


欧亚邮件取道西伯利亚

西伯利亚邮运服务对中国/欧洲邮件之裨益, 1900-1911

No. 14.



MAILS
FOR THE
FAR EAST
(Via SIBERIA).

FOR LETTERS AND POST-CARDS ONLY.

THE Siberian route is now available for the transmission of letters and post-cards from this Country for the Far East; but not for any other class of correspondence or for parcels.

Letters and post-cards intended for transmission by this route should be specially superscribed "via Siberia" or "via Russia"; and the postage must be fully prepaid. Any letters and post-cards in regard to which these conditions are not observed will be sent by the ordinary routes followed in other cases.

Letters addressed to H.M. Ships on the China Station, to the Colony of Hongkong, or to Chefoo, Wei-hai-Wei, Shanghai, Amoy, Canton, Foochow, Hankow, Hsinchow, Ningpo and Swatow, at all of which places there are British Post Offices, can pass at the rate of 1d. per ½ oz. To other places in China (including Manchuria), and also in Japan, Corea and the Philippine Islands the rate for letters is 2½d. per ½ oz.

The rate for post-cards is in all cases 1d. each.

Mails containing correspondence complying with the above mentioned conditions will henceforth be despatched from London to Moscow every evening, Sunday excepted. From Moscow there is a daily service to Dalny or Vladivostok, whence the Mails are sent on by Russian steamers as opportunities offer.

The time occupied in transit varies according to circumstances from 22 to 30 days.

By Command of the Postmaster General.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
1st September 1901.

Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by T. F. Unwin, at 2, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

No. 2.



MAILS
FOR THE
FAR EAST.

SUSPENSION OF THE SIBERIAN SERVICE.

THE Russian Post Office announces that in consequence of political events the Mail service to the Far East via Russia and Siberia is suspended.

Until further notice, therefore, any correspondence which may be posted in this Country marked for transmission via Siberia will be forwarded by one of the other routes specified in the Post Office Guide.

By Command of the Postmaster General.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
16th February, 1901.

Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by T. F. Unwin, at 2, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

CHINA—EUROPE MAIL VIA SIBERIA

CHINA-EUROPE MAIL VIA SIBERIA, 1900--1911

CHINA—EUROPE MAIL “VIA SIBERIA”, 1900--1911

Chapter 1. Construction and Completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, 1891-1903

1.1 Brief Background History Concerning The Trans-Siberian Railway

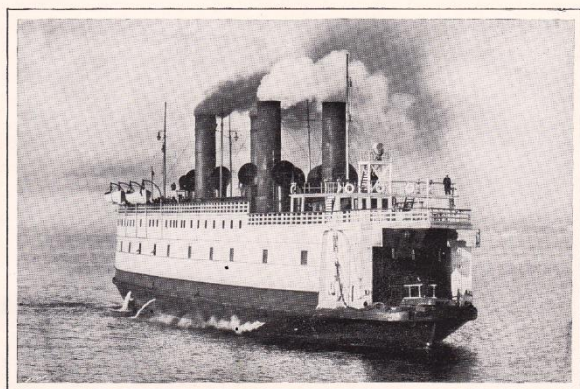
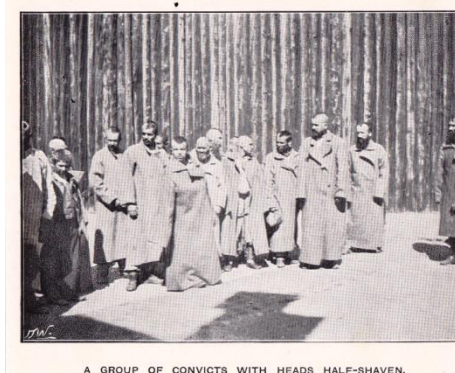
On the 19th May, 1891 the Grand Duke Tsarevich had officially laid a stone at Vladivostok, as a prelude to the “First Great Enterprise of the 20th Century” to herald the “Longest Railway in the World” extending 4,300 miles !

The Tsar made known of his ambition to build a railway connecting Moscow with Peking when in Exposition Universelle de 1900, a propaganda postcard captioned “Panorama Transsiberien” had been designed with fine print description at bottom “De Moscou A Peking (Campement Kirghis Pres de Tomsk)” because at that time the Trans-Siberian Railway was almost completed.



The completion of the Russian Trans-Siberian Railway, in 1903, linking Europe with the Orient, was hailed as a marvelous and splendid achievement, despite the fact that much of the work on the track, bridges and other construction was slipshod and often without proper supervision. The use of convict labour and political prisoners on this work resulted in carelessness, indifference and neglected precautions, making sections of the Railroad dangerous and well below the accepted standards which other nations demanded.

However, notwithstanding this, it was still a great engineering feat in Railway construction. The prospect of rapid transport—London to Shanghai in 16-18 days—Fare 50 pounds (so an advertisement for the Railway stated in 1903) was astounding. Prior to this event, the sea trip via Suez Canal could take six to ten weeks.



THE GREAT ENGLISH-BUILT ICE-BREAKER, "BAIKAL"

The Russians encountered two obstructions in pushing forward the Trans-Siberian Railway. The first of these was found at Lake Baikal. The railroad reached Irkutsk in 1898...but it had been found impossible to drive the track around Lake Baikal and link up at Chita due to the mountainous ranges, which went right into the lake.

Two Railway Ferry Ice-breaker ships were ordered, “Baikal” and “Angara” then taken to pieces and carried by rail/river and sleighs and reassembled on Lake Baikal. The link-up to

Chita across Lake Baikal commenced in 1902 and remained in operation until 1904 when the final rail link was completed.

Another obstruction arose from geographical limitation : the railway had to follow the contour of the Amur River southwards to Vladivostok in the shape of an inverted “U”, whereas if the rail route could cross Chinese Manchuria, several hundred miles of total mileage, plus time factor could be saved.



1.2 Extension into China as the Chinese Eastern Railway (& South Manchurian Railway)

The German landing in the Shantung peninsular allowed Russia to secure a leasehold of the Liao-tung territory together with the right to connect Port Arthur with Harbin by an extension of the Chinese Eastern Railway..... The line was started in 1898 and was completed from Harbin to Port Arthur in 1901.

When the concession was granted for the building of the railway the Chinese inserted clauses forbidding the construction of the line or stations at or within Chinese towns. So with the concession attached to the Railway Charter, whole new European type towns with ample space, were constructed by the Russians, away from Chinese towns, together with spacious and uncluttered Railway stations and sidings. Many of them were later to be completed by the Japanese after the Russo-Japanese War.

In August 1896, the Russian owned Russo-Chinese Bank secured a contract from the Chinese Government to build the “Chinese Eastern Railway” crossing Manchuria from west to east, linking at both ends with the adjacent sections of the Russian “Trans-Siberian Railway”. Work began in 1897, and the line (and stations) was opened to traffic in 1901. Russia demanded the right to protect the Railway with her own troops and this meant nothing but “Occupation !”

The “Boxer Movement” attracted the attention of major foreign powers and China herself, presenting Russia with a golden opportunity to enter Manchuria by force and complete the Chinese Eastern Railway whilst China and the foreign powers were busy sorting out their differences and grievances stirred up by Boxer Movement. With the linking up of East and West, the thoughts of rapid mail communications appealed both to business and trading companies and private individuals alike.

Alas, for all the publicity given to the new Railroad.....there was also another motive behind the intensive activity to get it into operation. The primary object of completing this Railroad was the Tsar’s concern for the speedy supply, reinforcement of his Eastern Military and Naval Forces, and in conjunction with his policy of territorial expansion in China and Manchuria.

1.3 Construction Progress of the Trans-Siberian Railroad

1892-1896 The West Siberian sector from Chelyabinsk to the Ob River was completed by Engineer Constantine Mikhailovski.

1893-1899 Mid-Siberian sector from Ob to Irkutsk and a branch from Taiga to Tomsk was completed by Engineer Nicholas Mezheniniv.

1894-1896 The Chelyabinsk-Yekaterinburg section was completed by Engineer Mikhailovski.

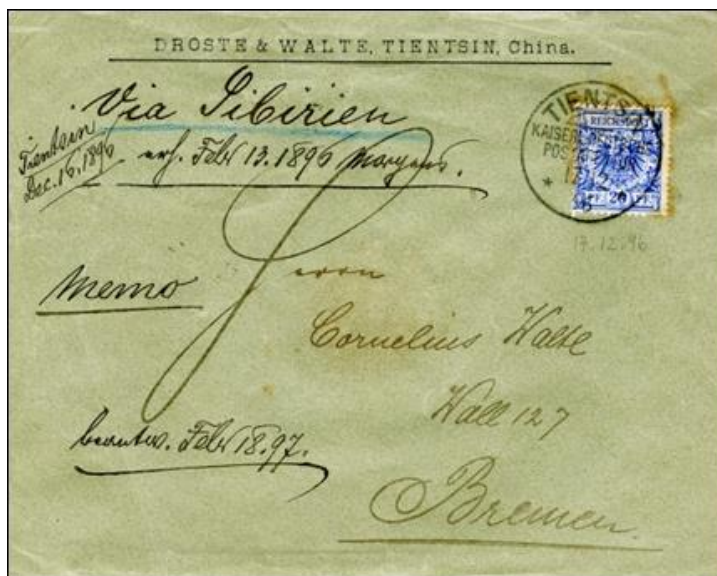
1895-1900 The Transbaikalian sector from Mysovsk on Lake Baikal to Sretensk on the Shilka River

was completed by Engineer Alexander Pushenchnikov.
 1897-1901 Transbaikalia line was completed by Engineer Pushechnikov and connecting line from Ussuri area to the Chinese Eastern Railway was completed by Engineer Alexander Yugovich.
 1897-1904 Chinese Eastern Railway from Manchouli to Pogradichnaya and from Harbin to Dalni and Port Arthur was completed by Engineer Yugovich.
 1899-1904 Circumbaikal loop from Port Baikal to Mysovsk was completed by Engineer-contractor Alexander Pertsov and others.
 1908-1916 Construction of the Amur section (Kuenga to Kharbarovsk) by Engineer Alexander Liverovski and other.

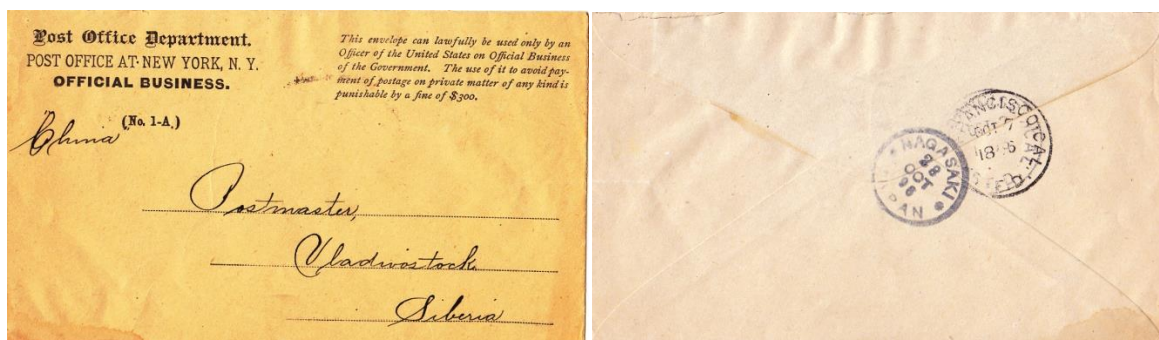
Chapter 2. Experimental “Via Siberia” Mail Berlin-Peking by German Post Office

The German Post Office organized an experimental trip in December 1896 to January 1897, carrying mail from Berlin to Peking on the completed sections of the Trans-Siberian Railway, as far as Lake Baikal, thence by land route to Kiachta and Urga to connect the Russian Postal Wagon service from Urga to Kalgan and Peking. This exercise aimed to ascertain the efficiency of this new mail route over the extant sea route and the whole journey took “weeks” longer. Three reasons might have caused delay : (a) mail items had been forwarded to a Russian company which affixed Russian stamps on each item before the Russian Post Office put them on board the Trans-Siberian Railroad, (2) at the inception of trans-Siberian Railway service, the schedule had not yet been fixed and (c) the German post bag was pretty big, heavy and could not be carried on camel back at Kiachta and had to be transported to Urga by car. After this trip, the idea of a new route to China via Mongolia had been dropped, but what happened to the mail items carried on the experimental trip ? Did they have transit daters to evidence their passage on Trans-Siberian Railway ? Were German and Russian stamps affixed on all items ?

