating the foundation of the Republic with a portrait of Yuan Shih-kai. The issue was limited and was ordered to be distributed at the same time to head and sub-head offices for sale at all postal establishments. The stamps were placed on sale December 15, 1912, and were valid to July 31, 1913.

Owing to the friction between Sun and Yuan, the former was compelled to leave China very shortly after this issue was made and it is said that the stamps bearing his likeness were immediately withdrawn from circulation, and the balance on hand at Peking destroyed. The Sun set,



Left, 1912 Sun Yat-sen issue, Sc. 183, with partial "Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing" imprint; right, 1912 Pres. Yuan Shih-kai, Sc. 191

therefore, ought to be considerably scarcer than the set showing Yuan's portrait. At least one sheet of one of these issues exists imperforate at left. No other errors are known. [In the 2020 Scott Classic Catalogue the Sun Yat-sen set, Sc. 178-189, has values of \$1,493 mint and \$675.50 used; the Yuan Shih-kai set, Sc. 190-201 has values of \$1,183 and \$530.75, respectively. JFD.]

The first regular issue of the Republic was made in 1913 and contained 19 values from 1/2c to \$10. It was engraved and printed by Waterlow & Sons in London, and stamps were printed in three designs. A few errors occur.

In 1915-1919 the second Republic issue was placed on sale. It was engraved and printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Peking and contained the 1-1/2c, 13c and \$20 values in addition to those of the former set.



Left to right, first Republic issue \$1, Sc. 217; second Republic issue \$2, Sc. 237 and center inverted variety, Sc. 237a; 1919 printing, Sc. 241

The designs are exceedingly similar to those of the London printing and must be carefully scanned to be told apart. This set contains a very important error, viz.: the \$2 blue and black with center inverted. One sheet of this stamp only was found and it is one of the greatest of Chinese errors.

In 1920 North China suffered from a terrible flood, millions of people becoming homeless and without food. As a relief measure the government surcharged the 2c green and 4c scarlet and 6c gray, 1c, 3c and 5c respectively. The difference between the face and surcharged value went to the aid of the flood victims.



Chinese P.O. 25th Anniversary, Sc. 245

In 1921, October 10, a set of four stamps was issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Chinese Post Office.

In 1923 the 3c stamp of the first Peking printing was surcharged 2c with a large "2" in the center of the stamp and a star obliterating the values in the four corners. This is found (page 23) with overprint inverted, and is a great rarity.

In 1923 the second issue by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Peking was placed on sale. At first this was printed on thin, French



1920 semi-postal, Sc. B3



Left 1922 2c on 3c, Sc. 247; right, overprint inverted, Sc. 247a

paper, containing the same values as the preceding set, and while the designs in general were the same, there are marked minor differences which cannot be gone into within the scope of this paper. The 30c is found in horizontal pairs, imperforate between. Later this same set was printed on Canadian paper, much thicker than the French. Perforation errors are found.

In 1923 the 4c grey stamp was surcharged 3c in red, and this is found with a minor variety of no period after cents. A much greater error is the inverted surcharge, of which 10 copies only were ever found, although it is known that at least two sheets existed at one time.

From 1923 to date ten "Commemoration" sets were issued to honor various events. These each consisted of four stamps, but the denominations vary. Proofs of some of them are obtainable but are rare.



1923 1c, 2nd Peking printing, Sc. 249



Ch'en Ying-shih, on 50c Martyrs issue, Sc. 323

To Be Continued



Left to right 1923 Constitution adoption commem., Sc. 273; Assumption of office by Marshal Chang Tso-lin, Sc. 279; transfer of Sun Yat-sen remains from Peiping to Nanking, Sc. 286.

The first of the doubtful sets was produced in 1932 and is called the Northwest Scientific Expedition Issue, sometimes known as the Sven Hedin Set. It consisted of the usual four values.

Dr. Sven Hedin was proposing to make a scientific exploration in Mongolia, Sinkiang, etc., and applied to the government for permission to do so.



Registered cover from Peking to New York, with vertical pairs of the complete issue, tied by "Peiping 2.9.33" bilingual date stamps, addressed by Hedin to Hugh Clark at the Scott Stamp and Coin Co. The letter from Hedin stated that he had posted this letter with a mint hinged set attached and that he "hope[s] the stamp is quite worthy of being entered in your famous catalogue," which it was, as Sc. 307-310



Sven Hedin 10c, Sc. 310

From the Stamp Specialist: China, Part 3

By James Starr (From *The Stamp Specialist Red Book, #8, published in 1942, with new images*)

We now come to an immensely interesting series of stamps which is too complicated to describe within the scope of this article, and I can only skim lightly over it. When the Chinese Government was obliged to evacuate Peking, they were forced to leave behind the plates used for the printing of their stamps. As time passed, the supply of stamps in occupied China, as well as in the unoccupied districts, necessarily became greatly reduced. Why the Japanese did not use the plates to produce more stamps, thereby acquiring the profit from their sale, is not known, but apparently they did not use them and the Chinese Government gave a contract to the Chung Hwa Book Company, Ltd., of Hongkong, to engrave and print a regular series of stamps.

