THE “SUZHONG PICTORIAL” STAMPS OF 1945-46
Hugh Lawrence and Richard Cates

The “Suzhong Pictorial” stamps\(^1\) are some of the more attractive and, from a design standpoint, interesting Chinese Communist Liberated Area (LA) stamps that were issued prior to the end of the War of Resistance against Japan (World War II) in September 1945. They were the first LA stamps issued for the Suzhong (Central Jiangsu) District which indicated both a denomination and a specific designation for the category of mail for which they were intended. Previously, the stamps issued for this district were without denomination, their intended purpose being designated solely by overprint. The Suzhong Pictorials also marked the initiation of mail service for private individuals within this district; prior stamps issued for this district were intended solely for use by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the army, or the government.

A comprehensive discussion of the Suzhong Pictorials requires examining a number of distinct matters: (a) the formation and development of the Suzhong District and the conditions under which it operated; (b) the background of the eight black essays for the Suzhong Pictorials and their designs; (c) the preparation and delivery of the requisite printing plates for the issued stamps; (d) the five initially issued stamps, how they differed from the essays, and the layouts of the plates used to print them; (e) the stamps of the second printing of the Suzhong Pictorials; and (f) why, when, and where the various overprints were issued.

The Suzhong District

The Suzhong District comprised that portion of Jiangsu Province that lay north of the Yangtze River (Changjiang), east of the Grand Canal (also known as the Jing-Hang Canal because it linked Beijing in the north to Hangzhou in the south), south of the southern boundary of the Yanfu District, and east to the shores of the Yellow Sea (Figure 1). It was established in December 1940 by the New Fourth Army as it moved northward from the area south of the Yangtze (also known as Sunan or South Jiangsu). The Suzhong District was a portion of the Central China Revolutionary Base Area and, although it was originally named the Subei (North Jiangsu, i.e., that portion of Jiangsu Province lying north of the Yangtze) District, this name was changed to the Suzhong District in early 1941.

The postal activities of the Suzhong District were under the control of the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau based in Libao. In May 1941, the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau established three sub-districts, initially referred to as the West, Central, and East (later renamed the Second, Third, and Fourth) Sub-districts. A sub-district

---

communications bureau was established for each of these and, similarly, a county communications bureau was established for each county within each of these subdistricts.

(Figure 1)

When the Suzhong District was established, the War of Resistance against Japan was still in its early stages and the Japanese held a predominant position in much of north and central China. Japanese forces occupied most of the large- and medium-size cities, and even some villages, and controlled most major land, rail, and water communications routes. Beyond this, the Japanese puppet government of Wang Jingwei (also known as the Reorganized National Government (RNG)) was based in Nanjing on the south bank of the Yangtze.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Japanese forces as well as the forces of the RNG conducted several “Mopping-up” Campaigns in the Central China area to repress military opposition. These were intensive military campaigns and, in Jiangsu Province at least, they were more effective against the Nationalist forces than against those of the Communists. Following these, a series of Pacification (Qingxiang or “Clearing Villages”) Campaigns were conducted. These had both military and political components and were an attempt to reduce opposition by rural Chinese against Japanese and RNG personnel. The Communists, of course, engaged in anti-Mopping-up and anti-Pacification campaigns which, by late 1944, began to bear dividends.

In response to these Japanese and RNG campaigns, however, the Second, Third, and Fourth Sub-districts (as well as a subsequently formed First Sub-district) were assigned the code designations “A” (for the First Sub-district), “B,” “C,” and “D” (for the Second through Fourth Sub-districts, respectively)
The Eight Black Essays

Given the hurdles presented by the Mopping-up and Pacification Campaigns, the provision of mail service was very difficult. At the beginning of the 1940s, neither stamps nor, in many instances, envelopes were used in the Suzhong District, folded sheets of paper usually being delivered by foot or by horseback with travel only at night. Mail service was restricted solely to the CCP, the government, and the military. Postage was not charged.

Although envelopes soon made an appearance, the first Suzhong District stamps were not issued until November 1942. These stamps consisted of the junk, torch, and hawk design stamps and were not denominated, the category of mail for which they were to be used indicated by an overprint: the character “ping” (平) being used on the stamp picturing a Chinese junk to indicate mail of any kind that was neither highly confidential nor urgent but for which records needed to be maintained to permit verification of delivery (verifiable); the character “ji” (机) being used on the stamp picturing a torch to indicate confidential (a category of mail requiring formal registration) (registered confidential); and the character “kuai” (快) being used on the stamp picturing a hawk to indicate express (a category of mail that also required formal registration) (registered express). Mail service continued to be restricted to the CCP, the government, and the military.

As conditions within the Suzhong District gradually began to improve in 1944, the personnel of the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau began to consider offering postal service to private individuals as well as to the party, government, and military, and to charge postage for all such services.

Fei Xing designed the Suzhong Pictorials. He had extensive experience as a printer and designer and, in 1935, had worked in the Dadong Bookstore printing plant in Shanghai as an underground Communist agent. In 1938 he moved first to Hong Kong, then to Wuhan, and finally to Wannan (South Anhui) where he worked as a designer and a printer with the Military Bureau of the New Fourth Army. Because of this experience he was dispatched to Shanghai to purchase printing equipment. Upon completing this assignment, he returned to Suzhong.

In 1944, Fei Xing was asked by the head of the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau, a Mr. Shen, to design the set of denominated stamps which would be needed. He returned to Shanghai and sketched out eight designs. While he would have preferred designs which more directly glorified the CCP, the Communist army and the like, he had to be a bit more circumspect as Shanghai was under Japanese control. In most cases he settled for images that were somewhat muted. His designs, all in black, consisted of the following:

(a) A 30 fen (三角) two-part design, the upper portion of which shows three soldiers studying a party newspaper and the lower portion of which shows a battle scene. The character “快” at the upper right indicates the stamp was intended for all types of
party, government, or military letters and official documents that were urgent and required registered express treatment (Figure 2).