Tientsin German Post Office handled the above item to Bremen Germany dated 17/12/96 and there was manuscript endorsement “Via Sibirien” at upper left corner, below which the sender deliberately wrote “Tientsin Dec. 16, 1896” against the latter the recipient wrote a remark in German to confirm date of receipt as Febr.13 1896(7). Perhaps another experimental trip from Tientsin to Bremen took place even earlier in February 1896 ? Anyway, 61 days transit time disinterested the German Post Office and when the eastbound experimental journey also proved unsatisfactory, the mail route between Germany and China via Mongolia was no longer pursued with keen interest.



At around the same time in 1896, the United States New York Post Office was also anxious to gather information on the progress and efficiency of the via Siberia mail service, when it sent this stampless “Official Business” cover to “Vladivostok China”. The dispatch dater was absent, but it reached San Francisco on October 7 1896 and was carried by steamer to Nagasaki, arriving there on October 28 but there was no Vladivostok arrival dater, perhaps it was sent to Tientsin since “China” was written at upper left corner.



Around 1896 the construction of the Chelyabinsk-Yekaterinburg section had been completed and the extension from Irkutsk-Baikal just commenced, perhaps some publicity concerning the speedy construction progress has aroused much interest from European nations which resulted in the experimental trip by the German Post Office and from United States of America as well as evidenced by this Official Business cover which probably contained request for information.

Chapter 3. Acceptance of “Via Siberia” Mail by Russian Post Offices Prior To Official Inauguration

Just like the Great Wall of China, the trans-Siberian Railway was not a single mammoth project but it extended then existing railway systems within Russian Empire, with extension in east-west directions to connect major cities en route until it stretched from Warsaw and Moscow in the west to Vladivostok in the east, with a section from Manchouli to Pogradichynia built within the Chinese Northeast provinces.

3.1. Mongolian Mail to China or Europe Prior to Inauguration of “Via Siberia” Mail Service.

The earliest postmark recorded from the Mongolian towns of Urga and Kyachta is the dotted oval cancellation with the number 4, used from Kyachta shortly after the issue of Russian postage stamps in 1858. Twenty five years later in 1883, a stampless official cover was sent from Chita to Troitsko-savsk and transited Kyachta of Chinese Mongolia, receiving single circle type Kyachta datestamp 27 FEB 1883. The cover originated from an inspector of national schools and was addressed to the teacher of a childrens' school in Troitsko-savsk and it is interesting to note that Russian post office had been established in Kyachta in China rather than the small border town of Troitsko-savsk within Russian territory. Note that it only took 5 days for the journey from Chita to Kyachta, clearly indicating that sections of railway could have existed between major cities en route at that time, and later form part of the trans-Siberian Railway proper. Incidentally, this is the only known stampless “official” business entire with the handstamp of the issuing department printed on paper and adhered to entire.



Another March 1901 registered cover below originated from Urga, franked with 3 Russian stamps totaling 30 kopeks, canceled by indistinct Russian Post Office Urga dater with Troitsko-savsk transit dater of 8 III 1901 (Julian calendar, or Gregorian calendar March 21, 1901) New York transit 4-17 1901 and REGISTERED APR 23 1901 Nevada City, - Cal. daters all on reverse. The very fact that this item had been delivered via Troitsko-savsk evidenced that the Russian Post Office previously established at Kyachta had by that time relocated to Troitsko-savsk which necessitated posting across the border at Russian territory and it is envisaged that the mail subsequently boarded the Trans-Siberian Railroad proper at Verkhne-Udinsk station (now named Ulan-Ude) at the south eastern end of Lake Baikal.

The 30 kopek Russian postage paid can be broken down into international letter rate 10 kopek, international registration rate 10 kopek, additional weight or alternatively acknowledgement of receipt fee 10 kopek. Another point of interest is to note the impromptu made registration label from the Russian Post Office Urga, at the very early stages of acceptance mails from Mongolia back to China.

3.2. Sinkiang Mail to and from China Prior to Inauguration of "Via Siberia" Mail Service.

The Russian Post Offices in Ilie (Kuldja), Kashgar and Tacheng of Sinkiang Province also began to accept mail "Via Siberia" long before the official inauguration of "via Siberia" mail service, but surprising enough, this service had been utilized by Chinese merchants in Sinkiang to deliver mail items from cities in Sinkiang to Kalgan or Peking and vice versa, the following 1898 red band cover from Tientsin to Ilie is a typical example.

The postage paid was 21 kopeks, and since there is no registration marking, it can be assumed a triple weight item. Apart from the transit Troitsko-savsk c.d.s. there is no further transit or arrival c.d.s.' but still the time taken by this item to reach its destination can



still be calculated because the recipient wrote down by manuscript on cover back “received “Wu” year 3rd month 28th day 3-5p.m.” and this indicated May 18, 1898 and by converting the date of dispatch into Gregorian calendar, i.e. January 18, 1898, the time taken was exactly four months.

Another 1901 IV 17 (Julian calendar) registered red band cover paid 20 kopek Russian postage, 10 kopek each for international letter rate and registration fee. Since the address was written in Chinese, staff of Russian Post Office Kuldja wrote Russian language version of address with “via Troitsko-savsk” instruction on cover back below which is Russian Post Office Peking arrival dater 1901 V 31 (also Julian calendar). The sender was a firm dealing with goods and merchandise from Peking and this cover contained an order list. The 48 day transit time was not surprising considering the fact that Manchouli exchange station had not been opened and the more difficult Mongolian trip via Kyachta, Urga and Kalgan had to be taken. This cover was numbered 74 by Chinese brush manuscript at top left cover front.



A similar cover from the same correspondence, numbered 81 revealed that the cover actually transitted the Russian town of Semipalatinsk and this valuable clue pin pointed to its possible delivery via Novonikolevsk before taking an eastward journey and re-enter China at Kyachta, then carried overland via Urga, Kalgan to Peking because it could not have entered China via Manchouli because the Chinese Eastern Railway had not been completed at that time.

In the mid-1920's, the “philatelic King” of China, Dr. M. D. Chow took an immense interest in the “via Siberia” mail service and together with his friend Mr. S. C. Zhao they recorded around 20+ covers originating from Sinkiang and carried via Siberia to China and these two items originally belonged to the M. D. Chow collection but with the exception of 4 items in Dr. Raymond Casey’s collection, the location of the rest are unknown.



3.3. Mails carried "Via Siberia" From Other Parts of China

In the latter half of 1902, Russian Postal Agencies in Newchwang, Tientsin, Shanghai, Peking and Yinkow began to accept mail items with Russian postage, to be carried along Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchouli, there connecting Trans-Siberian Railway to Russian or European destinations. However, great efforts to improve the efficiency were required to establish the confidence of "Via Siberia" service because a longer transit time than the "Via Suez" route by sea would not be considered, especially when the sender had to pay extra postage in Russian currency. The burden of additional postage was circumvented by an ingenious arrangement in late 1903 when the Chinese Post Office relied on the French Post Office to deliver their Europe bound mail in accordance with a Postal Agreement entered between these two respective post offices effective January 1, 1902 and the French Post Office pass the same to the Russian Post Office for delivery "Via Siberia" relying on her membership status of the Universal Postal Union.

The 1901.I.9 cover (Julian calendar) on the right originated from Peking, was franked 5 kopek canceled Russian Post Office Peking dater with manuscript endorsement "Via Newchwang and Trans-Siberia", the Moscow transit dater 1902 II.8 evidenced its trip on the Trans-Siberian Railway and it arrived Vienna 24.2.02. At this time, the Manchouli exchange station had already begun to function (since November 1901), but the 32 day transit time make it impossible to ascertain whether it entered China via Kiachta or Manchouli.



A month later in February 1902, the German Post Office handled a postcard from Hankau, the date of dispatch being 10/2 02 and it arrived Bruxelles Belgium on 1 MARS 02, an unbelievably short 19 days in transit. Did Bruxelles Post Office staff forget to change the month slug to April.? The 19 day transit time was actually achievable in 1909 as illustrated by later examples.



Another example Peking--England recorded a 10 day transit time from Chefoo (1902 XI 25) to Moscow (1902 XII 5) and this was what the

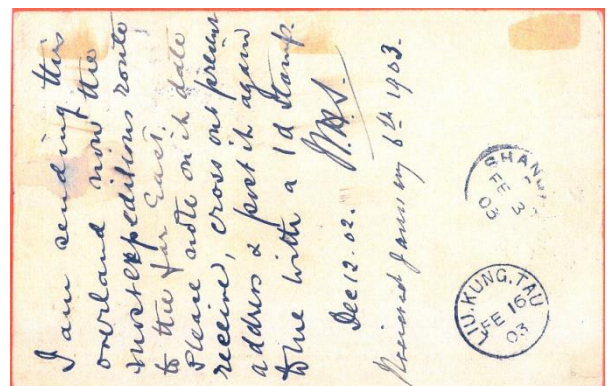


public was waiting for. With the opening of the Manchouli route efficiency of the via Siberia mail service was enhanced, attracting more and more people entrusting their mail items to this service. But

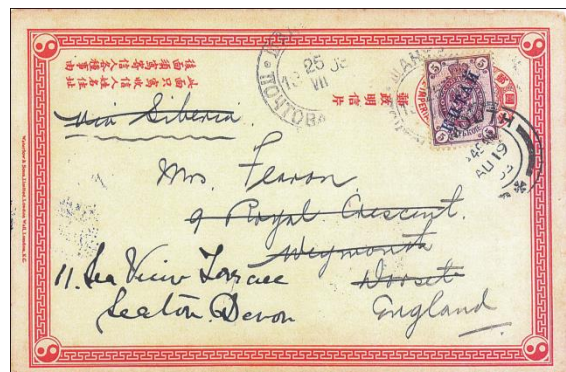
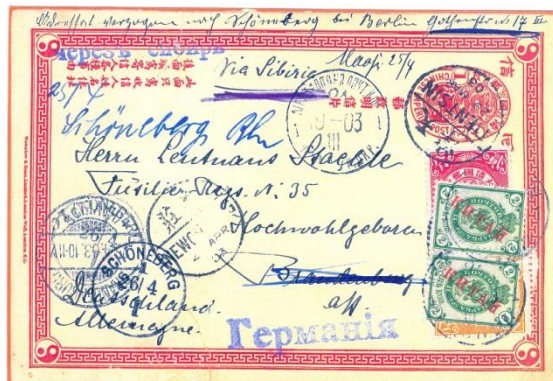
strange enough, foreign residents in China could not ascertain any item from Europe to China making use of this service and enquiry was made as illustrated by the following example.

The British residents from Liu Kung Tau of British Leasehold territory of Weihaiwei were among the first to utilize “Via Siberia” mail service apart from the major cities. The 19 NOV 02 cover arrived Maidstone on DE 19 09, requiring a transit time of 30 days.

Another sender from Liu Kung Tau sent a post card endorsed “Via Port Arthur and Moscow” and he wrote a message requesting the recipient to note the date of receipt and then send the card back. The recipient duly obliged and this card revealed important facts : it took 25 days to reach England but the return trip sea trip via Shanghai took 40 days because Russia was still negotiating the imposition of additional postage for the use of “Via Siberia” mail service and since most European countries did not accept the fee standard, “Via Siberia” mail service was not available to eastbound mail. It was not until early 1904 that mail items from European countries to China and carried “Via Siberia” are known to exist.



Two postal stationery cards, both endorsed “Via Siberia”, from Tientsin and Shanghai respectively give some idea as to the transit time required to reach European destinations. Both items had to pay additional Russian postage, the transit time from Tientsin to Schoneberg of Germany is 28 days and from Shanghai to Weymouth United Kingdom is 25 days. It is interesting to note that the manuscript endorsement “Via Siberia” was crossed out on the latter card but it still arrived United Kingdom in just 25 days, and could not have possibly be delivered by sea route.



