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THE
POSTAGE STAMPS
— OF —
CHINA

With a History of the
Chinese Imperial Post

BY

FRED. J. MELVILLE

PRESIDENT OF THE JUNIOR PHILATELIC
SOCIETY

With Collotype Plates
and Illustrations

LONDON

14, SUDBOURNE ROAD, BRIXTON,
S.W.

[1908.]

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President of the Junior
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introductory	7
II. Issue of 1878	14
III. Issue of 1885	18
IV. The Jubilee Issue of 1894	20
V. The Chinese Imperial Post—Provisional Issue of 1897	23
VI. Issue of 1897	31
VII. Issue of 1898	34
VIII. Postage Due Stamps	36
IX. Express Letter Stamp	38
X. The Present State of the Chinese Imperial Post	39
APPENDIX.	
Index to Plates	45



THE POSTAGE STAMPS OF CHINA.

CHAPTER I,

INTRODUCTORY.

THE story of postal communication in China commences at a very early date, though it would scarcely serve the purpose of this book to more than briefly allude to its earliest beginnings.

The earliest form of service for official despatches is the I Chan, or Government Courier Service, which is alluded to in the records of the Chou dynasty some 3,000 years ago, and is in active operation to the present day. It does not seem improbable, however, with the gradually increasing efficiency of the Chinese Imperial Post that this long established service will disappear.

The following short account of the Government Courier Service is quoted from an official source :—

“As actually working, this Service is placed under the supervision of the Board of War at Peking, where a special department, the Ch'ê Chia Ssü, with seven officials at its head, superintends all I Chan affairs, both metropolitan and provincial, and keeps and audits accounts.

“Two Yamêns near the Tung Hua Mên, both under joint Manchu and Chinese directors (Chien-tu), keep up at the capital their connexions with the

provinces ; one known as the Ma Kuan oversees the couriers and horses ; the other, the Chieh Pao Ch'u, attends to the mails on arrival and departure. 34 messengers are said to be perpetually on roster to maintain constant relations between these two Yamêns and the head department in the Board of War.

"As detached from these central bureaux, 16 directors, called T'i-tang, all superior military graduates, are appointed by the Board of War to reside in the provincial capitals and keep up from there direct communication with Peking ; the director at each place depends on the Provincial Judge.

"These 16 head bureaux are distributed among the provinces as follows :—Chihli, Kiangnan, Shantung, Shansi, Honan, Shenkan, Chehkiang, Fuhkien, Kiangsi, Hupeh, Hunan, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Szechwan, Yunnan ; one is special for the Yellow River and Grand Canal.

"All covers for dispatch through the I Chan to the provinces have to be inspected and stamped at the Ch'ê Chia Ssu ; they are then sent to the Chieh Pao Ch'u and through the Ma Kuan, whose horses and men are requisitioned, thence forwarded to the first stage from Peking, *i.e.*, Liang-hsiang-hsien if for a westward direction, or Tungchow if eastwards ; the Chou or Hsien there is responsible for the transmission to the next stage, and so on at each subsequent stage till the cover reaches its destination. Similarly, for provincial despatches to Peking, the T'i-tang attends to their despatch to the first stage from his end, and they proceed from stage to stage till they reach the Ch'ê Chia Ssu at Peking, whence they are sent to the Yamên concerned.

"Any dispatch so sent must be enclosed in an

official cover, *ma-jêng* indicating on a slip attached to it, *p'a itan*, the I Chan cities through which it has to pass; this slip is annotated at each place with the date of the passage. According to the urgency of the message, the couriers, *fu-i*, travel from 200 to 600 *li* per day, and at each stage horses and men must, in principle, be kept in readiness.

"In addition to the transmission of dispatches, the I Chan also provides means of transport for officials on transfer, but in this case, by regulation, the travellers must hold an authority or *huo-p'ai* to requisition horses and men at the official stages on the way.

"The sums spent for the maintenance of this large Service are not centralised in Peking, but are deducted at each district town from the local taxes to be reported to the provincial Treasury, and thence yearly to the Throne.

"This loose system of payment is said to lead to many abuses."

There are also Native postal agencies which have been existing for a very long period. They are private enterprises, and were long the only means by which the public could send letters locally and to the coast ports and other business centres. According to the Chinese Postal Report for 1904, "These posting agencies are essentially shop associations, for the most part engaged in other trade; the transmission of parcels, bank drafts, and sycee is the most lucrative part of their postal operations. They fix the limit of their responsibilities and adjust their rates as they please, the latter having frequently to be bargained for. One characteristic rule is that half the charge is paid by the sender and half by the addressee; this

practice often leads to extra demands on delivery when the second half of the charge, the *chin-teu* or *chin-li* (*pourboire*), is claimed."

No serious interference has been made with these native postal "hongs" since the establishment by Decree of 1896 of the Chinese Imperial Post. Sir Robert Hart suggested registering those operating at the Treaty Ports, but the policy adopted was one "to encourage their continuance and development," while at the same time presaging their ultimate absorption by the Imperial Post Office.

Chinese mercantile firms have for ages been doing postal work all over the Empire, not only at the few ports where the Imperial Post Office is now beginning to function, but at innumerable places at which it cannot be established for many a year, and have been making both a good livelihood and handling correspondence, parcels, etc., in a suitable and convenient manner for a very large public; they are thus necessary.

It was therefore decided to encourage their continuance and development, and in order to regularise matters and bring all into line, to begin by the registration of such firms as have business houses at the Treaty ports, to arrange for the carriage of their inter-port mails, to require all who thus registered to send such inter-port mail matter, etc., through the Imperial Post Office and to affiliate them as agents of the Imperial Post Office for conveyance of letters, etc., to and from places inland.

Special regulations have been drawn up in this sense for their guidance and observance, and while their constituents will continue to pay them as before for transmitting correspondence at Native rates fixed by themselves, such firms, on the other hand, are to

pay a transit fee to the Imperial Post Office, which has undertaken the conveyance of their inter-port mails according to special tariff.