The central design was a portrait of Sun Yat-sen, and soon after issue this portrait was reengraved. Shortly afterwards the top part of the frame was altered, thus making three sets of this issue. No announcement of these changes was made by the authorities. All were discovered by collectors.



Left to right, original printing, Sc. 345; re-engraved portrait, Sc. 347; altered frame, Sc. 354. On type I the coat button is a half-circle; on Type II it is a complete circle; and on Type III it also is a complete circle and the top frame line is fully shaded rather than partially shaded as on the other two.

In the autumn of 1939 the Chung Hwa Book Company experienced a strike of their employees which produced a stoppage of work at their factory.

They had on hand at that time a quantity of stamps which were printed but not gummed or perforated. These were all of the third Type, and consisted of the 2c and 5c, and \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 values. These uncompleted stamps were turned over to the Dah Tung Book Company for completion, and they perforated them 14-1/2 instead of 12-1/2 which was the gauge of the first mentioned sets.

The strike continuing, the plates for the whole issue were ordered turned over to the Dah Tung Book Company and they added secret marks in order to distinguish the printings, and continued to print the issue with 14 to 14-1/2 perforations. All the above stamps were printed on unwatermarked paper.

Sometime during 1940, the Dah Tung Book Company began to use paper which was watermarked with multiple Chinese characters, and from time to time new values were added to the series. Meanwhile, at about the same period, 1939-1940, the printing plates of the original Martyr Issue were brought from Peking to Hongkong, and the Commercial Press, Ltd., of Hongkong, was awarded a contract to print stamps of the original series from the original plates. Again secret marks were added to the old plates, and the Commercial Press began to manufacture a reprinted set (for secret marks, see page 23). These were printed on unwatermarked paper, perforated 12-1/2, except that the 1c orange

was also perforated 13-1/2 and 12-1/2 by 13-1/2. Also, a variety of the same stamp was found without secret marks and perforated 13 and 13-1/2. Then, the same stamps with the additional values began to appear, printed on watermarked paper, and at the present writing, 15 values on this watermarked paper are found.

To add to the confusion of these various printings, several of the dies were reengraved or else new dies made, but to go into details here would take entirely too much space. The field for research is unlimited.

During 1940-1941 the Postal rates in China experienced considerable changes, all of them increases. Among others, the 5c rate was changed to 8c. This produced a superabundance of the 5c value, while the 8c value was deficient, and this led to the surplus of 5c stamps being surcharged, in some cases 4c, but mostly 3c in order that the 3c and 5c values could be used to make up the 8c rate. Here again space will not permit a detailed description, but an immense opportunity for study exists.

Prior to 1941 the Chinese Government had evidently made up its mind that it would be expedient to provide a source for procuring stamps outside of China, and accordingly a contract was placed with the American Bank Note Company of New York, and during the year they prepared a set of 16 values. These stamps reached China during 1941 but very few of them were placed on sale prior to the downfall of Shanghai.

The last of these series of Martyr stamps was printed at Peking from the old plates of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing by order of the Puppet Government. The 8c stamp, the exact match of the original issue in shade and perforation, even to bearing the Bureau's imprint, was made. The paper is different, shrinking less, and the stamps measure 20-1/2 in width against 19-1/2 for the old issue. Immediately after the printing, most of the issue was overprinted with characters for the names of the different occupied Provinces. It is stated that very few of the unoverprinted stamps were put on sale and a very high price was asked for them at first. Evidently more of them were available than supposed as the price has had a tremendous drop.

The last Commemorative issue of stamps was in 1941, known as the Thrift Stamp Issue. It consisted of six values. It is to this set that the miniature sheet already referred to belongs. It was evidently prepared to sell to collectors as it is printed on white wove unwatermarked paper, unperforated, and all six values of the set are printed in the center of the sheet in two vertical columns beginning at the upper right.



1941 Thrift issue, Sc. 471, valid for postage. See also page 2



The third issue took place in 1932-1937. This was completely redrawn and it is interesting to note the different type of plane which had come into use in that period of time.

A collection of these stamps on first flight covers is most interesting and forms a very valuable history of the Chinese postal service, while air covers of 1940-1941 are a moving picture of changing conditions necessitated by the war.

