

# Rates During the Chinese Silver Yuan Currency Era

This is a postal history study of inflation-driven rates during the period of use of Silver Yuan stamps from late-April 1949 to the ultimate conquest of China by the Communists. The failure of the inflation plagued post-War Chinese National Currency (CNC) (Oct. 1945 to July 1948) and Gold Yuan currency (GY) (Aug. 1948 to Mar. 1949) led to the introduction of Silver Yuan currency (SY) in April 1949, mainly in the form of silver coins. Until January 31, 1949 CNC was convertible into GY at \$3,000,000 to \$1. Until August 31, 1949 GY was convertible into SY at \$4,000,000 to \$1. Theoretically Silver Yuan stood at \$12,000,000,000,000 to \$1 in relation to the former CNC. This continuing inflation was caused in part by the fear, and later the realization, that the Communists were winning the civil war.

The presentation is chronological within the following categories:

Surface Rates	— Domestic	— Two Rate Periods (DS1 and 2)
	— International	— Three Rate Periods (IS1 to 3)
Airmail Rates	— Domestic	— Four Rate Periods (DA1 to 4)
	— International	— Three Rate Periods (IA1 to 3)

**Special Categories** are identified in bold immediately preceding the text of the cover description. They include: First Day of Rate, Formula International Air Letter Sheet, Postage Paid Chop, Late Use of Gold Yuan stamps, Meter Stamp, Military Family Letter, Mobile Post Office (converted buses), Post Communist Takeover, Postage Due, Postal Kiosk (sidewalk stands), Postal Meters, Postcard, Printed Matter, Sample, Scarce (unusual) Destination, Scarce (typically small) Town of Origin, Temporary Label, etc. As a matter of policy, Grace Period covers were allowed for a few days to pass at the former rate.

**Auxiliary Services** are identified in bold within the text of the cover description. They include: AR (acknowledgement receipt), registered, ordinary express, registered-express, etc. These services can be identified by Chinese characters on the cover and slips (or remnants of slips) found on the back of the cover. Registered mail slips are in black ink on white paper. Registered express have green ink on white paper. AR slips are on red, pink, green, and sometimes white paper. Not all auxiliary services are shown for each rate period. "Overweight" refers to additional multiples of the weight increment for that rate (e.g. 20g.).

This is an extremely complicated area of Chinese philately because of the Communist advance, the change to SY, the collapse of communication, and the numerous stopgap measures.

The change to Silver Yuan was completely unexpected and no stamps or published rates were ready. Four stopgap measures were introduced: (a) postage paid chops, (b) meters, (c) temporary labels and (d) unit stamps. These were paid for with GY at the prevailing conversion rate until SY became available.

**Postage Paid chops** were applied to designate payment of the correct amount for whatever postal services were to be rendered.

**Meters** were of two types: printed on paper and affixed or made using postal meter machines in values of 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 5¢, 10¢, 11¢, 12¢, 15¢, 20¢, 25¢, 30¢ and 40¢.

**Temporary labels** could be either denominated or non-denominated. The non-denominated labels (a) merely signify that either the correct amount had been paid for the postal services or (b) were specific to the classes of service and/or auxiliary service fees involved.

**Unit stamps** [general issue and provincial issues] were non-denominated adhesives signifying payment for a class of service (i.e. domestic or international, ordinary surface or airmail) or an auxiliary service fee (i.e. registration, AR, express and registered express).

Several provinces created **Provincial Definitives** to use while awaiting distribution of the general issues. Currencies and exchange rates differed from place to place. **Local Control Overprints** were applied by towns in four provinces to discourage the sale or use of stolen stamps and prevent unscrupulous individuals buying stamps in a place with weak currency and selling them in a place with strong currency. The cost of such stamps was tied to the local currency. **Yunnan Province** had a weak currency. Postal rates were converted as follows: May 10 to Aug. 27 (3 to 1), Aug. 28 to Oct. 4 (2.25 to 1), Oct. 5 onward (1 to 1).