China was not a member of the Universal Postal Union and had to pay the additional Russian postage for the use of "Via Siberia" mail service. Initially Russia did not agree to carry mail items for other UPU countries free of charge, instead it demanded to charge the following scale of fees which the European nations found hard to accept:

- (a) 15 francs/kilogram for letters (equivalent at that time to \$3.00 U.S., or 12/6 sterling per 2.25 lbs.)
- (b) 3 francs/kilogram for other articles (60c U.S. or 2/6 sterling per 2.25 lbs.) excluding postcards which were unacceptable.

Chapter 4. Official Inauguration of "Via Siberia" Mail Service, October 1903

On October 1 1903 Russia agreed that foreign post offices in China, Japan and Korea can send mail items destined for Europe via the trans-Siberian railway and in the same month, the French "Bulletin Mensuel des Postes" advertised the following notice :

.In Europe, the arrangement of sending mail items to the Far East by the Trans-Siberian Railway was as follows : (1) postal sendings, intended to go by way of the Trans-Siberian route, will be sent from Paris at 8.05 p.m. by mail train No. 125 as far as Tergnier, and from there by train No. 127, (2) a mail train will leave daily from Moscow at 4:40 p.m., arriving on the 17th day following, at the terminals of the Trans-Siberian Line (Vladivostok, Port Arthur, Yinkow) The total time for the journey from Paris is 20 days. A daily departure will also take place in the opposite direction.

The sendings will be transported beyond Dalny, Port Arthur and Vladivostok by mail steamers controlled by the Chinese Eastern R.R. Co., leaving on the following routes :


- (a) From Dalny and Port Arthur for Chefoo (on the south coast of the Gulf of Po-Chi-Li),--every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday—Travel time : 16 hours.
- (b) From Dalny and Port Arthur for Shanghai (direct service)—every Wednesday—Travel time : 2 days.
- (c) From Dalny and Port Arthur for Nagasaki (direct service)—every Wednesday—Travel time : 2 days
- (d) From Dalny and Port Arthur for Shanghai, via Chomulpo, Korea--every 16 days—Travel time : Dalny to Chomulpo 2 days, Chomulpo to Shanghai 2 days.
- (e) From Vladivostok to Shanghai via Gensan and Fusan in Korea, and Nagasaki—every 23 to 24 days—Travel time : Vladivostok to Nagasaki 5 days, Nagasaki to Shanghai 3 days.

If available, the mail steamers of the Russian Volunteer Fleet will also be used for the transport of mail on the following routes :

- (a) Port Arthur to Nagasaki : one voyage per month. Travel time : two days.
- (b) Port Arthur to Shanghai : one voyage per month. Travel time : two days.
- (c) Vladivostok to Nagasaki : two voyages per month, at irregular intervals. Travel time : four days.
- (d) Vladivostok to Shanghai : one voyage per month. Travel time : six days.

Finally, postal communications between Tientsin and Peking will be served by the North China Railroad with a mail train which will run four times weekly in both directions between Newchwang and Peking (i.e. the then completed section of the Peking-Moukden Railway)

No. 14.



MAILS

FOR THE

FAR EAST

(Via SIBERIA).

FOR LETTERS AND POST-CARDS ONLY.

THE Siberian route is now available for the transmission of letters and post-cards from this Country for the Far East; but not for any other classes of correspondence or for parcels.

Letters and post-cards intended for transmission by this route should be specially superscribed "via Siberia" or "via Russia"; and the postage must be fully prepaid. Any letters and post-cards in regard to which these conditions are not observed will be sent by the ordinary routes followed in other cases.

Letters addressed to H.M. Ships on the China Station, to the Colony of Hongkong, or to Chefoo, Wei-hai-Wei, Shanghai, Amoy, Canton, Foochow, Hankow, Hoihow, Ningpo and Swatow, at all of which places there are British Post Offices, can pass at the rate of 1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. To other places in China (including Manchuria), and also to Japan, Corea and the Philippine Islands the rate for letters is 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

The rate for post-cards is in all cases 1d. each.

Mails containing correspondence complying with the above mentioned conditions will henceforth be despatched from London to Moscow every evening, Sunday excepted. From Moscow there is a daily service to Dalny or Vladivostok, whence the Mails are sent on by Russian steamers as opportunities offer.

The time occupied in transit varies according to circumstances from 22 to 30 days.

By Command of the Postmaster General.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
3rd November, 1903.

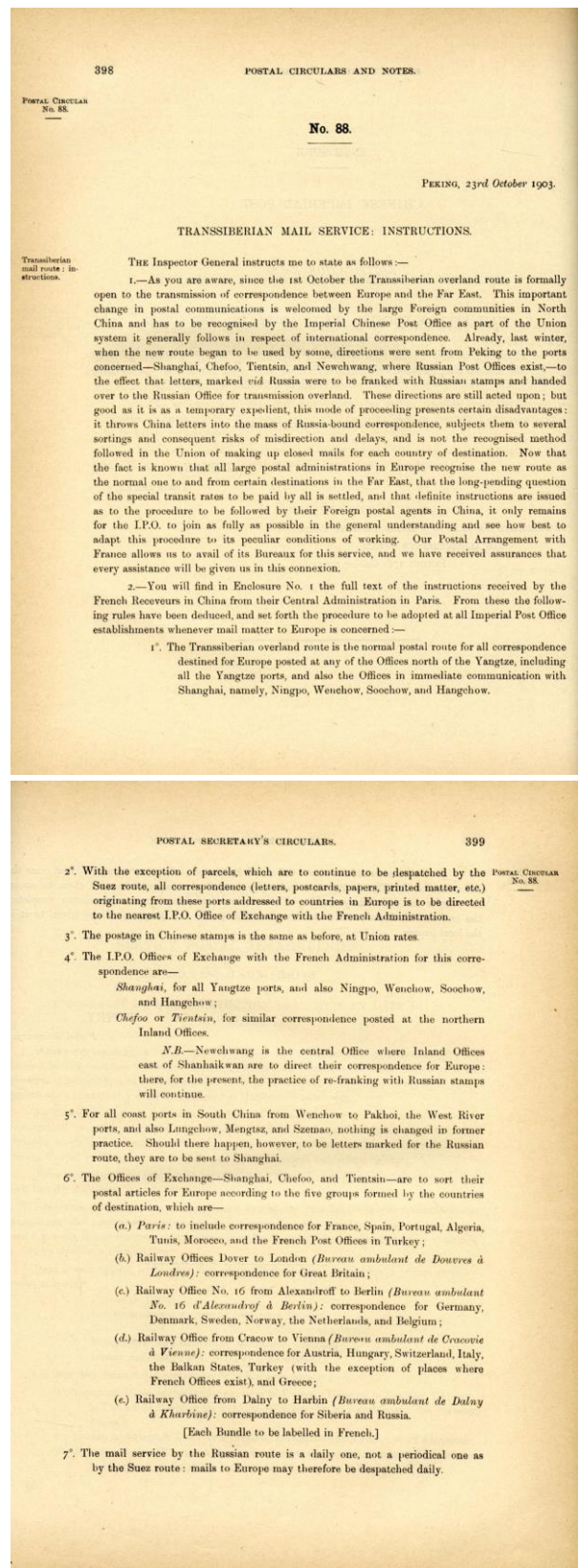
[49] Printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by W. P. Gifford & Sons, Ltd., Prince's Square, Old Bailey, E.C.

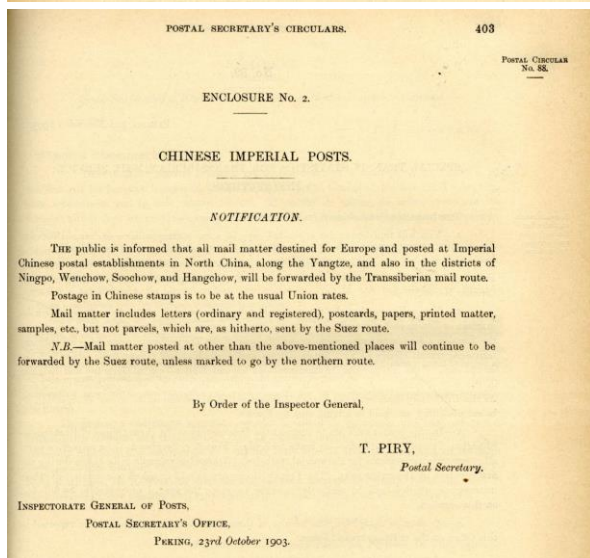
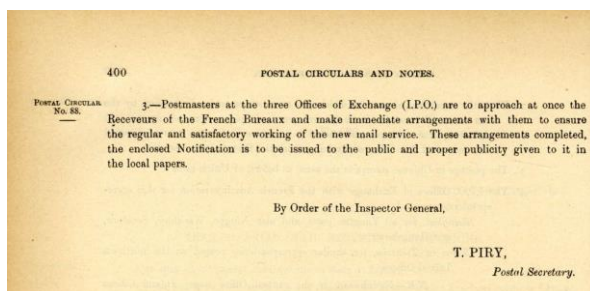
Under the pressure from many European nations reminding Russia to fulfill the obligations of member countries to the Universal Postal Union, Russia reluctantly agreed to allow UPU members utilize via Siberia mail service free of additional charge in Russian currency. When this final hurdle

was cleared, Great Britain Postmaster General issued a Notification on November 3, 1903 specifying relevant details and fee scales of this service.

The Chinese Imperial Post applied to join the Universal Postal Union but the abnormally long observation period could only be overcome by signing separate Postal Agreements with individual selected members of UPU and the Postal Agreement with French Post Office became effective January 1 1902, with Japanese Post Office July 18, 1903, British Post Office Hong Kong February 1 1905, German Post Office November 3, 1905 and Russian Post Office February 19 1909. At the inauguration of the "Via Siberia" mail service, Russian Post Office did not honour the Postal Agreement entered into between China and France on the pretext that it was not made under the auspices of the Universal Postal Union and as such, mail items of Chinese origin had to pay additional postage in Russian currency to be eligible for delivery via Siberia. Through negotiations, the Chinese Imperial Post at last came to agreement with Russian Post Office and a Postal Secretary's Notice No. 88 issued on October 23 1903 outlined the availability of "via Siberia" mail service to China when mail items destined for Europe or beyond would be carried via Siberia if they originated as far south as Hangchow and Wenchow; and as for southern provinces, mail items would be carried in the normal way via Suez Canal unless there is specific instruction to be delivered via Siberia. It was not until end October 1903 that mail items of Chinese origin and destined for European cities could be carried via Siberia even without the necessity of additional postage in Russian currency. A general study of then prevailing postage rates charged on mail items via Siberia is more particularly set out in Chapter 5.

Postal Secretary's Circular No. 88 had two enclosures, first of which is a Notification in French from the French Post Office and the second enclosure stated specifically that the normal rates charged by members of the Universal Postal Union would be applicable.





The above postal stationery card originated from Pingshiang and transited Siangtan on NOV 28 1903 with further transit in Shanghai DE 15 03 arriving Hamburg 9.1.04, requiring only 25 days from Shanghai to Hamburg.

Another postal stationery card from Swatow is of particular interest, it could be the only one of the via Siberia mail items with Pa Kua cancellation, used in China around 1897-98. It comprises six thick complete (denoted by 1) or broken (denoted by 2) bars, the 211 111 type was used by Swatow at the initial period of Chinese Imperial Post pending the arrival of "dollar chops" ordered from Japan. Apart from this, it could be the earliest example of mail from southern provinces of China adopting the via Siberia service.



So far we have only come across west bound mail using via Siberia service, but as Russia finally agreed to allow mails from UPU countries to travel on the Trans-Siberian Railway, the first east bound mail left London on September 28 1903 to connect with Paris-Moscow mail train. In November 1903 the General Post Office in London published a

bulletin stating that mail for the Far East would leave London every evening except Sunday.

As the via Siberia mail service began to function smoothly, transit time between Peking to Paris only required 21 days, as for Shanghai to Paris, 23 days are required. The approximate transit times between various stations on the way are set out in the following table.