Accordingly, these native establishments—of which more than 300 have already been registered—will function for some time to come almost independently alongside of the Imperial Post Office, but they will eventually be absorbed and gradually merged in the public Postal Service of the Empire without being inconvenienced or suppressed.

The comparatively recent establishment of the Chinese Imperial Post was the outcome of the growth of the Imperial Customs Post started in 1878, which in its turn was the outcome of an experiment dating back to 1861. The official report gives the following account of this experiment which Sir Robert Hart inaugurated two years after he entered the Imperial Service in 1859, and shows how it led first to the Customs Post and then to the Imperial Post :—

“ Early in the ‘sixties,’ during the first few winters after Foreign Representatives took up their residence at Peking, the Legation and Customs mails were exchanged between Shanghai and Peking under the auspices of the Tsungli Yamên, by means of the Government couriers employed for the transmission of official despatches.

“ It was then found convenient to arrange that the Customs should undertake the responsibility of making up and distributing these mails, a practice which, for the overland service during the winter months, involved the creation of Postal Departments at the Inspectorate and in the Custom Houses at Shanghai and Chingkiang, and similarly, for the transmission of mails by the coast steamers during

the open season, the opening of quasi-Postal Departments in the Tientsin and other coast port Custom Houses.

"At that early date it could be seen that out of this simple beginning might be elaborated a system answering other and larger requirements on the principle of a National Post Office.

"This idea gradually shaped into form and had already so much ingratiated itself in the official mind that in 1876, when the Chefoo Convention was being negotiated, the Tsungli Yamên authorised the Inspector-General to inform the British Minister, Sir Thomas Wade, that it was prepared to sanction the establishment of a National Postal System, and willing to make it a Treaty stipulation that postal establishments should be opened at once.

"Unfortunately, through, so to speak, a conspiracy of silence, the insertion of the postal clause was omitted in the official text of the Treaty, and thus the project was postponed *sine die*.

"Meanwhile, however, the experiment was persevered with and warmly encouraged by the Imperial Commissioner, Li *Chung-t'ang*, who promised to 'father' it officially as soon as it proved a success. Hence the more formal opening of Postal Departments at various Custom Houses, the 1878 experiment of trying a Native Post Office alongside the Customs Post, and the establishment of Customs couriers from Taku to Tientsin, from Tientsin to Peking, and the Customs winter mail service overland from Tientsin to Newchwang, from Tientsin to Chefoo, and from Tientsin to Chinkiang, as also the introduction of Customs postage stamps in 1878.

"The growing importance of the Service thus quietly built up and its convenience for regular



1



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11



12

communications with Peking and between Treaty ports were not only appreciated by the Foreign public, but were also recognised by the Foreign Administrations having postal agencies in China. In 1878 China was formally invited to join the Postal Union.

"In the same year, while on a visit to Paris, the Inspector-General was sounded by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to a possible way of withdrawing the French post office in Shanghai; and while, more than once, the British Postmaster General at Hong Kong expressed his readiness to close the Hong Kong post office agencies along the coast, arrangements were actually discussed for the absorption by the Customs Department of the Municipal Post Office at Shanghai.

"But no definite response to these overtures could be given, or final steps taken, before the Chinese Government had declared its intention to undertake national responsibilities; and the Customs Department continued to satisfy only certain wants and prepare the system for further development till 20 years after the Chefoo Convention the Decree of the 20th March, 1896, appeared.

"This Decree created an Imperial Post for all China, to be modelled on Western lines, the organisation and management of which were confided to Sir Robert Hart, who from that date has acted in the double capacity of Inspector General of Customs and Posts.

"This long hesitation on the part of the Chinese Government to formally recognise and foster an institution known to have worked with such profitable results in Foreign countries, both from public and revenue standpoints, may be to some people a matter of surprise, but it must not be forgotten that

from immemorial times the Chinese nation has possessed two Postal institutions, one, the I Chan (or Imperial Government Courier Service), deeply rooted in official routine; the other, the Native Posting Agencies, long used and respected by the people.

"Both give employment to legions of couriers and are still necessary to the requirements of an immense nation; they can neither be suppressed, transformed, nor replaced at a stroke.

"The Imperial decision, therefore, only gave final sanction to a new and vast undertaking, but abolished nothing. It is through competition and long and persevering efforts that the two older systems must be gradually superseded and the implantation of the National Post Office patiently pursued."

CHAPTER II.

ISSUE OF 1878.

It was in connection with this post conducted by the Maritime Customs that the first postage stamps of China were issued. They are distinctly Oriental in design and impression, and the issue comprised three denominations only, 1 candarin, 3, and 5 candarins (Figs. 1—3.)

The central feature of the design is a dragon, in a rectangular frame, and is to a certain extent an improved copy of the design of the first stamp of Shanghai issued in 1865. Mr. C. A. Howes, of Boston, whose studies of the designs of Oriental stamps have been among the most outstanding contributions to the literature of stamp collecting

within recent years, describes the dragon in detail and also the symbols immediately surrounding that fabulous creature within the rectangle which encloses it.

"A real orthodox dragon is a truly marvellous production as he is supposed to have the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, eyes of a rabbit, ears of a cow, neck of a snake, belly of a frog, scales of a carp, claws of a hawk, and palms of a tiger. It is four footed, and each foot has *five* claws if for use in pictures, embroideries or figures used by the imperial court or under its authority; for all other cases the representation must contain but *four* claws. Turning to our stamps we find the five-clawed dragon, showing that they were issued under imperial authority. On each side of the dragon's mouth are whiskers and there is, generally, a beard; its breath is sometimes changed into water and sometimes into fire; and its voice is like the jingling of copper pans.

"Pictures of dragons are almost always accompanied by certain accessories which will readily be seen (on the stamps). The curved or wavy lines beneath represent the sea; the 'curls' scattered around him represent the clouds, for this is the *lung* or dragon of the sky. The whiskers and beard are readily seen on the Shanghai stamp but not so readily on the Customs stamp. The latter, however, has the pearl or gem which the dragon is popularly supposed to carry on its forehead or in its beard, and to which are attributed wondrous virtues and powers of healing. Its name is the *yeh-kuang chu* or 'night shining pearl,' and it is variously described as a diamond, pearl or carbuncle, which is 'as brilliant as a fire and shines like a star.' It is the circular object beneath the dragon's head and within the curve of its body.

