

第1部門A 伝統・日本

Japan Hand Etched Stamps 1871-1876 黒田 卓(宮城県) ⑤

本作品は日本で初めて発行された郵便切手、手彫切手の伝統郵趣コレクションです。そのメインナンバーをほぼ網羅し基本的に発行年代順に配列・展示しています。出品者は製造面では、版別、紙質、色調(シェード)、目打、主要な変種などを分類基準として重視し、手彫切手の全体像をバランス良く示すことを心がけました。また、シート耳紙上に現れるトンボの時系列的変化にも注目しました。使用面では、郵便創業期の制度的な試行錯誤を踏まえて、単片上の消印、郵便印を並べるよりも、郵便制度史上興味深い使用例をカバー類で可能な限り表現するよう努めました。

Japan Etched Stamps 1871-1876

Purpose of the Exhibit

All of the Etched Stamps were produced by an unparalleled way of hand etching each position separately on copper plates of 40 stamps, which means even the stamps from the same plate are slightly different one another and abound in a wide variety of colors and design flaws (mistake, irregularity) and lightly engraved areas (mistake) — see later.

The exhibitor tries to classify and integrate forty-nine kinds of those stamps (excluding 20 Sen Dull Reddish Violet on Native Paper) into this collection largely on the basis of the chronological order proposed by the most authoritative specialized catalogue. With regard to the production aspect, much attention is paid to collecting unused stamps from the plates without and with some exceptions (out of 278 plates or sometimes blocks) & multiples, and taking up shade, paper material, perforation, specimen, pin-hole and error varieties with some study on crop marks on the corner selvages (Interlude:P41). From the viewpoint of the usage aspect, the exhibit attempts to emphasize the covers of postal historical significance such as registration, express delivery, cash-enclosed, overseas mails and forerunners of "Fourth Class Mail", consisting year-by-year changing Postal Regulations of the Government.

Plan and Noteworthy Items

I. 1871-72 Dragon Issue [P. 2-17] consists of 1) Mon Unit and 2) Sen Unit. One of the highlights is a 100 Mon/Plate 1 cover sent on the first day of enforcement of the Meiji 6 Postal Regulation proclaiming the nationwide uniform rate regardless of distance, shown in contrast with a 100 Mon first-year cover [P. 6]. Two covers, namely 200 Mon/Plate 1 (1871) and Plate 2 (1872) are displayed side by side with an analysis of distance & rate [P. 9]. Among Sen Unit stamps with a lot of paper and perforation varieties, a page related to 1 Sen Blue/Plates 1 & 3 exhibits three outstanding copies of Plate 1. Extremely Thick Wave Paper Unstuck, Plate 2 Lead Paper Unstuck and Plate 3 Brittle-Thick Wave Used [P. 14].

II. 1872-1873 Cherry Blossom Issue on Native Paper [P. 18-34] is divided into two groups depending on stamp production factors: 1) Matsuda Printing and 2) Government Printing (listed as MP & GP hereafter). Remarkable items of this section are as follows: Unused copies from Plates 2, 7 & 14 of 1 Sen Blue/GP [P. 20-21], the only known combination cover carried with the cooperation between official postal and old courier "Hikarui" services franked with a 2 Sen Vermillion MP [P. 24] and two assemblages of unused 4 Sen Carmine-Rose and 3 Sen Yellow copies from all the known plates [P. 31, 33].

III. 1874 Cherry Blossom Issue/Transitional Phase [P. 35-40] is divided into two groups: 1) Native Paper with Syllabics and 2) Foreign Paper without Syllabics. Notable items among the former group are the sole cover franked with a 6 Sen Violet Brown with Syllabic "Chi" (set by local Fancy Mark, and 20 Sen Reddish Violet with Syll. "Ka" & "Ha" unused copies [P. 37, 39]. As for the latter, a 6 Sen Carmine-Rose without Syll. franking cover is highly remarkable [P. 40].