Paris to Harbin	2 days	Shanghai to Dalny	2 days
Harbin to Moscow	15 days	Dalny to Harbin	2 days
Moscow to Paris	4 days	Harbin to Moscow	15 days
		Moscow to Paris	4 days
Total	21 days	Total	23 days

Mr. Robert Hart, Inspector General of Customs Peking, began to correspond with his former colleague and friend Mr. (Ian Campbell) residing in London Great Britain continuously throughout the period from 1868 to 1907 and 1437 letters had been compiled and published, both the sender and recipient carefully wrote down the dates of dispatch and receipt. Letter No. 1294 was endorsed “Via Siberia” which was dispatched on October 4 1903 and only needed a transit time of 30 days to reach its destination on November 3, as compared with forty to sixty days transit time shown on some earlier items of the same year.

It is quite understandable that Mr. Robert Hart did not make full use of the via Siberia mail service because he feared that Russian Post Office might inspect the contents of his letters, and apparently he did not make known the considerable saving in transit time to the general public in China. By the time inauguration took place and people began to utilize this service, they could only know the result in two months’ time, assuming one month transit time each way. After two rounds of communication, the Russo-Japanese War broke out and this explained why China-Europe mail via Siberia are scarce.

Chapter 5. Russian Traveling Post Office Daters Used On Chinese Eastern Railway

The Chinese Eastern Railway is a T shaped railway built by the Russians during the Boxer Movement. For better management of mail delivery and efficiency, Russian Postal Department assigned a series of numbers to be included in traveling post office daters to differential one from the others.

No. 259 Chita---Manchouli	No. 261 Manchouli---Harbin	No. 263 Harbin--Vladivostok	No. 265 Harbin--Port Arthur
No. 260 Manchouli---Chita	No. 262 Harbin---Manchouli	No. 264 Vladivostok--Harbin	No. 266 Port Arthur--Harbin

According to recently updated records kept by Mr. Philip E. Robinson, a co-author and leading authority on Russian Traveling Post Office daters, the circular type dater was first used on No.264 train Vladivostok to Harbin on August 26, 1901.

The postcard at right traveled on board No. 262 train Harbin to Manchouli on 1903 IX 4 (Julian calendar, September 17) from where it exited China to reach Leipzig on 1.10.03 with a transit time of only 14 days. 4 Kopek postcard rate was applicable.

No. 262 Traveling Post Office dater is by far the commonest of all the 8 types mentioned above, simply because Harbin-Manchouli is the proper direction for mail items to exit China to Europe.

Another postcard was franked with 2 Russian stamps paying 3 kopek postcard rate, canceled No. 262 Traveling Post Office dater 1903 IX 4 (Julian calendar, equivalent to September 17) with Sens Yonne French arrival dater 5 OUT 03, 22 days in transit.



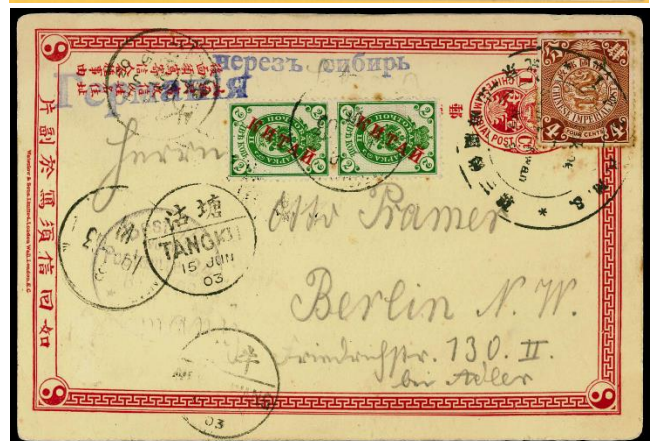
The standard, or rather the circumstances under which these elusive travelling post office (TPO) datestamps had been applied on mail items are difficult to ascertain, it is common sense to assume that mail items destined beyond Moscow would have been carried on sealed mail bags and hence not likely to receive TPO cancellations and yet many transit items from China to Europe received such TPO cancels as transit stamps. Even if an item was posted on board the train itself, it might receive more than one TPO cancellations as illustrated by the 1903 postcard illustrated on the right. It was posted on board the Harbin-Port Arthur section of the Chinese Eastern Railway thus receiving TPO No. 265 c.d.s. but since the card was destined for Holland, it had to travel back to Harbin, thence Manchouli and receiving another TPO 261 transit c.d.s. on the way. Perhaps it was the established rule at that time when additional TPO transit c.d.s.' were applied to mail items (post due items or items posted on board the train etc.) not in closed mail bags when the train transitted from one section of the Chinese Eastern Railway to another.



Another example is also dated 1903 to St. Die Vosges of France, posted on board train No. 262 from Harbin to Manchouli received another TPO No. 260 transit c.d.s. when it was delivered, across the Chinese border, to the Manchouli/Chita section of the trans-Siberian railway.



These circular Traveling Post Office daters had been used until 1906 and replaced by oval types, the earliest of which appeared on No. 259 train from Chita to Manchouli on July 5, 1902. And according to recently updated records kept by Mr. Philip E. Robinson, these oval TPO daters had been used as late as July 9 1923 on the No. 261 train from Manchouli to Harbin, even after ALL the Russian Post Offices in China had closed down in 1920. Generally speaking, circular types had been used prior to the Russo-Japanese War whilst most the oval types had been used after the said war.



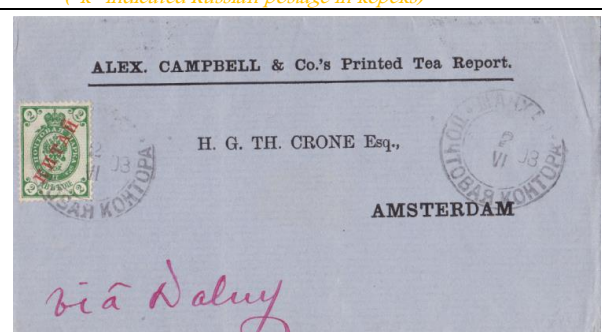
China understood the inevitable trend to modernize and towards this end, construction of a railway from Peking to Moukden, started in 1900, interrupted by the Boxer Movement and then resumed with full speed. Alas the railway was fully operative as late as 1911 when China had to buy the final section between Sinmintun to Moukden from Japan

A 1903 1 cent Chinese Postal stationery card with Chinese Imperial Post 4c added, canceled Peking-Shanhaikwan No. 3 train post office dater, Russian 2k pair canceled Russian post office dater after which the card traveled via Tangku, Tientsin, Newchwang with indistinct Berlin arrival dater. Peking-Shanhaikwan railway was the earliest section of the intended through railway from Peking to Moukden to act as a feeder service of the trans-Siberian railway.

Chapter 6 Postage Charged On Mail Items Carried “Via Siberia” in 1903

6.1 Postage Charged by Various Russian Post Offices in China

(“k” indicated Russian postage in kopeks)



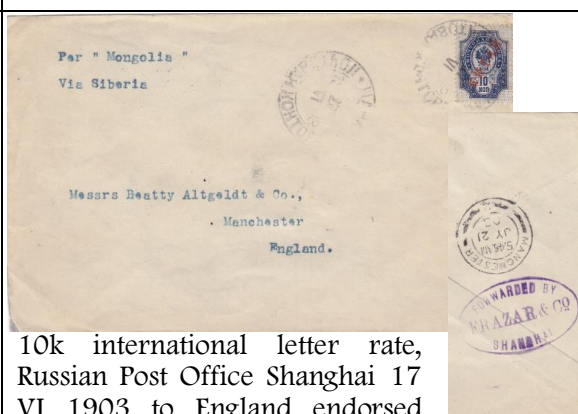
2k printed matter rate (Alex, Campbell & Co.’s Printed Tea Report), Russian Post Office Shanghai 2 VI 1903 to Amsterdam “via Dalny”



4k postcard rate, Russian Post Office Tientsin 5 VIII 1903 to Cassel France 4 SEPT 03.



4k postcard rate + 10k registration fee, Russian Post Office Shanghai 27 VI 1903 to Kjobenhavn 21 7 03 via Moscow.



10k international letter rate, Russian Post Office Shanghai 17 VI 1903 to England endorsed “Per Mongolia” “Via Siberia” with Manchester arrival c.d.s. JY 21 03.



10k international letter rate + 10k registration fee, Russian Post Office Shanghai 23 XI 1903 to Glasgow England, 23 DE 03 endorsed on cover front “Via Siberia” with R/SHANGHAI registration cachet & Russian Post Office Shanghai R label.





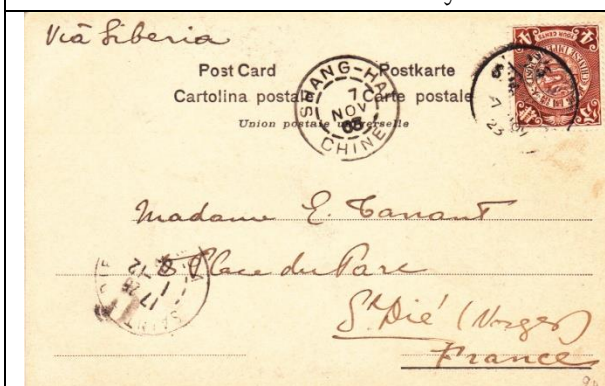
10k international letter rate + 10k registration fee and further 10K for acknowledgement of receipt fee, Russian Post Office Tientsin 24 IV 1903 to Paris with Russian language handstamp and registration label on cover front. Over-franked by 1k.

6.2 Postage Charged by Chinese Imperial Post Offices

("c" indicated Chinese postage in cents, "k" indicates Russian postage in kopeks)



4c + 4k international postcard rate, Imperial Shanghai Post Office 29 AUG 03 to St. Die France 30 9 03 via Chinese Eastern Railway.



4c international postcard rate Shanghai 7 NOV "23" to St. Die France 1-12 03. Posted after the Postal Secretary's Notice No. 88 of October 23, 1903, no additional postage in Russian currency was necessary.



10c international letter rate, Kiangsi Province via Kiukiang 9 DEC 03, Shanghai and Chinese Eastern Railway No. 265 to Finland

The international letter and postcard above, both posted after the Postal Secretary's Notice No. 88 of October 23, 1903 illustrate that the Russian Post Office did not insist on additional postage in Russian currency instead it fully honoured the Postal Agreement entered into between China and

France effective January 1, 1902.



4c international postcard rate + 10c international registration fee, Shanghai 7 NOV 03 to Paris with RECOMMANDE and PAR TRANSSIBERIEN handstamps.

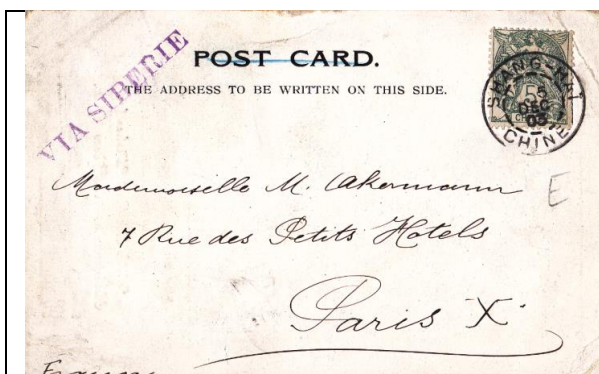


20k rate for overweight international letter with 2c inland postage for the trip from Liu Kung Tau 15 JUL 03 to Chefoo 17 VII 03 to Birkenhead England, endorsed Via Chefoo, Port Arthur & Moscow.

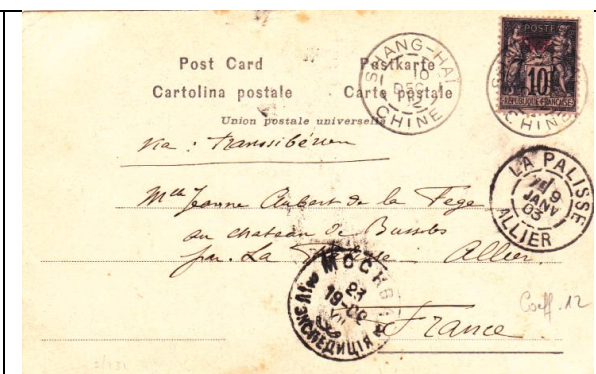


Another international letter from Tengchow via Chefoo to New York did not pay the inland postage of 1c from Tengchow to Chefoo and was charged postage due upon arrival by U. S. Post Office. After the Notice No. 88 on October 23, 1903, the inland postage was no longer required.