The horns branching out from it are the conventional Chinese symbol for the irradiation of its inherent light."

Apparently a separate drawing was made for each denomination, as there are a number of minute variations in the figure of the dragon and the emblems surrounding it.

The following diagram gives the translation of the Chinese inscriptions :

<i>ts'ing</i> = Pure		<i>ta</i> = Great
<i>I fen yin</i> = One candarin silver		<i>Yu cheng chu</i> = Post office (lit. Post-law shop)

The two characters in the top corners signifying "Great Pure" form the title of the present Manchu dynasty.

The value in the left vertical tablet is of course varied in each value.

The stamps were typographed at Shanghai on white

wove unwatermarked paper of varying thickness. The perforation uniformly gauges $12\frac{1}{2}$, though specimens of all three values are known imperforate.

There were three distinct settings of the first issue. In the first and second, the sheets were composed of five rows of five stamps. In the third of five rows of four. In the second setting the clichés were set further apart, so that each stamp is $29\frac{1}{2}$ mm. \times $26\frac{1}{2}$ mm., measuring between the innermost points of the perforation indentations. In the first and third settings the stamps measure $27\frac{1}{2}$ mm \times $24\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

Single stamps of the first and third setting can be distinguished by the following differences:—

1. The paper of the first and second settings is thinner than that of the third setting.

2. The impressions of the third setting are coarser, through wear of the stones. This is especially noticeable in the latest printings of the 3 candarins.

3. The shades differ. The green of the third setting is duller than that of the first. The same shade of red is to be found in both settings, but there is a very bright red peculiar to the last printings of the third setting. The 5 candarins of the third setting is much more yellow than the 5 candarins of the first and second.

4. The perforations get rougher in the third setting, the machine evidently getting blunted.

5. The first cancellations were circular dated ones, with English names and dates. These were succeeded in 1883 by oval seals with the name of the town in Chinese characters, except in the case of Chinkiang. The circular postmarks were not re-introduced till 1897, consequently circular post-marked copies belong to the first or second settings. The second setting took place in 1882, before July

the date of issue of the third setting was March 3rd, 1883, consequently specimens of the second setting are scarce.

There is a variety of the 1 candarin in which there is a break in the outer frame beneath the C of candarin. It occurs in a left-hand margin stamp of the first setting, in the third stamp of the second row of the second setting, and does not occur in the third setting. There is another minor variety which occurs in all settings. This seems to show that the same clichés were used in the different settings, but re-arranged; and that five of the most worn were left out in the third setting.

It is officially asserted that the blocks from which the stamps were printed have been destroyed, and the same authority gives the following as the quantities of each value which were issued:

1 candarin	-	206,486
3 "	-	558,768
5 "	-	239,610

SUMMARY.

1878 (August) Figs. 1—3. Typographed at Shanghai.
No watermark. Perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$.

1 candarin,	green.
3 "	red.
5 "	yellow.

CHAPTER III

ISSUE OF 1885.

IN 1885 the designs of the stamps were re-drawn, and improved. The new stamps (Figs. 4—6) were smaller in size ($19\frac{1}{2} \times 22\frac{1}{2}$ mm.) than the previous issue, and the colours were changed. The per-

foration gauges 12, though the earliest copies appear to have been perforated by the same machine as was latterly used for the previous issue, giving a rough perforation gauging 12½. With this issue watermarked paper was introduced, the design of the watermark consisting of the *yin-yang* symbol. "It is," says Mr. Howes, "a graphic illus-



The *yin-yang* Watermark.

tration of the two principles of nature, illustrated by the male and female in animate bodies, by the union of which all things were produced. . . . The Chinese idea of the two principles themselves does not ascribe any concrete form to them, they are simply unconscious, impersonal agents, the 'energies of the universal sexual system' to which the creation and preservation of the universe are attributed. The form, as given (in the watermark design), is supposed to represent the two agencies in motion, revolving around each other, and, by their mutual operation, creating and destroying, thus giving rise to the phenomena of nature. The white form is the *yang*, or male principle, the dark form (i.e. the shaded one in the watermarked design) the *yin*, or female principle."

These stamps were printed in Shanghai also, in sheets of twenty stamps each.

The new colours were a deep green for the 1 candarin, mauve for the 3 candarins, and bistre for the 5 candarins.

Postage Stamps of China

These stamps were issued in December 1885, and the following quantities are officially stated as the numbers issued.*

1 candarin	508,667
3 "	850,711
5 "	348,161

SUMMARY.

1885. (December). Figs. 4-6. Typographed at Shanghai. Watermark *yin-yang* symbol. Perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$, 12.

1 candarin,	deep green.
3 "	mauve.
5 "	bistre.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JUBILEE ISSUE OF 1894.

ON the 19th November 1894, a new series of stamps known as the Jubilee issue, was brought out to commemorate the sixtieth birthday of the Dowager Empress. This issue comprising nine stamps (Figs. 7—15), was printed in Japan on paper watermarked with the *yin-yang* symbol, and the designs were executed by Mr. R. A. de Villard, a gentleman in the service of the Chinese Imperial Customs.

The designs are explained by Mr. Villard in detail.

ONE CANDARIN (Fig. 7).—In the centre is the old form of the *Shou*, emblematic of longevity, round which is the *Wu fu* emblematic of five happinesses, and at the top is the peony, emblematic of illustriousness. Outside this on a circular band is "CHINA"

* In addition were issued in 1897, 38 000 of the 1 cent. surcharged on 1 candarin, 42,000 of 2 cent. surcharged on 3 candarin, 56,840 of 5 cent. surcharged on 5 candarin of this issue.

in the lower part, and Chinese characters signifying "Chinese Postal Service" in the upper part. The value is in discs in the angles.

TWO CANDARINS (Fig. 8).—In the centre is the dragon, above which are the leaves and fruit of the *passiflora*, a favourite emblem on auspicious occasions. "CHINA" below, and on the sides "Chinese Postal Service" in Chinese, with the values in squares in the angles.

