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SYNOPSIS

Mongolia – Land of Genghis Khan. Post offices and postmarks 1878 – 1939

The current exhibit represents a contribution towards the postal history as well as the research, systematization and use of postmarks (**MARCOPHILY**) by Russian, Chinese and Mongolian post offices on the territory of today's Mongolia during the time period 1878 to 1939.

The exhibit ends in 1939, the year of the Joint Soviet – Mongolian victory over the 6th Kwantung-Army of Japan during the Battle at the Chalchyn Gol, for the Mongolian people one of the most important events in its history of the 20th century.

The exhibit which includes genuinely travelled covers, cancellations on pieces of covers, as well as postal cards and forms, is divided in four main topics:

1. Activities of the Mongolian „URTUU“ (horse-relay) postal service
2. Activities of the Russian post offices and their postmarks (1878 – 1920)
3. Activities of the Chinese post offices and their postmarks (1910 – 1921)
4. Activities of the Mongolian post offices and their postmarks (1911 – 1939)

Based on a short historical introduction and a sketch of a map with the various post offices the main types of postmarks were registered, systematized and represented chronologically by means of genuinely travelled covers. In doing so, the focus is primarily on the activities and the use of postmarks of the capital URGU (Russ.), KULUN (Chin.) and ULANBAATAR (Mong.) followed by the local postmarks of the individual provincial post offices. While for some of the provincial post offices only very few or even no cover is known the existence and the activity of those can only be proved by presenting single postage stamps with an appropriate town postmark. The analysis of the activities of the Mongolian post offices and the use of their postmarks is based on the first nine stamp issues from 1924 up to 1932.

The various types of postmarks are described on the basis of the general recognized terminology. The following terms were used, for example: for Russian postmarks - „double oval“, „single circle“ and „double circle date-stamps“; for Chinese postmarks - „native circular“ and „bilingual circular date-stamps“ and for Mongolian postmarks - „square“ and „double circle date-stamps“. Deviations and specifications were presented. Mongolian postmarks of the individual post offices with their varieties are listed and described.

The respective period of use of postmarks with different color-prints as well as new findings (such as earlier or later usage of postmarks) are recorded accordingly.

The description of each cover is sub-divided into: postal route, stamps/postmarks and postal rates. In some cases, references to particularities and to the historical background is provided.

Based on my own research the exhibit shows for the first-time which post offices used what postmarks and stamp issues during what time period, which postal routes were used and when, how the postal rates developed and what particularities existed in the postal communications in particular with China.

The exhibit highlights the following items:

- Urgent and Express letters of the traditional Mongolian „URTUU“ (horse-relay) postal service;
- Early Russian „KYAKHTA“ cancellation (1878);

- The only known example of the earliest Russian postmark on a piece of cover from „URGA“ in Outer Mongolia (1879);
- Russian red band covers with double oval date-stamps from „URGA“ to China (1881-1893);
- Trans-Mongolian mail in both directions, i.e. so far the only known Russian postal stationary card from China across the desert Gobi and the Mongolian-Russian frontier post office of Troitskosavsk to Sweden (1897) as well as registered missionary envelope from Sweden passing the Siberian-Mongolian border to China (1900) with rare dispatch and transit postmarks;
- Russian covers and postage stamps with single and double circle date-stamps from "URGA" (1897-1918);
- Double circle date-stamps from "URGA" on registered parcel post with "Romanov" stamps (1913/14);
- Double circle date-stamps of Russian provincial post offices in Outer Mongolia (KOBDO, SHARASUME, TSAIN-SHABI and ULIASUTAI) and from the Mongolian-Siberian border town TROITSKOSAVSK;
- Chinese red band covers with native and bilingual circular date-stamps from KULUN (Urga) to China (1911-1920);
- So far an unknown bilingual circular date-stamp of the Chinese provincial post office CHENGWASZE /Sharasume (Altai region) and rare c.d.s. of the Chinese post office KIACHTA (Siberian-Mongolian border);
- Unknown incoming covers from the Chinese hinterland (province SHANXI) to KULUN (Urga) (1915-1919);
- Square date-stamps and double circle date-stamps from URGA/ ULANBATOR and various provincial post offices of the Mongolian People's Republic;
- Some of the earliest URGA square date-stamps on the first Mongolian postage stamps (1924);
- So far an unknown Mongolian postal form with the first seven postage stamps cancelled by „URGA“ square date-stamps (1925);
- Domestic covers with square date-stamps from provincial post offices to URGA/ULANBATOR (1925-1928)
- One of the two known German newspaper wrappers (DRESDEN) and the so far only discovered incoming registered envelope from LEIPZIG/ Germany to ULANBATOR/ Mongolia (1926);
- Registered covers with double circle date-stamps from ULANBATOR and various provincial post offices (1926-1939);
- One of the very few first air mail covers from MOSCOW/ USSR to ULANBATOR/ Mongolia (1928);
- Air mail from Mongolia to Sweden with short-term used Russian "Vozdushnaya Pochta" handstamp (1930);
- So far the only registered cover from Mongolia to GERMANY (FULDA) with double circle date-stamps on the complete series of the first „New Mongolia“ pictorial postage stamps (1935);
- Varieties of local, registered, postage due postmarks and various handstamps: error in dates, period of use, colour and wordings and re-naming of provincial post offices (1926-1939).