6.3 Postage Charged by various French Post Offices in China ("c" indicated centimes in French currency)



5c international printed matter rate, French Post Office Shanghai 5 DEC 03 to Paris 'VIA SIBERIA'



10c international postcard rate, French Post Office Shanghai 10 DEC 03 to La Palisse France 0 JANV 03 via Moscow 23 XII 1902



15c international letter rate for active serviceman, CORR. D ARMEES Shanghai 4 DEC 03 to Versailles France 30 DE 03 "Voie Siberienne"

6.4 Postage Charged by various British Post Offices in China ("c" indicates cents in Hong Kong currency)



4c international postcard rate Shanghai NO 25 03 to Lausanne 24 XII 03 and redirected.

6.5 Postage Charged by various German Post Offices in China ("pf" indicates in German currency)



10pf international postcard rate, German Post Office Hankow 2/12 03 to Copenhagen Denmark 30.12.03, endorsed "Via Siberia" at top left.



10 pf international postcard rate, German Post Office Shanghai 8/5 03 to Bremen 11.6.03. The 1c impressed stamp was unnecessary and hence not canceled.

6.6 Postage Charged by Russian Post Offices Kyakhata in Mongolia ("c" indicated cents in Chinese currency and "k" indicated kopeks in Russian currency.)



4k international postcard rate from Troitsko-savsk 22 VII 1903 to Kyrirtz Germany 23 8 03 but across the border to Kyakhta of Chinese Mongolia, the international postcard rate was 5k as illustrated by two 1903 examples to Eger, both written in Kyakhta (“Kh”) but posted at Troitsko-savsk.

Chapter 7. The Russo Japanese War, February 1904

Both Russia and Japan intended to have full control of Chinese Northeast Provinces for territorial expansion and for the rich natural resources. The completion of the Chinese Eastern Railway by Russia within Chinese Northeast Provinces, connecting Manchouli with Suifenho and Vladivostok in the east-west direction, and Harbin with Port Arthur in the North-South direction, effectively hindered similar ambition on the part of Japan.

Without prior warning, the Japanese Army attacked the Russian fleet anchored at Port Arthur on February 6, 1904 and war was declared on February 8 when Russia later announced on February 16 that the Trans-Siberian Railroad was to be closed temporarily.

General Post Office of Great Britain issued, on 16th February 1904 a Notification concerning suspension of the Siberian service.

The services from Marseilles by French mail ships, from Brindisi by English mail ships and from Naples by German mail ships have again become the normal routes for the transmission of mails destined for China, Korea and Japan. Dispatches from Paris



Every second Saturday evening, starting from March 15 via Marseilles.

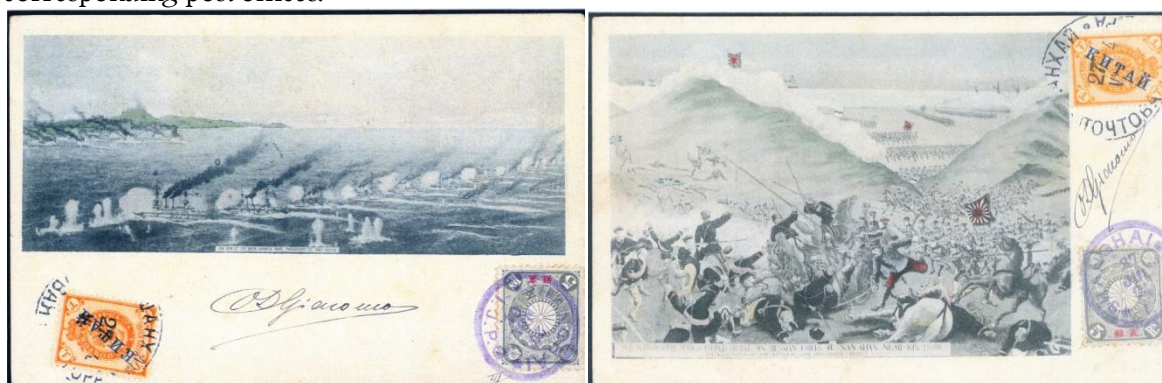
Every second Saturday morning, starting from March 12 via Brindisi.

Every second Tuesday evening, starting from March 1 via Naples.

For Japan and China only, forwarding of mails via Canada or the United States is possible. Onward Transmission is as follows :

- (a) Leave Vancouver about every three weeks.
- (b) Leave San Francisco four times per month.
- (c) Leave Tacoma three times per month.
- (d) Leave Seattle twice monthly.

Picture post cards of this Russo-Japanese War had been prepared, most of which depict war scenes, some with both Russian and Japanese stamps canceled with appropriate daters from the corresponding post offices.



Other picture post cards recorded details of the Russo-Japanese War at various stages.



Picture postcard entitled "Siberia On The Road To Manchuria----Near Lake Baikal"

To ensure prompt transfer to both artillery, ammunition and soldiers, the former had been carried on train to cross Lake Baikal whilst soldiers had to travel on sledges over the frozen lake.

Even though the Czar's Army was initially defeated, the returning sailors from the Varyag met with warm welcome and congratulated on their return to St. Petersburg.



Picture postcard entitled "Russo-Japanese War --No.11--Port Arthur 24th Feb.1904

The Russian crossing Lake Baikal (50 degrees below zero). The railroad established on the lake is only for trans-shipment of Artillery and ammunitions, the soldiers continue to cross in sledges, and the cold is severe.

On the war front, reinforcement in the form of Siberian riflemen arrived at Liao-yang where the ground battles were fought. Some of them actually traveled on the trans-Siberian railway



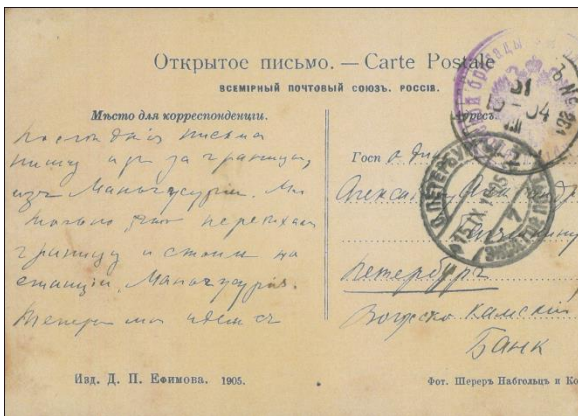
La Guerre Russo-Japonaise. — Les matelots du Varyag fêtes à leur retour à Saint-Petersbourg.

A Russian soldier on active service from 4th Battalion 23rd Artillery Brigades sent this card back home whilst on No. 261 Manchouli-Harbin train towards Port Arthur, This 1904 VIII 31 card bears a purple free-frank seal of his unit.

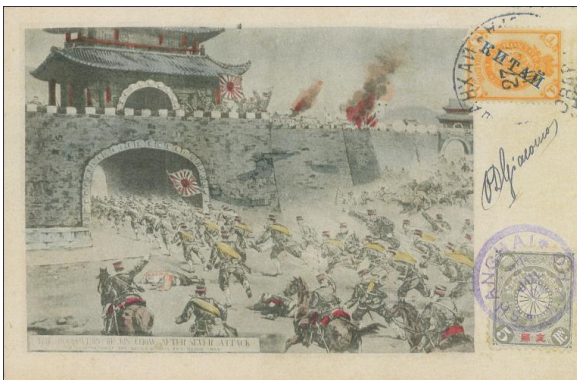


La Guerre Russo-Japonaise. — Les tirailleurs sibiériens. L'arrivée des renforts russes à Liao-Yang.

Another Russian serviceman was repatriated home as he sent this card (post free purple frank of his unit on top right) whilst on board No. 260 Manchouli—Chita train of the Chinese Eastern Railway.



Japan produced a vast number of coloured picture postcards depicting victorious war scenes back to Kyoto in 1905 and upon arrival, Japanese stamps were added and canceled commemorative handstamps.



It would be interesting to find mail items posted before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War and had actually been carried via Siberia during the War because at the initial stages, naval battles were predominant, but subsequently ground battles which subsequently disrupted the "via Siberia" mail service,



The above cover from Yuncheng of Shansi Province, transited Taiyuan 28 JAN 04 and Peking 2 FEB 04, handled by French Post Office Peking 3 FEVR 04 arriving Degerfors of Sweden on 29 2 1904 illustrating a transit time of 27 days from Peking to destination which serves to indicate that delivery by sea mail is unlikely

The following items are some which just got through via Siberia before the Russo-Japanese War whilst later items from March 1905 onwards, had to resume the sea route via Suez.



GB one penny postal stationery card from Earl's Court 7 JA 04 to Korea, endorsed "Via Siberia" probably just got through before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War but subsequently redirected to Hong Kong where QV2c stamp affixed, canceled MR 10 c.d.s., further redirected to Singapore MR 28 1904.





Another postcard of Russian origin 7.1.04 transited St. Petersburg 27 JAN 1903 to arrive at French Post Office Shanghai 4 FEVR 04 just before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, with further delivery to the Finnish Missionary Society at Chin-Shih via Shasi 13 FEB 04.



This post card from French Post Office Tientsin 29 JANV 04 to Monaco France 25-2 04, endorsed Via transsiberien probably got through before suspension of Via Siberia mail service caused by the outbreak of the



This registered postal stationery card from Shanghai on April 22 was withheld by French Post Office Shanghai and dispatched in May, arriving Weissenburg Germany on 16.6.04.

<p>Russo-Japanese War. In March 1904 it became apparent that mail items could no longer enjoy "Via Siberia" mail service.</p>	<p>There was no instruction as to the route to be taken, but most probably a sea route via Suez.</p>
 <p>The French Post Office was on good terms with the Russian Post Office but even this did not entitle French mail items to "Via Siberia" mail service simply because Japan was in full control of southern part of Chinese northeast provinces and mail items "Via Siberia" could not reach Harbin to board the trans-Siberian train and this French military cover to France, handled by French Post Office Tientsin had to be delivered by paquebot.</p>	 <p>At the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905, desperate land battles between Russia and Japan had been fought to gain supremacy of the Chinese northeast provinces and their rich natural resources. This picture postcard depicts a rare occasion of a friendly lunch on January 5, 1905 between generals and high official of the two adversaries. Perhaps rivalry only existed between nations at war, but not between their people.</p>
<p>18 months after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, the soldier from 4th Battalion 23rd Artillery Brigades survived the War and was repatriated home.</p> <p>He sent a postcard back home, with postage free handstamp of his unit, which bears oval No. 262 Harbin-Manchouli TPO dater 2 8 05. He wrote about the guarding of the Chinese Eastern Railway by Russian frontier guards at Buhedu. At this point in time, peace is right across the corner.</p>	

Chapter 8. Treaty of Portsmouth 1905 to Unofficial Resumption of Service 1907

8.1 Treaty of Portsmouth

Russia was defeated during the Russo-Japanese War, and as part of the terms included in the Peace Treaty brokered by the Americans and signed in Portsmouth on 5 September 1905, Russia had to cede to Japan part of the railway from Port Arthur to Kwanchengtse as war compensation. This section of the Chinese Eastern Railway built by the Russian will henceforth be named South Manchurian Railway and controlled solely by Japan, together with the ownership of a narrow strip of land on both sides known as the South Manchurian Railway Zone and the right to station army for safety protection of the railway.

From this point in time, No. 265 Russian Traveling Post Office dater was applicable to that section of railway from Harbin to Kwanchengtse and No. 266 from Kwanchengtse to Harbin.