THREE CANDARINS (Fig. 9).—In the centre the dragon, above which is the *Pan tar* or dwarf peach tree, the fruit being the emblem of longevity, the tree being said to bear fruit for 3,000 years. In the angles are the numerals within the octagonal *Pa kua*. Inscriptions and value as before.

FOUR CANDARINS (Fig. 10).—In the centre the dragon, above which is the peony.

FIVE CANDARINS (Fig. 11).—In the centre a carp, known as the "messenger fish," above which is the *Lin chih hwa*, a plant emblematic of longevity, and below a bunch of Chinese immortelle.

SIX CANDARINS (Fig. 12).—In the centre the dragon with immortelle at the top. The value in the angles is within the *Pa kua*.

NINE CANDARINS (Fig. 13).—An oblong rectangular stamp with the *Shou* and *Wu fu* in the centre, supported by dragons.

TWELVE CANDARINS (Fig. 14).—Similar shape, with the *Shou* in the centre, but in another character, supported by dragons. Above is the peony.

TWENTY FOUR CANDARINS (Fig. 15).—Also oblong. In the centre a junk approaching land. Above is a dwarf peach tree.

These stamps were lithographed from Mr. de Villard's designs in Japan and afterwards in Shanghai. The

Postage Stamps of China

first six values were printed in sheets of twenty stamps, and the remaining three (9, 12 and 24 candarins) in sheets of twenty five stamps.

The paper is ordinary white wove, and the perforation gauges 12. The paper is normally watermarked with the *yin-yang* as before, but all the stamps may be found on unwatermarked paper also.

Pairs of the 9 candarins green may be found tête-bêche, the stamp at the bottom of the sheet on the left being inverted. Both the 1 candarin and the 9 candarins may be found partly imperforate.

Of these stamps the net issue, that is after the surplus stocks had been returned from post offices and destroyed, was as follows:—

1 Candarin	100,077
2 "	78,404
3 "	188,494
4 "	44,689
5 "	32,779
6 "	54,247
9 "	58,523
12 "	33,509
24 "	34,035

SUMMARY.

1894 (November 19) Figs. 7-15. Lithographed at first in Japan and later in Shanghai. Watermark *yin-yang* symbol. Perforated 12.

1 Candarin,	geranium red.
2 "	olive green.
3 "	yellow.
4 "	rose.
5 "	deep chrome yellow.
6 "	carmine brown.
9 "	grey green.
12 "	orange.
24 "	carmine.



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



CHAPTER V.

THE CHINESE IMPERIAL POST.—PROVISIONAL ISSUE OF 1897.

THE numerous local posts which had been turning out quantities of stamps, probably more for collectors than for postal use, were suppressed (though not the native posts referred to in Chapter I.) by order of the Imperial Government on February 2nd, 1896. The one exception was the Shanghai Local Post, which had been in operation longer even than the Customs Post. But even this post was restricted from this date to work only within the boundaries of the city instead of to the other treaty ports.

An Imperial Edict at the same time recognised the Imperial Customs Post which henceforth was styled the Chinese Imperial Post, and the currency was changed from candarins (tael) to cents (dollar) and a new issue of twelve denominations was ordered from Japan. While they were being prepared it was found necessary to overprint the remaining stock of stamps of the two previous issues with the values expressed in the new currency. A quantity of 3 cents Revenue stamps was also requisitioned for the overprinting.

The surcharging was done both in Chinese and in English, and the denominations created were $\frac{1}{2}$ cent, 1 cent, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 30 cents, 1 dollar and 5 dollars.

The first of the stamps to be surcharged were the 1894 issue, and the overprinted stamps appeared on January 1st, 1897. The English numerals were small as in the accompanying illustrations, and the new

壹洋暫
分銀作

1
cent.

貳洋暫
分銀作

2
cents.

values ran from $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to 30 cents, as follows :

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent on 2 candarins

1 " 3 "

2 " 2 "

4 " 4 "

5 " 5 "

8 " 6 "

10 " 6 "

10 " 9 "

10 " 12 "

30 " 24 "

Double surcharges exist of the $\frac{1}{2}$ cent on 3 candarins, 2 cents on 2 candarins, 4 cents on 4 candarins, and the 10 cents on 9 candarins. The 1 cent on the 1 candarin is also found with the overprint inverted. Imperforate or partially imperforate specimens exist of all except the 1c, 4c, 10c (on 6 candarins), 10c (on 9 candarins) and 30c.

On the first sheets the lower part of the figures " $\frac{1}{2}$ " was missing on one or more of the stamps, making the surcharge appear "1" cent, but the omission was afterwards corrected.

The numerals having been found too small to be readily distinguished, larger ones were inserted in the

printing forms and the new type of surcharge appeared

壹洋壹

分銀作

1

cent.

very soon after the first type. In the case of the " $\frac{1}{2}$ cent" a variety may be found with the "t" of "cent" missing, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ c, 2c, 4c, and 10c (on 9 candarins) surcharges may be found inverted. The stock of 2 candarin stamps having run out, the original plate (according to Mr. Mencarini) was retouched and the figure 2 on each stamp in the plate instead of having a curved foot has a straight foot. 202,739 of these stamps from the "retouched" plate were issued surcharged "2 cents."

The stamps surcharged with the second type are :

$\frac{1}{2}$	cent	on	3	candarins	
1	"	"	1	"	
2	"	"	2	"	
2	"	"	2	"	(retouched plate.)
4	"	"	4	"	
5	"	"	5	"	
8	"	"	6	"	
10	"	"	9	"	
10	"	"	12	"	
30	"	"	24	"	

It appears as though there were two settings of this type, in the first of which the surcharge measures 17 to $17\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high, and in the second 16 to $16\frac{1}{2}$ mm. high. They can be distinguished more easily by the relative positions of the English numerals and the

Chinese inscription, the former being closer to the Chinese characters in the second printing.

The stamps of the 1885 issue were also over-printed and issued in February and in May with the small type numerals and the larger type respectively. The denominations are ;

1 cent on 1 candarin.