This issue was reprinted in Hongkong in 1941.



1932 3rd issue, Sc. C11



Left, 1932-37 issue, Sc. 20 without secret mark; right, 1940-41 issue with secret mark, that being an opening in the lower left part of the left character. (Reminder: for a closer look use your pdf magnifier tool.)

1941 Thrift issue right, with margin overprint for Russian Philatelic Society in Russia Exhibition, not valid for postage. Overprints also were made in French and Chinese.

The final set to date was issued on October 10, 1941 to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic. It consists of 10 values of current stamps, apparently picked haphazard, bearing a "U" shaped overprint which reads "To Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic of China on October 10, 1941."

This hasty sketch will show the reader what an exceedingly interesting lot of stamps the recent Chinese issues are. There are any number of errors in the series, some of importance, others merely of printing, but it is quite feasible to get up a collection which would fill two or three volumes and would surely meet with great commendation at any exhibition.



1941 Foundation of the Republic overprint on block of six with imprint, Sc. 481

Air Mail Stamps

The first issue of Chinese airmail stamps occurred in July 1921 and consisted of five values. The second issue was made in 1929 and the stamp is a modification of that of the first issue.



Right, 1921 90c, Sc. C5; above, July 1, 1921 Peking-Tsinan-Shanghai and return first flight with Sc. C1 on first day of issue.

Postage Dues

The first use of Postage Dues occurred on March 19, 1904, when the stamps of the regular issue were over-printed with two Chinese characters meaning "Postage Due." Six values of this issue were printed. The 10c value exists in vertical pairs, imperforate between.

Later in the year, the regular issue of 8 values was put on sale, and of these the 1/2c blue and the 2c blue exist in horizontal pairs, imperforate between.

The above illustrations show one value each of three different postage due issues. At left 1/2c value of the first regular issue; in center 2c value with the 1912 "Provisional Neutrality" overprint executed by Waterlow & Sons, London

In 1911 the Government started to change the color of the stamps from blue to brown. The 1c and 2c values were issued, and the 5c was ordered. It is stated that this was never put on sale but a small quantity certainly were sold and are very scarce. Watch for copies with overprint removed.

In February 1912 the blue set was overprinted horizontally in red with four characters meaning Provisional Neutrality. The 20c and 30c values are rarities, as only 25 of each were sold. The 1c and 2c brown were also overprinted with the same characters, also in red. It is stated that they were not put on sale, which statement is contradicted by M. D. Chow who says that there are ten copies of each value and that the persons from whom he got his copies bought them at the post office.

In 1912 all values of blue and brown were overprinted vertically with four characters meaning "Chinese Republic." Errors exist. This was done by the Statistical Department of the Customs Post in Shanghai. Later in the year a similar set was overprinted with the same characters, but in this case in two vertical columns and in black ink. These were overprinted by Messrs. Waterlow & Sons of London. The same errors occur.

In 1912 the 1/2, 1, 2, 4, 5, 20 and 30 cents blue and the 1c brown regular dues were overprinted at Harbin with the characters Shung Hwa in black. There is considerable doubt whether or not they are a legitimate issue, and no doubt that they were not authorized by the postal authorities.

In 1913 the first regular set of Dues under the Republic was put on sale. These were prepared by Messrs. Waterlow & Sons, and consisted



Left to right, top row first: Postage Due issues: 1904 1st issue, Sc. J6; 1904 2nd issue, Sc. J9; 1911 3rd issue, Sc. J16; 1912 4th issue, Sc. J24; 1912 5th issue, Sc. J25; 1912 6th issue, Sc. J36; 1913 7th issue, Sc. J43.

of 8 values on unwatermarked paper. In 1915 this set was reprinted at the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Peking. The paper and perforation are the same, and the stamps are very difficult to tell from the London printing.

In 1932 the Third Republican issue, ordered to conform with the regulations of the Universal Postal Union, was placed on sale. They were engraved and printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Peking in the same values, but the color was orange.

In 1940 the current \$1 and \$2 values of postage stamps were overprinted with 2 characters, meaning Postage Due, and were issued in small quantities. This was done during the month of March and in May of the same year the regular Hongkong issue of Dues in seven values appeared. The remaining values came out at a later date.

Express Delivery Stamps



1913 Express Delivery, five parts intact, with sans serif letters, Sc. E9

One of the most interesting emissions of the Chinese Postal Service is the Express Delivery Stamps. Eight were issued by the Imperial Post and two by the Republic. The former consisted of four parts, the stub, which remained at the office of origin as a record, the second and third parts accompanied the letter to office of delivery; there the third part remained as a record and the second returned to office of origin as proof of delivery, and the fourth was given to sender of letter as his receipt.

