

Chefoo Local Post, China 1893-96

A traditional exhibit that attempts to show the actual demand and need for the stamps and postal services of the Chefoo Local Post by foreign residents in this north China port city. Postal history items are presented to support and illustrate this demand.

Exhibit Plan	(items of significance are indicated by 🟡🟢)
Chapter 1	Foreign mail from/received-at Chefoo before Chefoo Local Post and as a branch of Shanghai Local Post
Chapter 2	Formation of the Chefoo Local Post
Chapter 3	Pre-production material and die proofs
Chapter 4	Printing from the original die
Chapter 5	Subsequent printing(s) of the low value stamps
Chapter 6	High value stamps
Chapter 7	Markings of Chefoo Local Post and usages
Chapter 8	Postal stationery



Introduction

For the longest time, there had been a stigma attached to China's Local Post. This was the thinking that these stamps were merely the work of a few enterprising individuals that were able to capitalize on these Local Post services to print stamps to make money from unsuspecting collectors. This is aggravated by the formation of the SSSS, the Society for the Suppression of the Speculative Stamps, which was formed in 1895-05-06 and was supported by RPSL and APS. The exhibitor is attempting, with this exhibit, to show that not all Local Post were the same and Chefoo's Local Post had an actual demand and need for its services.

Chefoo was one of only five cities that the first stamps of China, the Large Dragons, were issued. Besides the capital of Beijing, its adjacent port city of Tientsin and the international post city of Shanghai, Chefoo ranked as the fourth most important city of China in a philatelic sense. In terms of importance in a Local Post context, it only ranked second to Shanghai Local Post, which had a head-start of nearly 30 years, before Chefoo Local Post's inception in June 1893. Stamps were subsequently issued in October 1893. Simply put, there were no other postal services available to the foreign residents that they could use or trust until 1897.

The Printings

The Original Printing of stamps was issued in October 1893 and was soon exhausted. Subsequent order(s) yielded a delivery sometime in January 1894, but no record had survived to prove or disprove this. By then, a new die, die 2 or stone 2 was used and the original 5 values were reproduced with the new stone. Variation in watermark have confused past researchers and some separate those printed with the new stone but still with reverse watermark, as in the Original Printing, were arbitrarily called the Second Printing. This classification was for a 1/2c printing and 5c, meanwhile others were classified into a Third Printing and these all had normal watermarks. Except the 1c value, printed with the new die but still with reverse watermark, was put into the Third Printing with no other explanation. The exhibitor disagrees with this classification and called these the Subsequent Printing(s). What was even more confusing was the 1/2c value which had been identified, besides the Original Printing, was printed from stone 2, stone 3 and stone 4. In this exhibit, it showed that there were yet another stone that was based on stone 3, but was not previously identified. The high value stamp were issued sometime in 1896, but by then, the word was out with the formation of the Chinese Imperial Post by 1897 and none of these high values saw any postal usages, as all Local Posts were ordered to be closed prior to 1897. The postal stationery, post card, letter card, wrapper were issued sometime in April 1894.

The Markings

Postal history items showing all recorded marking of this local post are presented, including the Chefoo Local bilingual marking, the oval marking, the Paid marking with and without frames, the To-Pay marking (postage due), registered and triple ring markings.

References

The Shanghai Postal System, The Stamps and Postal History, Charles W. Dougan, APS, 1981.

Catalog of The Shanghai Postal System, The second and revised edition of the catalog originally published by L.F. Livingston, Wei-Liang Chow, 1990.