2 cents on 3 candarins.

5 cents on 5 candarins.

Of the 1885 stamps surcharged with the large type, Mr. Mencarini states: "This set is known as the *Pakhoi* set, but so far as can be gathered from official records not a single stamp was sent to that port. No cancelled specimens have been seen, and it is surmised that the balance in stock, after surcharging, was erroneously printed with this type."

But Messrs. Whitfield King inform me that they have some specimens bearing the *Pakhoi* postmark dated May 8th, 1897. They tell me that when the provisional stamps were issued in January, 1897, all the Post Offices in China were notified to return at once to Shanghai the whole of their stock of stamps for the purpose of being surcharged, with values in cents, but *Pakhoi*, being a very distant port, the stamps were not received at Shanghai until April, 1897. By this time the small type surcharges were not being used, consequently the stamps received the surcharge in the larger type and were sent back to *Pakhoi*. The total number issued is believed to have been 1,000 of each value.

Over 600,000 3 cents so-called Revenue stamps (Fig. 16) were also surcharged to meet the demand for postage stamps. They were used for the values 1 cent, 2 and 4 cents, 1 dollar and 5 dollars. The 1 cent has

the value expressed in words in English "one cent";

大清郵政
壹分

one cent.

there are two types of the 2 cents, one in which the English inscription is all in one line, and the other in

大清郵政
壹洋貳分
作銀
2 cents.

大清郵政
壹洋貳分
作銀
2 cents.

which it is in two lines and the figure 2 is larger.

Two types of the 4 cents occur with large and small numeral 4. The dollar overprint has two types of

大清郵政
肆洋
肆分
作銀
4 cents

the upper row of Chinese characters, the one having

大清郵政
壹圓
1 dollar

大清郵政
壹圓
1 dollar.

the characters small and the other having them considerably larger. The 2 cents (value in one line) and the 5 dollars exist with inverted surcharges. The same 2 cents also may be found with the surcharge printed twice, and with the period missing. Two other varieties occur on all sheets of the 2 cents (in one line), one with an inverted final "s" and the other with a comma instead of the full stop.

The stamp on which these surcharges were overprinted was an unissued essay, as China has never had any system of Revenue Stamps.

The quantities of all these surcharges are given (though not all in detail) in the Decennial Reports of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, 1892-1901.

These figures presumably include the stamps of the 1885 issue of which the numbers surcharged were :

1	cent	on	1	candarin,	38,000
2	"		3	"	42,000
5	"		5	"	56,840

Value.	Surcharged on.	Total number issued.
$\frac{1}{2}$ cent	3 candarin	440,728
1 cent	1 candarin	387,734
1 cent	Revenue, 3 cents ...	200,000
2 cents	2 candarin	790,075
2 cents	Revenue, 3 cents ...	349,600
4 cents	4 candarin	344,505
4 cents	Revenue, 3 cents ...	50,000
5 cents	5 candarin	321,575
8 cents	6 candarin	196,848
10 cents	6 candarin	20,000
10 cents	9 candarin	132,813
10 cents	12 candarin	62,926
30 cents	24 candarin	50,366
1 dollar	Revenue, 3 cents ...	20,485
5 dollars	Revenue, 3 cents ...	5,000

Chinese Imperial Post—Prov. Issue of 1897 29

Returned and destroyed.	Net Issue.
136,681	304,047
177,402	410,332
280,000	859,675
157,238	237,267
163,833	157,742
125,828	71,020
64,431	151,308
24,040	26,326
13,236	7,249
—	5,000

Postage Stamps of China

SUMMARY.

1897. Provisional stamps surcharged in black on issue of 1894. Small English numerals.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent. on		3 candarins.	
1	"	1	"
2	"	2	"
4	"	4	"
5	"	5	"
8	"	6	"
10	"	6	"
10	"	9	"
10	"	12	"
30	"	24	"

Surcharged in black on issue of 1894. Large English numerals.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent. on		3 candarins.		
1	"	1	"	
2	"	2	"	
2	"	2	"	(retouched plate)
4	"	4	"	
5	"	5	"	
8	"	6	"	
10	"	9	"	
10	"	12	"	
30	"	24	"	

1897. Surcharge in black on issue of 1885.

1 cent. on		1 candarin.	
2	"	3	"
5	"	5	"

1897 (Fig. 16). Revenue stamp. Surcharged in black on the red 3 cent.

"one cent."

2 cents. small "2" Surcharge in one line.

2 " large "2" Surcharge in two lines.

4 " small "4" Surcharge in one line.

4 " large "4" Surcharge in two lines.

1 dollar top row of Chinese characters small.

1 " top row of Chinese characters large.

5 dollars.

CHAPTER VI

ISSUE OF 1897.

THE new regular issue of stamps, printed in Japan, from designs by Mr. de Villard, was placed on sale on August 16, 1897, according to Mr. Mencarini, though the official "Note on the Postage Stamps of China," says the stamps were lithographed in Japan in 1898.

These stamps include twelve denominations, from $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to 5 dollars (figs. 17—24), and were printed in panes of twenty from stones prepared in Japan, where they were manufactured. The first six values from $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to 10 cents, show the dragon in a circle surrounded by a circular band on which are inscribed the words, in English and Chinese characters, "Imperial Chinese Post." The upper angles contain the Chinese inscription of value, and the lower ones contain English numerals. The value is also expressed in words (English) across the bottom of each design.

The 20, 30 and 50 cents stamps have a representation of the carp or messenger fish on a shield-shaped tablet. The carp, according to Mr. Howes, "is regarded as the king of fish by the Chinese, who have tamed and cultivated carp from the earliest times, and is fabled to turn into a dragon. He symbolises literary talent, because of his perseverance in surmounting obstacles when ascending rivers. Common Chinese expressions are 'The carp has become a dragon—or has leaped the dragon-gate,' when students are successful in getting degrees and promotions. Its term of 'messenger fish' refers to an

old legend that political intrigue was once carried on under the very nose of a suspicious prince by the conspirators sending carp to each other, in each fish being a letter. For this reason letters were often folded into the rough shape of a carp, and even now letters are sometimes called *shuang li*, or a 'brace of carp.' On the stamp, however, he is represented alive and in his native element."