IV. 1874 Cherry Blossom Issue on Foreign Paper [P. 41-57] is comprised of 8 denomination stamps. Here are noticeable items such as an assortment of 2 Sen Yellow unused copies with all the Syllabics [P. 46], a double-weight cover franked with 4 Sen Red with Syll. "I" [P. 49], the cover regarded as a forerunner of "Fourth Class Mail" franked with 10 Sen Green with Syll. "Ro" [P. 53], 20 Sen Violet with Syll. "Ho" to England [P. 55] and 30 Sen Grey with Syll. "I" overseas covers to USA (as for the latter as many as a dozen covers reported to exist) [P. 57].

V. 1875 Bird Issue [P. 58-60] contains pictorial 12, 15 & 45 Sen stamps, issued at the same time as the inauguration of the Postal Agreement between US and Japan. The only known mixed-franking cover with a British 1 Penny & two copies of 12 Sen Syll. "I" and the well-known error "Hand-written Ten (Kaki-ju)" on 15 Sen Syll. "Ro", together with an early usage cover franked with single 15 Sen Syll. "I" are the items that might attract notice [P. 58, 59].

VI. 1875 Cherry Blossom Issue on Foreign Paper/Revised Color [P. 61-75] includes two groups: 1) With Syll. and 2) Without Syll. Highlights in this section are as follows: a cover jointly franked with 1 Sen Brown with Syll. & without Syll. [P. 63], a cash-enclosed cover franked with a 6 Sen Orange copy "Re" [P. 70] and a registered cover to Germany franked with a 20 Sen Rose Syll. "Chi" [P. 74].

VII. 1875-1876 Cherry Blossom Issue on Foreign Paper/Revised Design [P. 76-80] consists of three stamps. An illustration of transitional stages of 1 Sen Brown with Ribbon 3 Positions of Plate 2 [P. 77], and a variety of perforation & an assortment of Fancy Markings of 2 Sen Yellow with Ribbon [P. 78-79] are eye-catching items in this section.

Literature (in Japanese)

Study Group of Hand Engraved Stamps, *The Specialized Catalogue Japanese Hand Engraved Stamps*, 7th ed., Tokyo, 2007.
Japan Philatelic Society, *Japanese Stamp Specialized Catalogue: Etched Stamps*, Tokyo, 2023 (partly in English).

Dragon Issue/ Mon Unit
1871 Dragon 200 Mon Orange-Red on Native Paper

Plate 1
Changing Stages of Post Wears on the Three Positions (pp. 22, 30, 36)

Specimen (p. 13, 4)

Plate 2

100 Mon [P. 17]

Cherry Blossom Issue
1872 10 Sen Grey-Green on Native Paper/Matsuda Printing

Short Tool Perf.

bright green, dull green, light blue green, deep greenish blue, ash green, MLL Perf.

Registered Cover from Otsu, Shikoku
Proc., Hakko-ido to Tokyo
Manuscript date Mar. 24 1874 (Meiji 7), cancelled with double-circle type Fancy Cancel of Otsu, applied NIBITokyo M3-A9 for arrival on reverse. Registration fee 4 Sen and Quadruple-weight rate 8 Sen, 12 Sen in total.

Bird Issue
1875 15 Sen Slate-Violet with Syllabics on Foreign Paper/Wagtail

Handwritten "十" (Ten) Error [Kaki-ju]

Cover from Yokohama to New York, dated Feb. 26 1875 (Meiji 8), franked with a single 15 Sen Slate-Violet Syll. "I", cancelled with blue-inked dumb marking (Y1875D), alongside Yokohama CDS in blue and transit mark of San Francisco (Mar. 25). Almost indisputably the Pacific Mail Ship Company's steamer "China" took it on 26 Feb. and carried this cover to San Francisco.
One of the first-year overseas mail that Yokohama P.O. had treated directly and independently from the Foreign Post Offices operating there, based on the U.S.-Japan Postal Exchange Agreement.