

China Express Letter Stamp(1912-1914)

About this Exhibit

This single-frame traditional exhibit studies China's Express Letter Stamps, 1912–1914. Following the establishment of the Republic of China, the Imperial dragon-design issues (Scott #E4–E7) remained in use, were overprinted as provisional issues (Scott #E8), and were replaced by the new goose design (Scott #E9). Scott catalogue numbers are used throughout.

Importance

These express stamps reflect a pivotal period in Chinese postal history. From 1912 to 1914, over 7.4 million express items were handled, demonstrating rapid growth during political transition. The concurrent use of Imperial issues (E4–E7), provisional overprints (E8), and the new E9 design illustrates both regime change and postal modernization. The adoption of the same format for E10 (1914) confirms the reform's success.

The Challenges & Items of Interest

Although millions of express stamps were used between 1912 and 1914, few survive today. Regulations required immediate use, and Parts A–C of E8 and E9 were retained and destroyed by post offices within two years. Surviving pieces were often damaged during delivery.

The E8 issues, locally managed, show numerous undocumented overprint and modification varieties. While Chang identified only a few types, this exhibit includes those plus several newly recorded examples.

Philatelic References

1. China Clipper, Dr. Lloyds Ruland, 1941
2. Researches on Express Letter Stamps of Qing Dynasty and Republic of China, Zengshu Chang, 1991
3. Republic of China Express Letter Stamps & Mail Slips: 1912-1929, H. James Maxwell, China Stamp Society website
4. Studies on the Express Delivery Service from Late Tsing Dynasty to Early Republic of China (1905-1916), the exhibitor, Collectors' Philatelic Annual Report (2022), Volume 24

Timeline

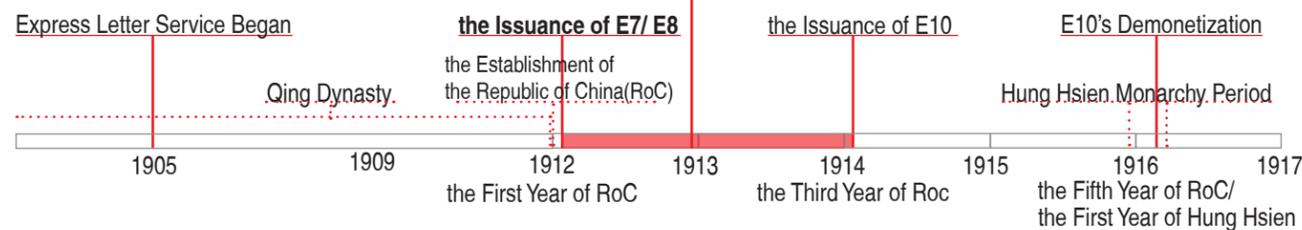


Exhibit Plan

- Part 1) Title Page, Imperial Express Stamp in Transition
- Part 2) E8 Operational Handling of Each Express Stamp Part
- Part 3) E9 Design & Early Usage
- Part 4) E9 Printing Errors & Varieties
- Part 5) Thousand Character Classic (TCC) Management System
- Part 6) E9 Operational Handling of Each Express Stamp Part
- Part 7) E9 Standard Usage Examples
- Part 8) E9 Uncommon Usage & Auxiliary Markings

Philatelic Knowledge and Research

The exhibitor's research fills gaps in existing literature, including studies on the development of the express service and the Thousand Character Classic (TCC) Management System, revealing new city assignments and operational insights.

Presentation

Dates are shown in the standard month/day/year format for consistency, while original styles on cancellations or covers — such as “the first year of the Republic of China(RoC)(1912)” — are preserved. City names appear as written on the postal items, e.g., Peking (Beijing), Tientsin (Tianjin), and Nankin (Nanjing).



漢



E8 Type B1

Locally Overprinted with “Han” on E6
Nanking (Mar. 15, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Tientsin/ Tientsin City (Mar. 20, first year of RoC)

Per Chang's study, the “Han” overprint was reported only from Chengdu, Szechwan Province. However, the illustrated example (serial No. 0073, with Nanking CDS) demonstrates that this overprint type was also employed beyond Chengdu.



During 1912-1914, express letter stamps became complex, with three types in concurrent use:

- **Type A** – Original imperial dragon-design stamps (E4–E7)
- **Type B** – Locally overprinted or modified Imperial issues to mark the Republic (E8)
Because the General Postmaster gave only broad guidance, local postmasters improvised: some simply crossed out “Imperial” in red ink, while some overprinted city names(B1), “Republic of China”(B2), or “China”(B3).
- **Type C** – Newly designed goose-design issue (E9), released late 1912 or early 1913 (see page 3-8)



中華民國

E8 Type B2

Locally Overprinted with “RoC” on E5
Chowtsun (Jun. 23, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Tsinan (Jun. 24, the first year of RoC)



E4 Type A

Chüanchow(Mar. 14, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Amoy(Mar. 15, the first year of RoC)



E8 Type B1

Locally Overprinted with “Chüanchow” on E4
Chüanchow (Oct. 4, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Amoy (Oct. 6, the first year of RoC)

泉州



E8 Type B3

Locally Overprinted with “China” on E5
Changchow (Oct. 1, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Amoy (Oct. 2, the first year of RoC)

中華



E8 Type B3

Locally Overprinted with “China” on E7
Changchow (Oct. 12, the first year of RoC)(1912)
Amoy (Oct. 3, the first year of RoC)

中華



Type C Scott E9

Shanghai(Dec. 28, 1912)