**Hunan Province** and **Kwangsi Province** did not follow all national rates during the first rate period.

Hunan:

Domestic registration 8¢ instead of 12¢,  
in province only

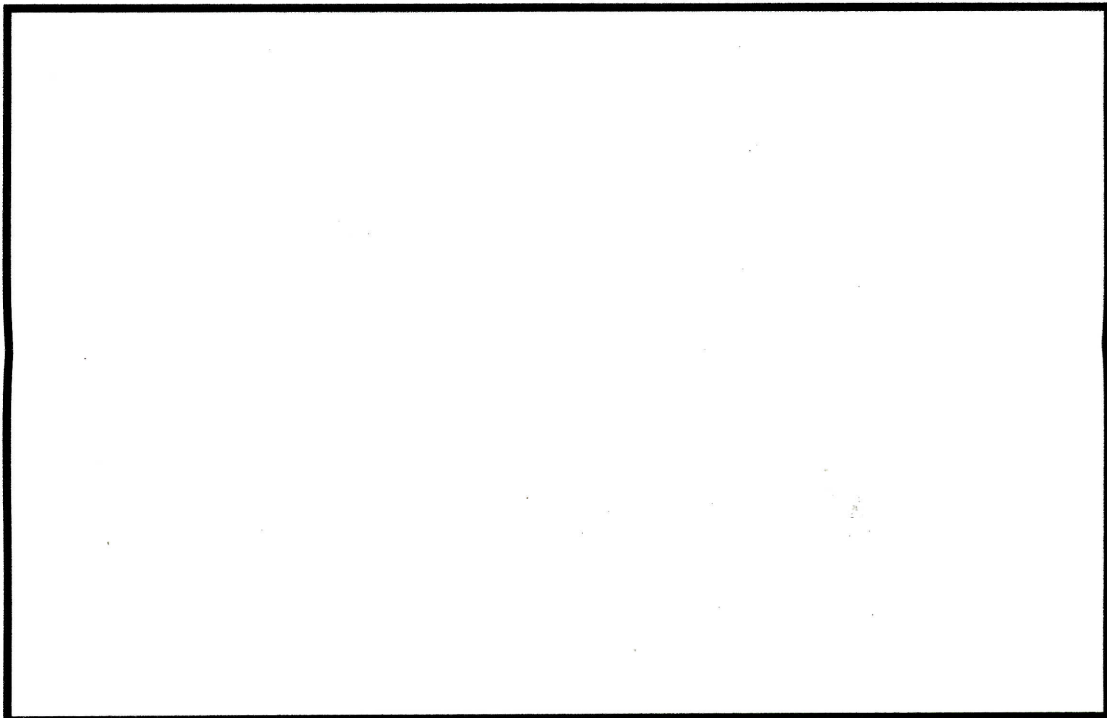
Domestic airmail 25¢ instead of 6¢

Kwangsi:

5¢ domestic surface instead of 4¢

Effective April 19, 1944, to facilitate post-War communication and help reunite dislocated families the Directorate General of Posts, China's postal agency (DGP), amended the rates to treat letters and postcards to **Hong Kong** and **Macao** as domestic, but all other items to those destinations continued to pay international rates. Also, auxiliary service fees (i.e. registration, AR, express and registered express) continued to be charged international rates.

Chinese cancels often number the year from the founding of the Republic of China (Nationalist) in 1912. Add eleven to convert to the Gregorian calendar. All dollar amounts are expressed in Silver Yuan (SY) unless described as otherwise. Canton is in Kwangtung Province. Chungking is in Szechwan Province.



**Post Card and Meter Stamp to Hong Kong— June 18, 1949 Canton**  
2¢ to **Hong Kong**. Only postcard with meter stamp reported.

**Very Significant Covers** have thicker blue borders. 