8.2 Oval Traveling Post Office Datestamps Used on Chinese Eastern Railway



The soldier who had entered China in August 1904 to participate in the Russo-Japanese War, had luckily survived and was repatriated back to Russia when he sent this picture post card which received oval Postal Wagon No. 262 c.d.s. 2.9.05, addressed to **Omsk** with St. Petersburg transit c.d.s. 19.IX 1905



Picture postcard (Vladivostok Harbour)
written 1 X 1907, franked Russian 4k stamp
canceled oval Postal Wagon No. 264 c.d.s. 1 X
07 (Julian calendar, or October 14, 1907),
addressed to Dubunn with Russian language
transit c.d.s. of 15 X 1907



Picture post card (indigenous residents) posted on board Kwanchengtze to Harbin section of the Chinese Eastern Railway, the 2k pair of stamps canceled by Postal Wagon No. 266 c.d.s. 11.12.10 (Julian calendar, or December 23, 1910), addressed to Surrey England but without any transit or arrival c.d.s.



Picture post card posted on board the Chinese Eastern Railway without paying any postage in Russian stamps, Postal Wagon No. 262 c.d.s. of 27.2.10 was applied alongside oval postage due handstamp used on Postal Wagon Nos. 261/262 and the amount of due "6" was inserted by pencil manuscript, addressed to Russian destination with Russian language transit or arrival c.d.s. 28.2.10.

Japan did use the seized portion of the Chinese Eastern Railway between Port Arthur and Kwanchengtse to carry its own mail during the Russo-Japanese War and small three segment Japanese language daters had been used, and suffice it to say that these mails were directed back home to Japan and did not concern “via Siberia” mail service. There was a period of stand off between Russia and Japan when Russian troops were still present near the cede section of railway now known as South Manchurian Railway but later with the presence of Japanese troops near the Chinese Eastern Railway, Russia had to honour the Treaty of Washington and withdrew her troops from South Manchuria. Japan’s ambition did not cease upon becoming the possessor of South Manchurian Railway, a greater goal was to link it with Chosen Line via Antung to Seoul, Fusan, (by ferry to) Shimonoseki, Osaka and Tokyo. It took Japan a few years to change the railway gauge from 5 feet wide type to 1 meter narrow gauge and the South Manchurian Railway was fully operational in 1910.

8.3 Longer Transit Time for China—Europe Mail via Suez Canal, 1905-1907

Let us look at some examples to see the respective transit times taken by the British, French and German Post Office when handling China—Europe mails via their mailboat services connecting European ports with Chinese ports.



Hankow 15 FEB 05 to Herent Belgium 25 MARS 1903, handled by Shanghai British Post Office, transit time 38 days.



Shanghai 30 MAY 05 to Bruxelles Belgium 7 JUIL 05, handled by French Post Office Shanghai, Transit time : 33 days



Tientsin 4/9 05 to Cassel Germany 20.10.05 by German Post Office, transit time 46 days.

The Universal Postal Convention, signed at Rome on May 26, 1906 between the various member countries of the UPU, devoted the second article of its Protocol to the “settlement of forwarding charges to be paid to the Russian Administration on the right to exchange mails by way of the Trans-Siberian Railroad” It is also specified that “unsealed transmission is not accepted by the above-mentioned railroad.” One year’s time was required to materialize the provisions specified in the Protocol during this time only Russian language items with Russian postage could be delivered via Siberia mail service as illustrated by the following examples.



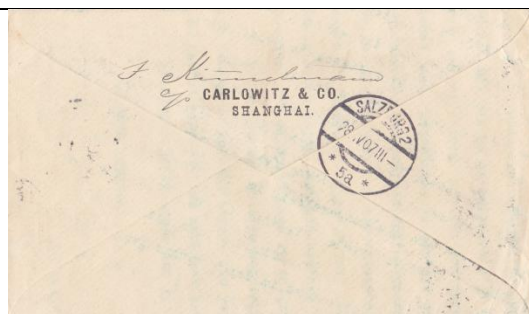
1906 IV 23 postcard from soldier on active Service with purple free frank handstamp at top right and Russian arrival dater 1906 V 11. Transit time 19 days.



1906.9.1 postcard from Harbin Station to Russia transit Moscow 21.9.06. Transit time from Harbin to Moscow: 20 days.



An inward cover from Glasgow of U.K. NO 10 05 to Tsingtau transited through Shanghai B.P.O. DE 15 05, Tientsin 2 DEC 05, arriving Tsingtau 27/12 05, subsequently redirected to Shanghai with B.P.O. c.d.s. MR 13 06.



Another early 1907 cover was franked with Russian 7k canceled Russian Post Office Shanghai c.d.s. 24.3.07 with St. Petersburg arrival c.d.s. 28.IV 07. Again it might have taken a sea route to Vladivostok before further transmission by trans-Siberian railway.



Chinese Imperial Post 1c postal stationery reply card uprated with 2c and 1/2c x 2 canceled Hokan lunar year c.d.s., with "Via Siberia" handstamp, transited Paoting 1 OCT 07, Tientsin 2 OCT 07 arriving Paris 30 OCTO 07. This illustrates that delivery efficiency was only comparable to that of sea mail.



The British Post Office Shanghai handled this "Via Siberia" printed matter cover to London, paying only 4c postage in Hong Kong currency canceled MY 4 07 c.d.s with arrival backstamp of MAY 25 07, only 23 days in transit



The German Post Office Tientsin also handled this 2c rated post card (written 22.4.07) to Brannschweig Germany, endorsed "Via Sibiria" with 23/4 07 issuing c.d.s.



This Chinese postal stationery card was franked with French Post Office 5c pair canceled Shanghai Chine c.d.s. 13 SEPT 07 with "VIA SIBERIA" handstamp and Gex Ain arrival c.d.s. 5 OCT 07, 22 days in transit.



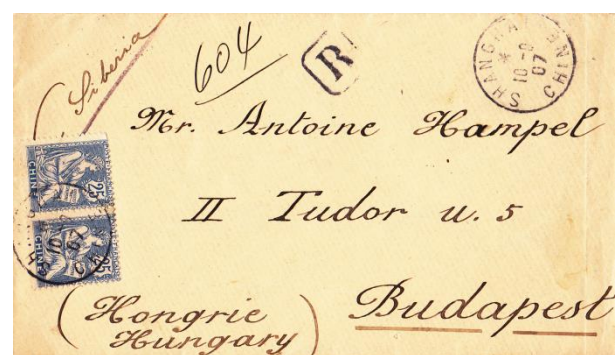
This 4c rated "Via Siberia" post card from Hankow 24 JUN 07 via Shanghai 27 JUN to Bruxelles 18.7.07 only took 24 days to reach its European destination.



This post card illustrated then prevailing route at around 1907. Written "Kh 20.5.07" meaning Kyakhta 20.5.07 with 10k and 4k stamps canceled Troitskosavsk c.d.s. 7 V 1907, addressed to Shanghai (28.5.07) but transited Vladivostok 15.5.07 with further delivery by sea route.



Another post card also from Hankow "via Siberia" but posted on a later date 17 OCT 07 arrived the same destination Bruxelles 12 NOVE 07, transit time 25 days.



A 50c rated registered cover was franked with French Post Office 25c pair canceled Shanghai Chine 10-9 07 c.d.s. with Budapest arrival back stamp 907 OKT 3, 23 days in transit.

In the first half of 1907, across Europe and Far East, sender of mail items dare not believe that the Russian Post Office will act according to the Notice issued by the French Post Office. The reluctance to indicate "via Siberia" route had caused undue delay sometimes more than 10 days. On the other hand the British Post Office in Tientsin and Shanghai actively increased their market share of mail business when each of the said offices needed 5 daters with index A,B,C,D,E to deal with the vast amount of mail items handled there and then.



Little did the senders know that via Siberia mail service was not without risks. Russo-Japanese War and the ensuing internal rebellion weakened the Czarist government which did not have the resources to guard the entire trans-Siberian railway against bandits to ensure safety of passengers and mails. Apparently the French Post Office did not mention this in its earlier public announcement in May 1907. This postcard depicts bandits robbing mail carriages and in some rare occasions they rob trans-Siberian trains as well.

Chapter 9 Southern & Inner Provinces of China began to utilize Via Siberia Mail Service.

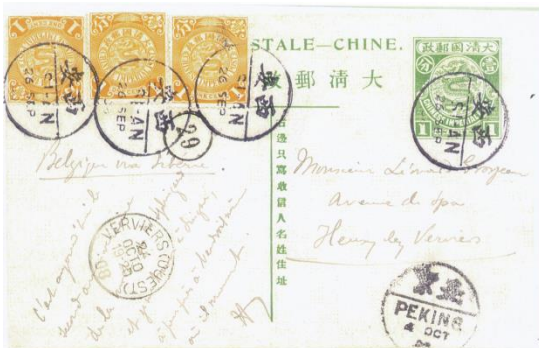
When the via Siberia mail service resumed in 1907, foreign residents in remote central and southern provinces of China also made use of this service when senders in Kansu, Yunnan, Shensi, and Kiangsi entrusted their Europe bound mail to via Siberia mail service.



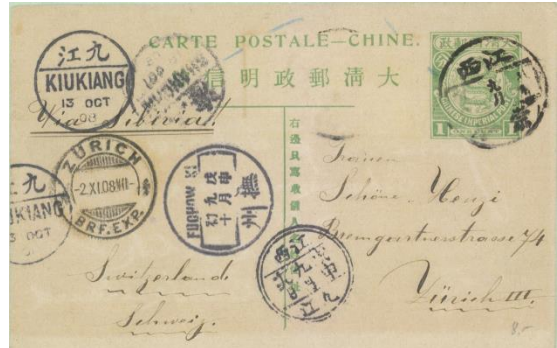
1908 postal stationery card from Lanchow Kansu Province (May 1 08) via Tientsin 20 MAY 08 to Bruxelles Belgium 7 JUN 08. Transit time Tientsin/Bruxelles only 18 days.



1908 postal stationery card Yunnanfu (May 30 08) to Norge, endorsed "Via Siberia" but still carried via Tengyueh 24 JUN 08 with Kristiania arrival dater 6 VIII 08.



Postal stationery card Sian 26 SEP 08 (Shensi Province) via Peking 4 OCT to Bruxelles, Belgium 24 OCTO 08, 20 days transit time from Peking to Bruxelles.



Postal stationery card Fuchow (Oct.13 08 Kiangsi Province) via Kiukiang 13 OCT 08, Shanghai to Zurich Switzerland 2 XI 08, 20 days transit time from Kiukiang to Bruxelles

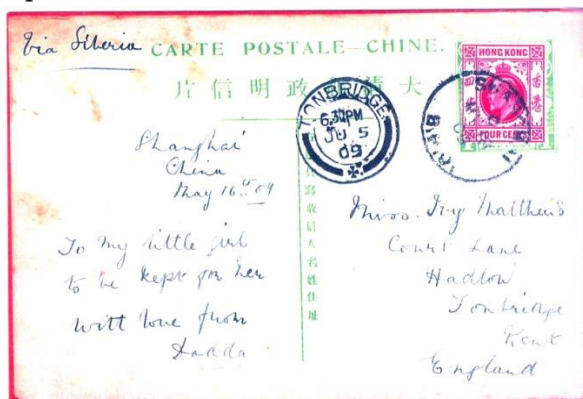
The German leased territory of Tsingtau also utilized "via Siberia" mail service as illustrated by the registered cover below which was franked 20 copies of the 1pf stamp of Tsingtau, canceled TSINGTAU DEUTSCHE POST c.d.s. 26.6.08 with Via Siberia manuscript at top left and registration label in front, oval LONDON arrival dater 15 JU 08 at lower left, only 19 days in transit



Chapter 10 . Official Resumption of Via Siberia Mail Service 1909

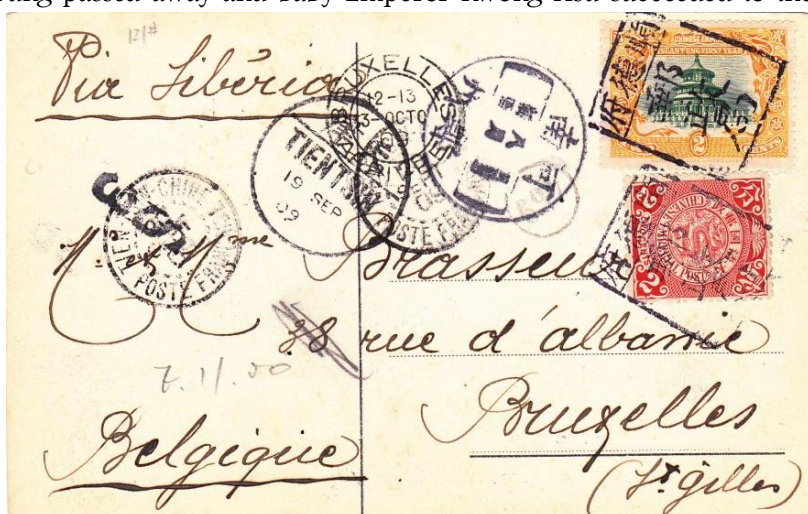
In February 1909 Russian Post Office announced the official resumption of the Via Siberia mail service after mounting pressure from European nations. A Postal Agreement was entered into between China and Russia, effective February 19 1909 when Russia agreed to deliver China/Europe mail via Siberia mail service free of additional Russian postage.