In the Republican issues the stamp consisted of five parts, a narrow piece being inserted between the original third and fourth parts which was pasted to the letter. Complete copies of the two Republican issues unused, especially the second, are common, but those of the Empire are extremely scarce, one of them practically unknown.

These stamps carried the letter without extra charge (except for overweight) until February 1, 1916, when the rate was raised to 13c, which was required to be paid with ordinary stamps. The express stamps were demonetized and to indicate this were overprinted locally, with the letters A, B, C, D, applied to different places on the stamp in different type. There are eight varieties of this overprint. Try to reconstruct the original stamp from used parts. It can be done by using parts of different stamps but as each stamp had a serial number, You will never be able to assemble all the parts of only one stamp.



Demonetized Express Delivery stamp

A complete story of these stamps was published some years ago in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, and another article in detail is coming out in the *China Clipper* at the present time.

It is not generally known that China has issued a number of Stamp Booklets containing stamps in assorted different values for handy use. The first issue of which the writer knows occurred on October 10, 1917, and the stamps were those of the 1915 issue. The covers of these books were works of art, and in the originals were beautifully colored.

This issue was followed by several others, much less ornate in their make-up, and all but the last issue were printed from special plates laid out so that the stamps could be bound in the covers. The last issue, which contained the 1923 stamps, was apparently taken from the edges of ordinary sheets. Articles describing these booklets in detail may be seen in the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, Volume 7, No. 1, and the issues of the *Asian Stamp Journal*. I am afraid, however, that the latter, like the Booklets themselves, are now unobtainable.

These Booklets present one of the philatelic paradoxes. "They are



The two first Stamp Booklets issued in 1917. Booklet one at left has a pale blue background with a rectangle of greenish yellow and a wreath of leaves and blossoms of the tree peony. Booklet two at right has a pale yellow background with a pink border. The inscription is surrounded by a conventionalized flower of pale pink whose leaves and stems are brown. They are a piece of art.

of extreme scarcity today, if at all obtainable, and yet, if they could be obtained, it would probably be at a very reasonable price. They were, however, of extreme interest and presented many problems at the time or their issue.

Covers form a very interesting field for collecting and research. Those of the first and second issues are extremely rare, and combination covers, franked with Chinese and foreign stamps, are of greatest interest, but this article is already too long to go into the subject as it deserves.

[We present a few examples on the pages that follow. JFD.]



An 1898 combination cover, a registered envelope bearing an 1897 large figures \$1 on 3c Red Revenue (top row, center). The top row, left to right, also shows Imperial Chinese Post 20c, 30c and \$1 marginal vertical pair (placed sideways). Below that, left to right, are Hong Kong 50c on 48c, 20c on 30c and Postal Fiscal \$1 on \$2 single and vertical pair. The China stamps are tied by Canton dollar chops, the Hong Kong stamps by "Hong Kong" circular date stamps.



Early First Issue usage: 3c single on cover to Shanghai tied by "Customs Aug 31 79 Chinkiang" double circle date stamp, cover also with "Customs Sept 1 79 Shanghai" receiver and manuscript "Herewith one parcel with address."



Fully paid cover to Westfield, Mass., with 1882 1c and 5c tied by "Customs Jul 21 82 Shanghai" date stamps and large Tientsin chops; and U.S. 5¢ also applied in China, cover also with "U.S. Postal Agency Jul 26 Shanghai" c.d.s. at left and octagonal "Westfield Sep 14 Mass" receiver at right above the 5c single.



May 7, 1920 Handley-Page entire letter sheet, carried on the return flight from Tientsin to Peking, bearing a 10c Junk issue cancelled by circular date stamps, the cover also with framed bilingual handstamps ("Chinese Post Office / Despatched by aeroplane / Tientsin to Peking" and "Received by Aeroplane"). The printed message inside reads "This letter card will be forwarded in the first mail despatched by aeroplane from Tientsin to Peking. The aeroplane is a Handley-Page, supplied by the Ministry of Communications."

In conclusion there is one point I have not mentioned in regard to the pleasures to be derived from collecting Chinese stamps, and that is a study of the language. To the writer's mind there is nothing more fascinating than to take a Chinese dictionary, hunt up the meaning of the different characters and write down the literal meaning and then trace out what the thought would be in English. It is immensely interesting and I think will give pleasure to anyone who takes the trouble to do it. However, Westerners will have to confine themselves to the printed characters as I do not think any of us are capable of recognizing the written characters unless we have been brought up in China, or have lived there for many years.