The inscription "Imperial Chinese Post," in Chinese and English, appears on curved bands above and below the shield, a bunch of immortelle appears at the top, and in the upper angles are Chinese characters denoting the value. The English numerals appear at the sides on lozenge-shaped tablets. The English words of value are across the bottom of the stamp.

The design of the 1 dollar, 2 and 5 dollars depicts a wild goose in flight. Mr. Howes explains the tradition of the goose, or *hung* :—

"According to legend the Emperor of China once sent an ambassador to the sovereign of a country at the North. The ambassador was treacherously detained and reduced to the position of a cattle-driver. One day he captured a wild goose, and remembering the migrations of these birds north and south, the thought occurred to him to attach to it a letter bearing the Emperor's name and to set it free.

"Of course it happened that the Emperor was out hunting one day and fortunately brought down this very goose, on which he found the letter. Needless to add, the ambassador was soon rescued and the neighbouring sovereign duly punished for his treachery. From this legend comes the common expression for the mail —*hung pien*, 'the convenience of the wild goose.'"

The perforations of this series vary from 11—12, and there is a considerable range of shades of most of the colours. The colours and the numbers of stamps issued are as follows :—

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent.	brown purple	...	...	481,200
1	„ yellow	...	...	433,200
2	„ orange	...	...	1,248,000
4	„ brown	...	...	912,000
5	„ rose	...	...	360,000
10	„ green	...	...	360,000
20	„ brown-lake	...	...	168,000
30	„ carmine	...	...	168,000
50	„ yellow green	...	...	360,000
1 dollar,	carmine and rose...	...	...	51,600
2	„ orange and yellow	...	...	12,930
5	„ yellow, green and rose	...	...	7,200

The higher values, according to the "Official Note," were used chiefly for Remittance Certificates, and therefore did not enter into general circulation.

An error exists in which the 50 cents yellow-green stamp is in the colour of the 10 cents green.

SUMMARY.

1897. Figs. 17-24. Lithographed in Japan. White wove paper. Watermark *yin yang* symbol. Perforated 11-12.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent	brown purple.
1	„ yellow.
2	„ orange.
4	„ brown.
5	„ rose.
10	„ green.
20	„ brown lake.
30	„ carmine.
50	„ yellow green.
50	„ green (error).
1 dollar	carmine and rose.
2	„ orange and yellow.
5	„ yellow green and rose.

CHAPTER VII.

ISSUE OF 1898.

THE manufacture of the 1897-98 series in Japan was scarcely satisfactory in its results. Similar designs, though not identical, were therefore ordered from Messrs. Waterlow and Sons of London. The designs were transferred from steel dies on to copper plates from which the stamps were printed on white wove paper.

The designs of the twelve values correspond to those of the preceding issue, but the English inscription has been altered from "Imperial Chinese Post" to "Chinese Imperial Post," and there is a general improvement in the finish of the stamps (compare Figs. 25-27 and 17-24), chiefly effected by the introduction of geometrical backgrounds and the finer lines which can be obtained better by copper plate printing than by lithography.

The paper was at first watermarked with the "*yin yang*" symbol and is a white wove. Mr. Mencarini states that Messrs Waterlow and Sons were supplied with 110 reams of watermarked paper, enough to print about 13,000,000 stamps. On this paper the firm was to print, without regard to the stamps fitting the watermark and after the exhaustion of the paper the stamps were to be printed on unwatermarked paper.

So that we get all the series both watermarked and unwatermarked.

The nine low values, viz., $\frac{1}{2}$ cent to 50 cents were printed in panes of twenty stamps and the dollar values in panes of forty-eight stamps.

There are three distinct perforations, viz: 12-14 irregular, 15 regular and 16 regular. The last two may be found a trifle under 15 and 16 sometimes,



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27



28



but these are quite distinct from the 12-14 perforations. Part perforated specimens of nearly all the values exist.

There is a range of shades to each colour, and in the case of 5 cents issued during 1904 according to the "Official Note" they "were inclined to orange yellow and some other issues approached the colour of the 2 cents stamp."

A bisected provisional stamp was issued at Foochow in October, 1903, consisting of half of the 2 cents stamp cancelled "Postage 1 cent Paid." The 2 cents cut diagonally was also authorised at Chungking in August, 1904, but was cancelled in the ordinary way.

On July 10th, 1905, the colour of the 5 cents stamp was changed to mauve.

A new value, 16 cents was added to the current set in 1907, printed in olive green on unwatermarked paper.

SUMMARY.

1898. (Figs 25-27, etc.) Printed by Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, London, on white wove paper, watermarked "yin yang," and later on unwatermarked paper. Perf. 12-14, 15, 16.

- ½ cent, seal brown.
- 1 ,, orange yellow.
- 2 cents, cardinal red.
- 4 ,, red brown.
- 5 ,, salmon to orange red.
- 10 ,, deep green.
- 20 ,, light red brown.
- 30 ,, rose.
- 50 ,, light green.
- 1 dollar red and pale rose.
- 2 dollars yellow and red.
- 5 ,, green and pale rose.

1905. *Change of Colour. No watermark.*
5 cents mauve.

1907. *New Value. No watermark. Perf. 14.*
16 cents, olive green.

CHAPTER VIII.

POSTAGE DUE STAMPS.

IN 1904 Postage Due stamps were introduced. Mr. T. Piry, the Postal Secretary, in his Report for 1904 refers to the need for such stamps. "Most Postal Administrations," he says, "use Postage Due stamps for controlling receipts on delivery, but none wants them more than the Chinese Administration, where so much has to be left to native hands. The system now adopted as a measure of control prevents every irregularity on the delivery of letters and will contribute to maintain integrity in the lower ranks of employés."

The Postage Due stamps were at first created by overprinting the ordinary postage stamps of the values $\frac{1}{2}$ cent., 1 cent., 2, 4, 5, and 10 cents., with an English

POSTAGE DUE

資欠

and a Chinese inscription. These were superseded in November 1904 by a set of eight stamps all of one design, and all printed in blue, a colour which appears to have been tabooed in all the regular issues, on account of its being a mourning colour in the Chinese Empire.