Mostly foreign literature (handbooks, catalogues and philatelic articles - Engl., Russ., Swed., Chin. and Mong.) was used. In addition the exhibit is based on my own research work, which was published in the following philatelic journals from 2015 to 2020 (see the „Introductory“ page of the exhibit):

„ARCHIV“, „berlin-brandenburg philatelie“, „Die China-Philatelie“, „Festschrift zum 130.Jahrestag des Berliner Philatelisten-Klubs 1888 e.V.“, „philatelie“, „Zeitschrift für Russische Philatelie“ (GER), „British Journal of Russian Philately“ (UK) and „Nordisk Filateli“ (SWE).

The exhibitor is member of the following associations and societies:

AIJP (Association Internationale Journaliste Philatelic), „Lichtenberger Philatelistenfreunde '79 e.V.“, „Berliner Philatelisten-Klub von 1888 e.V.“, „Forge „China“, „Bund Deutscher Philatelisten e.V.“ (GER), „British Society of Russian Philately“, Royal Philatelic Society London (UK) and „ROSSICA - The Society of Russian Philately“ (USA).

- The only known example of the earliest Russian postmark on a piece of cover from „URGA“ in Outer Mongolia (1879);
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- Russian covers and postage stamps with single and double circle date-stamps from „URGA“ (1897-1918);
- Double circle date-stamps from „URGA“ on registered parcel post with „Romanov“ stamps (1913/14);
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MONGOLIA

- Land of Genghis Khan.

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Plan:



1. Activities of the traditional Mongolian „URTUU“ (horse-relay) postal service



2. Activities of the Russian post offices and their postmarks (1878-1920)

- 2.1 The Russian postal service in Outer Mongolia and its early „URGA“ postmarks
- 2.2 „URGA“ - Double oval date-stamps with date specifications (1881-1895)
- 2.3 „URGA“ - Single circle date-stamps with serial number „1“ (1896-1909)
- 2.4 „URGA“ - Double circle date-stamps with serial letters „a“, „be“ and „ve“ (1909-1918)
- 2.5 Provincial post offices - Circular date-stamps (1897-1919)
- 2.6 Frontier post office „TROITSKOSAVSK“ - circular date-stamps (1897-1918)



3. Activities of the Chinese post offices and their postmarks (1910-1921)

- 3.1 The Chinese postal service in Outer Mongolia and its main postmarks
- 3.2 „KULUN“ - Native circular date-stamp (1911)
- 3.3 „URGA / KULUN“ - Bilingual circular date-stamps (1912-1920)
- 3.4 Provincial and frontier post offices - Circular date-stamps (1910-1920)



4. Activities of the Mongolian post offices and their postmarks (1921-1939)

- 4.1 Early stages of the Mongolian postal service and its first postmarks
- 4.2 „URGA“ - Square date-stamps (1924-1925)
- 4.3 Provincial post offices - Square date-stamps (1925-1929)
- 4.4 „ULANBATOR“ - Double circle date-stamps (1926-1935)
- 4.5 Provincial post offices - Double circle date-stamps (1926-1934)
- 4.6 „ULAN-BAATOR (UGOR)“ Double circle date-stamps (1935-1939)

Historic background:

A special characteristic of the development of the **postal service in Outer Mongolia** since the second half of the 19th century was the fact that on the basis of bilateral treaties (1727, 1858 and 1860) the official postal routes and the first post offices were operated by its neighbors, **Russia and China**. The main postal route between those two neighboring countries went through Mongolian territories, the legendary „Great Tea Road“ from **Tientsin – Beijing – Kalgan – Urga – Kyakhta** and vice versa.

After the **proclamation of the independence of Outer Mongolia on 29 December 1911** the Mongols did not possess their own postage stamps and town cancels. Therefore only Russian and Chinese postal stamps and postmarks were used at all in Outer Mongolia. At the beginning of **August 1924** the Mongolian Post issued its **first own postage stamps**, however without the country-name „MONGOLIA“ and without its own national currency value. Only after the **proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic on 26 November 1924** conditions were gradually established to build an own national postal service, including the use of its own postmarks with the name of the country as well as the names of the provincial post offices.

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