A period of stability ensued, from official resumption of Via Siberia mail service in 1909 to the eve of World War I in 1914 when vast expansion of mail volume was experienced not only by Chinese Post Offices but also by various Foreign Post Offices such as the British Post Offices in Shanghai and Tientsin, each of them needed 5 daters (index A to E) to cope with the increase in business, and the card in the previous page from Shanghai MY 16 09 to Tonbridge of U.K. JU 5 09 is a typical example.



Many significant events happened in China in 1909 amongst which was the signing of a special agreement between Tsarist Chinese Eastern Railway Company and the Qing Government in Peking which provided inter alia, that inside every Russian Mail Carriage on Chinese Eastern Railway a section measuring 1.5M to 2M could be partitioned off at the expense of the Chinese Government and used to transport “Official Mail” for the Chinese mandarinates free of charge. This section of the mail carriage was to be supervised by persons appointed by the Chinese authorities. Simultaneously regular Chinese Post Office mail was also allowed to be transported in this section but only upon payment of sufficient postage. Apparently this right was not exercised during the Qing Dynasty or alternatively no specific dater had been used then, since Dong Qing daters had not been recorded until 1913.

In February, Emperor Hsuan Tung passed away and baby Emperor Kwong Hsu succeeded to the throne and after glorious burial rituals, a commemorate stamp set of 3 denominations was issued, 2c, 3c and 7c on September 8, 1909 to celebrate the ascension of baby Emperor Hsuan Tung to the throne. The use of stamps from this set in 1909 on international mail items via Siberia are quite scarce but two examples are illustrated here.



The first postcard originated from Shuntehfu in Chihli Province, endorsed Via Siberia franked Hsuan Tung 2c and Chinese Imperial Post 2c, paying 4c international postcard rate, canceled “nameplate” type Shuntehfu dateless handstamp, transit via Chengchow and Tientsin 19 SEP 09 and handled by French Post Office Tientsin to reach Bruxelles 28 SEPT 09, only 9 days in transit.

A 9 DEC 09 post card from Foochow was franked with 2c stamps x 2, addressed to Torino of Italy, endorsed Via Siberia and transited Shanghai on 14 DEC 09 but the indistinct arrival dater failed to give any clue as to transit time taken.

Foochow is the provincial capital of Fukien Province and before 1909 mail items to Europe had to transit Hong Kong and carried by mail boats via the Suez Canal. The above card went northward to Shanghai, indicating the compliance of the sender's requested route via Siberia.

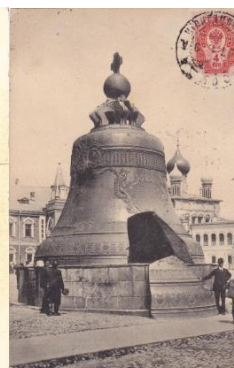


The Imperial Chinese Post Office at Urga of Chinese Mongolia was set up on January 14, 1910 which corresponded to the 4th day of the Severe month (12th lunar month) in the lunar year Gan Hsu. Initially mail delivery service took place once every week and senders of mail items from Urga back to Peking or Kalgan could choose between domestic mail delivery, which required only 4 cents Chinese postage, or the international mail service via Siberia but the postage was 6 cents Chinese currency, the former by overland route via Gobi desert and the latter by trans-Siberian railway which re-enters China at Manchouli.

There is no official notification as to the full resumption of “Via Siberia” mail service from the Postal Administration Head Office of the Chinese Imperial Post, perhaps everybody was aware of this fact from 1907 and the rules and postage charges had all remained the same, a 1908 post card “via Siberia” destined for France was posted and handled by a postal agency in Shansi Province.



However, it was not everything as usual when via Siberia mail service resumed, and this postcard from Russia via Moscow to Chun



Liang Cheng of Chinese Chihli Province exhibited an usual routing via Shanghai instead of being carried along the South Manchurian and then Peking-Moukden railways to Peking before further delivery to destination via Tangku. Instead it transited Shanghai, indicating that it took the Vladivostok to Shanghai

ferry service after travelling on the east bound trans-Siberian railway to Vladivostok.

Commencing 1909 the South Manchurian Railway, now under Japanese control, began to operate and the Japanese Post Offices established several exchange stations of mails at Shanhaikwan, Mukden and Changchun when different types of cancels had been used from these three stations as well as the rare oval cancellations with inscription I.J.P.O.No.1 MUKDEN-CHANGCHUN and I.J.P.O.No.2 CHANGCHUN-MUKDEN SOUTH MANCHURIA are more particularly set out in a brief study arranged as Appendix A on pages () to (), however there is still insufficient information as to the mail exchange formalities between Chinese, Russian and Japanese Post Offices before 1911.

10.1 The Peking-Moukden Railway

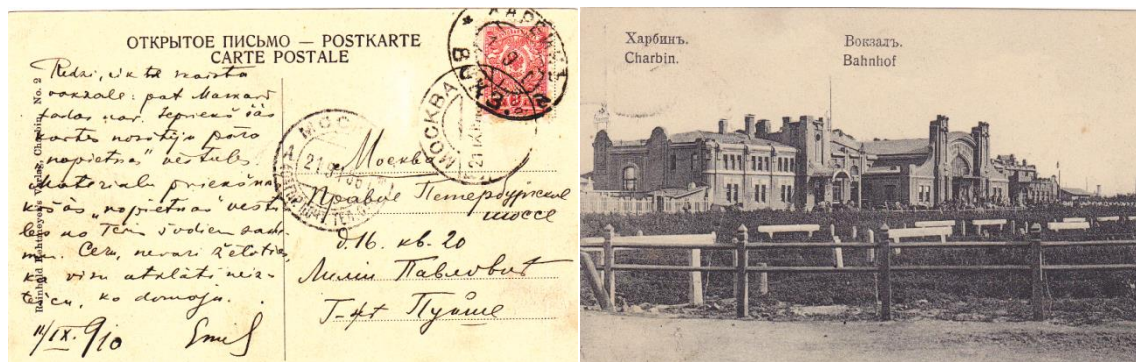
The first railway ever built in China connected Peking with Tientsin and became operative at the beginning of 1900 and was later destroyed during the Boxer Movement of mid-1900. When order was restored, Qing Dynasty was fully aware of the need to establish a railway system with the ultimate goal to connect Shanghai, Peking with Moukden. Basically the entire network can be classified as two main trunks, one from Peking to Moukden and the other from Shanghai via Pukow to Tientsin. However, Japan also constructed a section of railway in narrow gauge between Sinmintun and Moukden and China had to pay this section from Japan in order to change the gauge and complete the entire Peking-Moukden railway, which was finally fully operative by the end of 1911. The following examples illustrate train post office cancels on postcards to foreign destinations carried via Siberia.



Both card paid the 4 cents international post card rate, canceled respectively Peking to Changteh and Changteh to Peking train post office c.d.s. with year/month/date in lunar year reckoning. The former with Peking transit 10 AUG 10 c.d.s. and Bruxelles 25 AOUT 10 arrival c.d.s., transit time taken was 14 days. The latter also transited Peking 11 AUG 10, addressed to Romania but the arrival date is indistinct and cannot be ascertained.

10.2 Russian Post Offices at Harbin and Manchouli Train Stations

Even though the Harbin and Manchouli train station daters appeared much earlier than 1910, their application were limited, it was not until the resumption of operation on the part of the South Manchurian Railway that passenger and mail volumes surged and the post offices at these two



stations were more fully utilized.



Both picture post cards are dated 1910, the former addressed to (Russian destination) showing Harbin station on picture side, the latter addressed to Munchen Germany and the picture side showed quaint design eastern style temples in the Chinese northeast provinces.

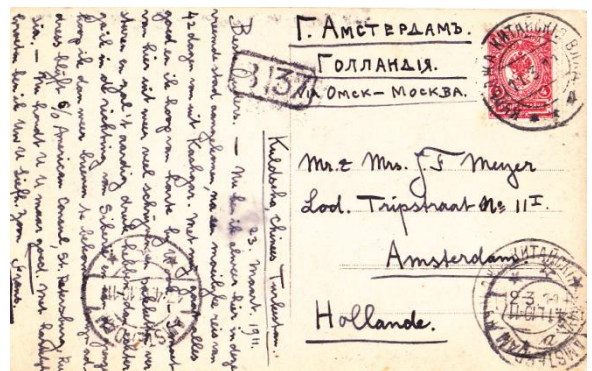


Even though the Chinese Imperial Post had already established a post office at Harbin, mail items via Siberia were not exchanged there between Russian and Chinese post offices, instead they had been exchanged further south down the railway at Kwanchengtze or Moukden depending on destination of mail items. A postal stationery card from Harbin to Austria recorded 20 JAN 10 c.d.s. of Harbin Post Office and the card was written in “Esperanto”, a type of international language which had been popular with districts governed or under the extensive influence of Russian

administration.

10.3 Russian Post Offices in Sinkiang Province.

In 1910 a sender dispatched a picture post card from Kashgar in Sinkiang Province to Amsterdam Holland, handled by Russian Post Office at Kashgar 12.10.10 (October 23, 1910) with Amsterdam arrival c.d.s. 13 NOV 10, transit time only 21 days. Next year he traveled to Kuldja and sent another post card to the same addressee, this time handled by Russian Post Office Kuldja 11.3.11 (March 24, 1911) with Amsterdam arrival c.d.s. 17.4.11, transit time 24 days.



10.3 Rare Origins and Destinations

Another 21 NOV 1910 registered overweight cover was addressed to Sarajevo from Ningpo and endorsed Via Siberia. It paid 26 cents postage, being as to 10 cents international letter rate, 6c for additional weight unit and 10c for international transit. It arrived Sarajevo 11 12 10 and the transit time was 12 days.



ional registration fee. It transited Shanghai on 23 NOV, the taken was 20 days.



VIA SIBERIA
St John's Kinross
Edinburgh
The Rev.^d Bristol
A. B. Wynne,
Hon. Secy. Pan-Anglian Club
Chippendale
England.