The design (Fig. 28) consists of two curved bands with a straight tablet between, inscribed "Postage Due." Chinese characters appear in the upper curved band, and the English words Imperial Post appear in

the lower band. The name "CHINA" appears at the top in letters of colour on a white tablet, and the value is at the bottom in English words and figures thus: HALF $\frac{1}{2}$ CENT. In the central part enclosed by the two curved bands are Chinese characters and Chinese characters of value appear in the upper angles. The ground is filled in with a geometrical design.

SUMMARY.

1904. *Postage Due Stamps, Provisional Issue Black surcharge on types of 1898. No watermark.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent.	brown.
1	„ orange yellow.
2	„ cardinal red.
4	„ red brown.
5	„ orange red.
10	„ deep green.

1904 (November) Fig. 28. Regular issue. No watermark. Perf. 14.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cent.	blue.
1	„ „
2	„ „
4	„ „
5	„ „
10	„ „
20	„ „
30	„ „

* Mr. Menarini gives the numbers printed of these stamps which are not included in the Decennial Report. $\frac{1}{2}$ cent. 81,440, 1 cent. 281,560, 2 cents. 177,200, 4 cents. 155,360, 5 cents. 115,680, 10 cents. 139,680.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPRESS LETTER STAMP.

MR. MENCARINI mentions in his paper in the *Monthly Journal* an Express Delivery Stamp, issued on November 11, 1905. It consists of "a large oblong label about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, divided into four parts by vertical lines of perforation. The whole is covered by a groundwork formed of the inscription 'CHINESEIMPERIALPOSTOFFICE,' all in one word, in small capitals, many times repeated, printed in light green. The left hand portion seems to be a kind of counterfoil; it contains only a vertical inscription in Chinese, at the right hand side, in deep green, and a number in Chinese and European figures, in black (this number is repeated in black, on each of the other portions); the rest of the label is occupied by a large device, all in dark green, extending across the other three parts, and consisting of a very elaborate Dragon, enclosed in a fancy frame, inscribed 'CHINESE IMPERIAL POST' at top, and 'EXPRESS LETTER' below and at each end. There is also a Chinese inscription, outside the frame, at each end, and there are some Chinese characters mixed up with the Dragon."

The stamp is lithographed.

SUMMARY.

1905, November 11. Express Letter Stamp.
10 cents. dark green on light green.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHINESE IMPERIAL POST.

UP to the time of the sixth Congress of the Universal Postal Union, held in 1906, at Rome, the Chinese Empire had not joined the Postal Union; but it was represented at the Conference, and declared its intention of adhering to the Union before or at the next Congress.

But while China is not formally in the Postal Union, conventions have been signed between China and various other powers, so that through the contracting Administrations the country, as the Postal Secretary pointed out in his 1904 report, is "in exactly the same relations with all Union countries, as if she had already joined it. Under these conventions Chinese mail matter for abroad, franked in Chinese stamps, is handed over in open bags to the Foreign Post Office at the Foreign mail terminus port, and that Post Office, by date stamping each cover, confers on it the right of admission into any Union country in the world; on the other hand, the Foreign Post Office hands over in a similar way its incoming Foreign correspondence for transmission through Chinese lines. There is thus between the Chinese and Foreign Offices an exchange of services which are paid for, as is done by any two Union countries, on the basis of yearly statistics, taken during the first 28 days of May or November of alternate years, and which are settled at the established Union rates."

The Chinese Imperial Post in dealing with international correspondence conforms in every respect to the rules of a Union country.

"All international mail matter to and from Treaty ports and steam-served places is passed free at Chinese offices if fully prepaid at Union tariffs, and when a tax is applied for insufficiency of postage it is done in conformity with Union rules. To non-steam-served places, where communications have to be maintained by costly land couriers, the rule remains the same for light articles—letters and postcards,—but on printed mail matter and other heavy mail articles the Chinese Administration imposes a domestic charge distinct from Union rates, to cover courier expenses. As regards more particularly mail matter arriving from British places at the penny postage rate, or from America at the United States domestic rate, if received for distribution in Shanghai, it is distributed free, but if received for further transmission through the Imperial Post Office system, it is taxed in conformity with Union rules."

To conclude these notes on the Chinese Imperial Post, the following extract from the Postal Report for 1904 is given to show the state of the organisation in that year.

"Under its present organisation the Headquarters of the Imperial Post Office are at Peking, where all postal affairs are dealt with by the Postal Secretary, under the Inspector General of Customs and Posts.

"The eighteen provinces and Manchuria have been divided into postal districts, now 35 in number, each of which is under the immediate supervision of a Postmaster.

"The Head Office of each district is at the Treaty

port of that district, except in the case of Peking, where the Head Office of the large Peking district is situated. Certain large districts have been subdivided into sub-districts, of which there are now five, placed under a District Inspector who resides in the provincial capital in that sub-district.

“Each head, or sub-head office, has under it a certain number of subordinate offices; these are of three kinds:—

“*Branch Offices*: at which the Imperial Post Office maintains its own staff on its own premises.

“*Inland Agencies*: at which licensed Agents, who are usually substantial shopkeepers of the place and guaranteed, undertake all postal business, including the delivery of correspondence, in return for a fixed commission and certain other emoluments; and

“*Box Offices*: that is, small shops in which the Imperial Post Office places letter boxes, cleared at certain times during the day, and where the owner, under licence and guarantee, is allowed to sell stamps to the public in return for a small commission; ordinary postal business, including registration, can be effected at these shops, but the owners do not undertake delivery. Box Offices are placed in all large cities as adjuncts to the Head and Branch Offices situated there.

“In addition, in certain cities are to be found street pillar-boxes, which are cleared at regular intervals.

“All Branch Offices established at important places undertake the transmission of small sums of money by means of a Money Order system.

“The size of each postal district was originally

determined by consideration of the distance, the density of population, and the means of communication available in the district; but, the limits once defined, it has been left to Postmasters to extend to inland places within their districts on certain broad lines fixed by Headquarters, and this extension, begun in 1901, has been uninterruptedly carried on.