KAIFENG
6 JUN
10

CHIPPENDHAM
7 AM
JUN 24
10

CHIPPENDHAM
8 PM
JUN 24
10

CHIPPENDHAM
9 PM
JUN 24
10

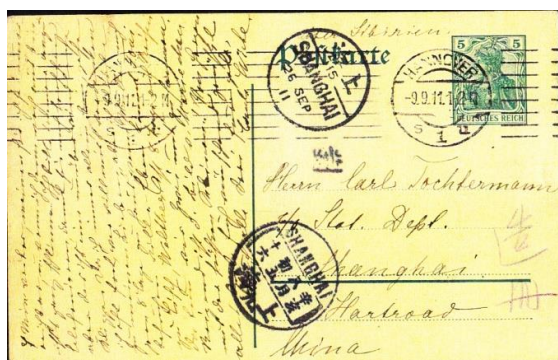
CHIPPENDHAM
10 PM
JUN 24
10

Szechwan Province is another “inland” province in China on the eastern side of Tibet and for mail items to England, as illustrated by the following postal stationery card from Paoning, it had to take a complicated inland route via Wanhhsien (7 AUG 10), Hankow (15 AUG “1”) and Peking 18 AUG 10 when French Post Office Peking took over and the card reached Newcastle.on.Tyne SP 5 10

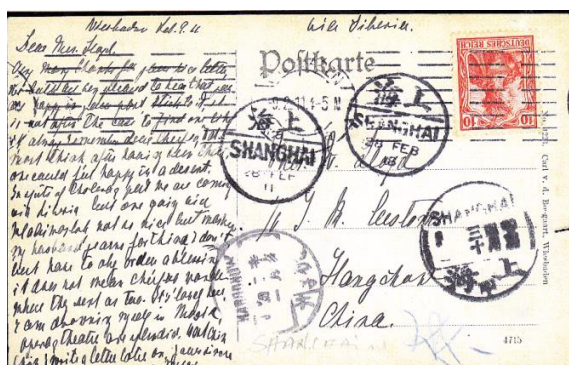


10.4 Efficiency of the resumed service.

A series of 4 post cards, from various origins in Germany to or transit Shanghai during the period 1910 to 1911 serve as a random sampling to test the efficiency of the east bound via Siberia mail service which ranged from 16 to 19 days. Three cards were addressed to a German serving as Inspector General of Customs in Shanghai and the 4th card was addressed to Hangchow. Also the first card was posted on board a Bahnpost from Berlin to Hanover.



Bahnpost ZUG 203 24 9 10, Shanghai 11 OCT 10. Hanover 9.9.11 Shanghai 26 SEP 11



Steglitz 21.5.11 Shanghai 6 JUN 11

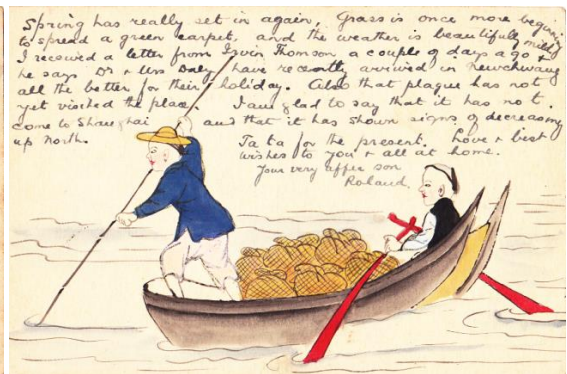
Weisbaden 9.2.11 2 Shanghai 8 FEB 11.

Chapter 11 Year 1911, the Beginning and the End.

10.1 The Beginning of Airmail Service.

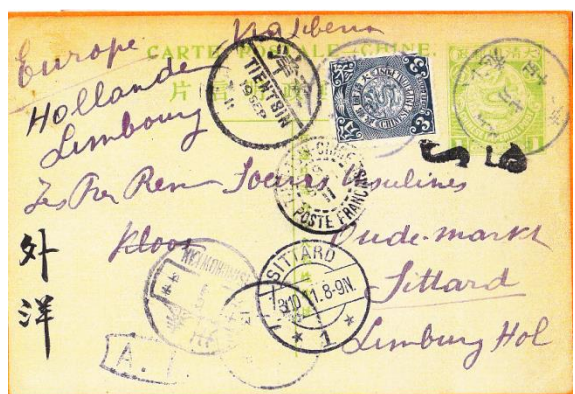
The first U.K. Aerial Post took place on SP 9 1911 between London and Windsor and a first flight commemorative postcard was franked with 1/2d x 2 canceled commemorative handstamp “FIRST UNITED KINGDOM AERIAL POST LONDON” and addressed to Canton arrival c.d.s. OC 4 11 below, with manuscript Via Siberia at top. For the first time a mail item by “aerial post” arrived China.





Earlier in March 1911, an Englishman wrote the above postcard to his father back in England, with underlined manuscript instruction “via Siberia” at top, franked Russian 4k stamp canceled Shanghai Poste Russe c.d.s. 6.3.11, the message was written the previous day and it contained inter alia “.....Last Sunday afternoon I went to a place about 15 miles from here to see a French aviator, Vallon by name fly on a biplane. Just fancy aviation already in China, He flew successfully, crowds were there, and it was very interesting.” In fact the same aviator had an accident in a later flight one or two months later and lost his life in Shanghai. The idea that aeroplane might some day take passengers and mail items was not far fetched fantasy any more, even though it took China another ten years to establish a formal flight service between Peking, Tientsin and Tsinan in July 1921.

11.2 Expansion of Via Siberia mail service to remote provinces in China



Two postal stationery cards, one from Sheklung in Kwantung Province to Barmen Germany and the other from Fukiang in western province of Kansu to Holland, both with additional franking of 3 cents to make up the 4 cents international postcard rate and both with manuscript instruction “Via Siberia”. The former transited Shanghai and the latter transited Tientsin 19 SEP 11 with SITTARO arrival c.d.s. 3.10.11, transit time only 14 days counting from Tientsin.

11.3 Wuchang Revolution and the end of Imperial Qing Dynasty

A innocent looking postal stationery card to Dresden Germany, dispatched from Shihtao in Shantung Province, was uprated with additional 3 cents, the lunar dater corresponded to October 9 1911, the day before the outbreak of Wuchang Revolution. Manuscript instruction Via Siberia was written conspicuously and the card transited French Post Office Chefou (Chefoo) 12 OCT 11, revolutionary sentiment had already begun to spread all over China. Some historians regarded October 9 1911 as the last day of the imperial Qing Dynasty.

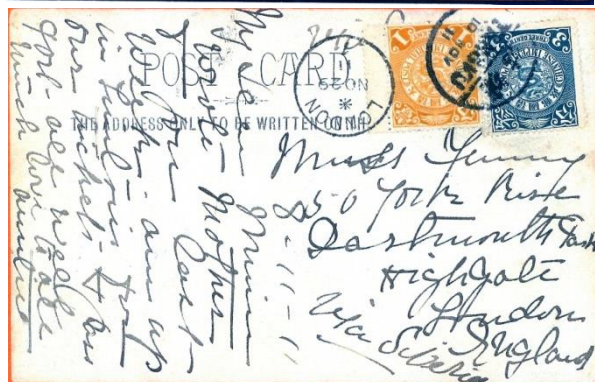




A picture postcard from Peking 7 OCT 11 addressed to Coventry England and endorsed Via Siberia at top left might not be delivered as per instruction because Via Siberia had been crossed out, Coventry arrival c.d.s. OC 24 11 indicated a transit time of 17 days, a little longer than normal, perhaps Wuchang Revolution and the subsequent military conflicts could have resulted in diversion of this card by way of sea mail.

Another picture postcard from Tangku 10 NOV 11 to London NO 29,11 was also endorsed Via

Siberia and took 18 days to reach London. There was no trace of redirection in view of lack of transit daters on both items.



Towards the end of 1911, revolutionary forces united under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and on January 1, 1912 Dr. Sun Yat Sen proclaimed the founding of Zhong Hua Min Guo or the Republic of China and during the first ever election, Dr. Sun was named the first President of the Republic of China and initially a five striped flag of red, yellow, blue, white and black had been adopted to symbolize the

harmonious co-existence of the five major races of people in China. Many commemorative picture post cards had been published for this event. Other historians regard December 31, 1911 as the last day of the Imperial Qing Empire because the Republic of China was founded the ensuing day.



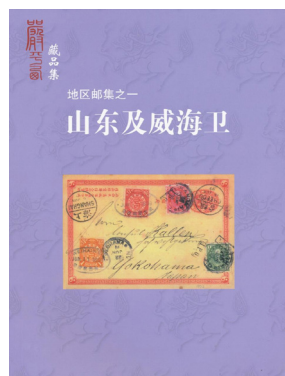
The official termination of Imperial Qing Empire came with the Abdication announcement on February 12, 1912 when Qing Emperor Hsuan Tung abdicated the throne and the sovereignty of the Chinese Republic is beyond doubt.

Post Office Shanghai on 1.2.12 (or February 14, 1912) addressed to Russian destination and endorsed "Via Siberia". It reported this historical event : "...Today the Republic of China has been proclaimed, the Abdication of the Throne was published this morning."

The Wuchang Revolution and the subsequent battles between the Imperial Qing Empire and the revolutionary forces had little or only transient effect on China-Europe mail via Siberia but the first part of the story comes to a perfect ending and the various aspects of "Via Siberia" mail service for the period 1912 to 1932 will be the subject of the next book by the same authors.

A most appropriate picture post card, franked Russian Post Office 4k, was dispatched from Russian





1



2

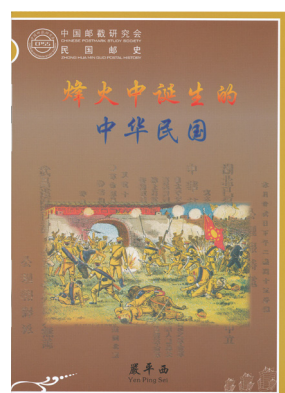


3

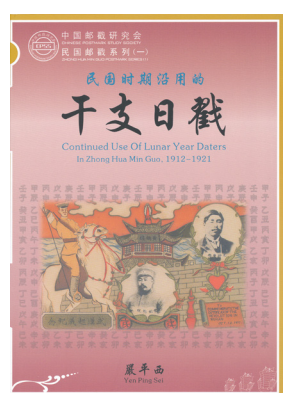


4

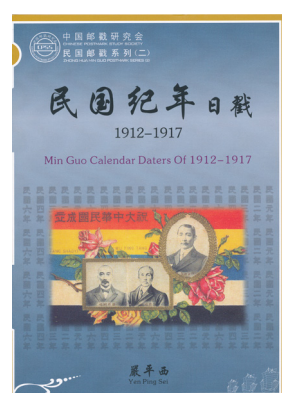
1-4 平装及精装



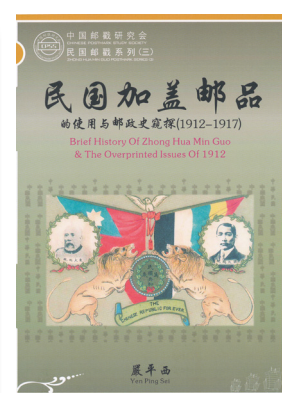
5



6



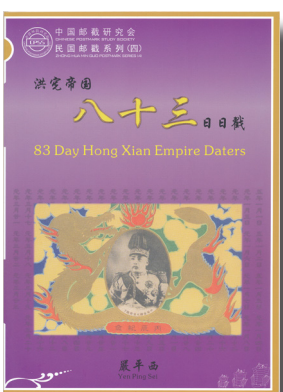
7



8



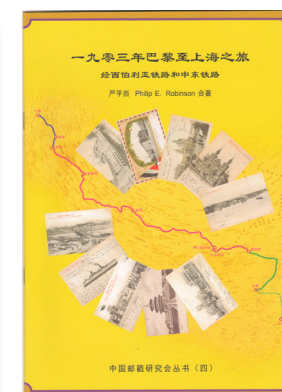
5-8合订本



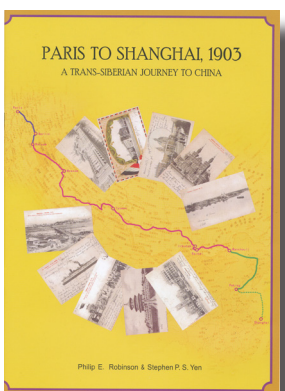
9



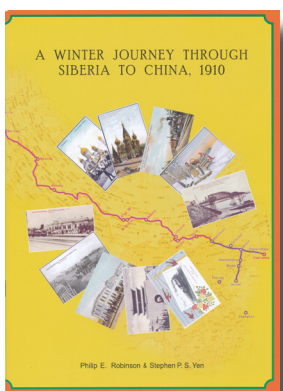
10



11



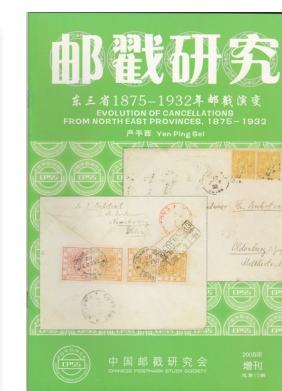
12



13



14



15