"The aim has been, starting from the Treaty ports as centres, to open and establish through the most important places direct postal routes between Head Offices and provincial capitals; to connect with these routes as many as possible of the prefectual and district cities; to bring every open place into postal communication, *via* Treaty ports, or Peking, with the Foreign mail terminus at Shanghai, Tientsin, or Canton, thence with Union countries and the outside world.

"The result of this first period of extension has been that at this date the Imperial Post Office is to be found and all postal business can be transacted in every provincial capital of the Empire, in most prefectual and district cities, and in the more important smaller centres and towns throughout China.

"The total number of establishments on the 31st December, 1904, was 1,319.* The Imperial Post Office issued a large Postal Working Map in 1903, and published a List of Establishments, which has since been brought up to date every six months by means of Supplementary Lists.
Communication between Imperial establishments is kept up by means of contract steamers on the coast

* Increased to 1626 by December 31, 1905.

and large rivers ; by railways where they exist ; by steam launches, junks, or hong boats on the inland waterways ; and on the numerous overland routes, which now measure over 101,000 *li* (33,000 miles)* in length by mounted or foot couriers.

“The coast and river steamers and launches run on certain lines and between fixed points and are availed of wherever possible.

“Railways are still in their infancy in China, but lines already open are used to their full extent.

“Where steam communication is available, operations are greatly facilitated and transport is cheaper, hence certain tariff distinctions for the fixing of rates between steam-served and non-steam-served places to be noticed in the Tariff Table. Hong-boats are chiefly used in the Southern part of Kiangsu and Northern Chehkiang—a district with a large network of canals and small creeks, many of them unnavigable by launches.

“This part of China is also very densely populated, and although the Shanghai, Hangchow, and Ningpo districts are not extensive, it will be seen from the maps that they contain an unusually large number of Post Offices, a remark likewise applicable to the Canton delta districts.

“Communication by couriers, of a kind to fill the requirements of a Postal Service built up on Western lines, has naturally been no easy matter in a vast country like China, presenting every variety of geographical features and where public roads are utterly neglected. Old established trade routes are usually followed, even at the cost of extra distance, as offering greater safety for the couriers, and as

*Increased to 121,000 *li* (40,000 miles) in 1905.

capable of convenient sub-divisions into stages, from the number of towns and villages found on them.

“ Stages are generally limited to 100 *li* (33 English miles), and the couriers run according to schedule on fixed days; but on the main routes speed is accelerated as much as possible, daily despatches being ensured on them for light mails and an every-two-days or semi-weekly service for heavy mails.

“ For light mails night-and-day foot couriers are used in some parts and mounted couriers in others, raising the speed to 200 *li* (or 65 miles) per day.

“ The couriers are the employés of the Imperial Post Office and wear uniforms or badges.”

SUMMARY OF POSTAL BUSINESS 1904—1905.

	1904	1905
Mail matter received during	30,670,985	36,098,583
“ “ despatched “	21,291,853	23,058,735
“ “ in transit “	14,692,758	16,804,110
“ “ dealt with “	66,655,596	75,961,428
Clubbed letters dealt with “		262,903
“ “ gross weight “	... ..	(kilos) 104,929
“ “ number of letters contained “	8,304,125	8,896,782
Parcels received ... ..	... ..	477,900
“ “ weight .. ..	... ..	(kilos) 1,576,011
“ despatched ... ..	... ..	314,225
“ “ weight ... ..	... ..	(kilos) 1,103,403
“ in transit ... ..	... ..	240,038
“ “ weight ... ..	... ..	(kilos) 583,192
“ dealt with	771,606	1,032,163
“ “ weight 5,952,887- <i>lb.</i> 14- <i>oz.</i>	(kilos) 3,262,606	

Appendix.



Index to Plates.

Appendix

INDEX TO PLATES.

Fig.	Plate I.				Page
1.	1878,	1 candarin.	Green	... ..	14
2.	"	3 candarins.	Red	... ..	14
3.	"	5 candarins.	Yellow	... ..	14
4.	1885,	1 candarin	Deep green	... ..	18
5.	"	3 candarins.	Mauve	... ..	18
6.	"	5 candarins.	Bistre	... ..	18
7.	1894,	1 candarin.	Geranium red	... ..	20
8.	"	2 candarins.	Olive green	... ..	21
9.	"	3 candarins.	Yellow	... ..	21
10.	"	4 candarins.	Rose	... ..	21
11.	"	5 candarins.	Deep chrome yellow	... ..	21
12.	"	6 candarins.	Carmine brown	... ..	21

Plate II.

13.	1894,	9 candarins.	Grey green	... ..	21
14.	"	12 candarins.	Orange	... ..	21
15.	"	24 candarins.	Carmine	... ..	21
16.	1897,	"one cent" on 3c,	Revenue Stamp	... ..	26
17.	"	$\frac{1}{2}$ cent.	Brown-purple	... ..	31
18.	"	1 cent.	Yellow	... ..	31
19.	"	2 cents.	Orange	... ..	31

Plate III.

20.	1897.	4 cents.	Brown	... ..	31
21.	"	5 cents.	Rose	... ..	31
22.	"	10 cents.	Green	... ..	31
23.	"	20 cents.	Brown lake	... ..	31
24.	"	1 dollar.	Carmine and rose	... ..	31
25.	1898,	$\frac{1}{2}$ cent.	Seal brown	... ..	34
26.	"	20 cents.	Light red brown	... ..	34
27.	"	1 dollar.	Red and pale rose	... ..	34
28.	1904,	Postage Due 4 cents	—	... ..	36



EGYPT

In the world of politics there is no country so much before the public eye as Egypt, and the land of the Pharaohs, whether it should become a British dominion or not, will always have a curious interest for the British people. There is a fascination about Sphinx-land which extends to its stamps, and Mr. FRED. J. MELVILLE'S next book on the stamps of a special country will deal with Egypt. It will be illustrated in the superb style of the other recent works by the same author, and its price will be 1s. net.

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