(b) A 15 fen design which shows a soldier and two children. The character “平” at the upper left indicates the stamp was intended for party, government, or military letters and documents that did not require formal registration but did require what would now be called a “tracking number” so that delivery could be verified (Figure 3).

(c) A 15 fen (壹角半) design which shows nurses tending injured soldiers. It does not indicate the category of mail for which the stamp was to be used (Figure 4).

(d) A 25 fen design which shows a soldier holding a rifle and bayonet. The character “mi” (密) towards the lower right indicates the stamp was intended for party, government, or military letters and documents that were extremely sensitive and required registered confidential treatment (Figure 5).

(e) A 10 fen (壹角) design which shows a soldier and a militiaman shooting at the enemy. The character “yin” (印) at the upper left indicates the stamp was intended for all forms of party, government, or military printed matter (Figure 6). Although this
category of mail did not require registration or verifiability, it was not available to private individuals.

(f) A 30 fen design which commemorates the 23rd anniversary of the CCP. It does not indicate the category of mail for which the stamp was to be used (Figure 7).

(g) A 25 fen (廿五分) design which shows two soldiers holding a child. It does not indicate the category of mail for which the stamp was to be used (Figure 8).

(h) A 5 fen (五分) design which shows a peasant, a child, and an ox used in farming. The character “bian” (便) at the upper left indicates the stamp was intended for use by private individuals (Figure 9). This was the only category of mail available to private individuals².

Each of these sketches (other than that shown in Figure 8 above) includes the date “1944” in either Arabic numerals or Chinese characters, each of these sketches (other than that shown in Figure 7 above) includes the name “Shuzhung” (Suzhong) in Roman letters, and each of these sketches (other than that shown in Figure 8 above) includes the name “Suzhong Wartime Post” (苏中战邮) somewhere in the design.

The Suzhong Pictorial Printing Plates

After Fei Xing completed his designs, Yang Lihong was specifically sent from Suzhong to Shanghai to prepare the plates to be used to print the Suzhong Pictorials. This was done at the printing plant of the Shanghai magazine “Time” (Shidai Zazhi) while the Japanese continued to occupy the city. The plates were made from zinc. The canceling chop that was to be used throughout Suzhong was made from iron. When the plates were completed, black prints of the essays were prepared and approved by Fei Xing.

Then the hard part: how to smuggle the plates and the chop back to Suzhong when much of the route, including the points of riverboat departure and arrival, were under the control of Japanese or RNG forces and travelers were routinely subject to search. The method was ingenious. On the boat journey up the Yangtze from Shanghai to Puzhen (on the north bank of the Yangtze across from Nanjing), Fei Xing was accompanied by Li Tanqiu, the wife of Tang Kang, the head of the Suzhong newspaper bureau, and his infant daughter. The plates and the chop were successfully hidden in the daughter’s diaper basket and ultimately delivered to Mr. Shen in Rugao.

The First Print of the Suzhong Pictorials

From the eight designs originally sketched by Fei Xing, five were selected and constitute the first print of the Suzhong Pictorials. All were issued on March 15, 1945, one for each of the required categories of mail. The date “1944” that was included in each of the sketches of the selected designs was changed to “1945” on the issued stamps and each of the issued stamps was modified from the original sketch in various ways. All stamps of both the first and second prints of the Suzhong Pictorials, except for the K. A. overprints discussed below, were denominated in Jianghuai Currency (江淮币), equivalent to, and later replaced by, Central China Currency (华中币).

The peasant, child, and ox design (Figure 9 above) was retained as the stamp to be used for private individuals (便) and was printed in blue-green. Its denomination, however, was increased from 5 fen to 10 fen (壹角). Use of this stamp was limited to within the Suzhong District (Figure 10).

The design of the stamp for printed matter (印) showing a soldier and a militiaman shooting at the enemy (Figure 6 above) was kept largely in its original form. It was printed in blue-green and retained its original denomination of 10 fen (壹角) (Figure 11).

The registered express (快) stamp, also printed in blue-green, is almost identical to the corresponding black essay (Figure 2 above) (Figure 12). When this stamp was issued, however, it was determined that the 30 fen denomination was too low to cover the cost of the service provided so the stamp was surcharged in red “Change for use as 40 fen” (改作四角) (in the corners of the stamp, reading top to bottom, right to left) with the character “express” (快) centered on the stamp. This was not only because the character “kuai” in the original design was quite small, but also because it was covered by the character “gai” (改) in the surcharge. The surcharge was applied by the printing plant of the Suzhong Bao (a newspaper).

---

3 Yang EC282-286; Mizuhara HZ95-99; PPTP K.HZ-24(1-5)
4 Yang EC282; Mizuhara HZ96; PPTP K.HZ-24(2)
5 Yang EC283; Mizuhara HZ95; PPTP K.HZ-24(1)
6 Yang EC286; Mizuhara HZ99; PPTP K.HZ-24(5)
One error is known with respect to the registered express stamp in which the character “express” (快) is missing from the center of the stamp (Figure 13). It is likely that this error occurs on one of the two center registered express stamps that are toward the middle of the complete sheet rather than at the sheet margin (as evidenced by the block of six of the stamp (3 x 2) with the error at position 2 of 6 shown in Figure 14). It is not certain if this is a constant error or only appeared later in the printing process. In addition, the stamp exists wholly without surcharge in its prepared but unissued form (Figure 15).

The cover shown in Figure 16 was mailed on March 14, 1946 by the Second Branch Office of the Central China Bank to the Baoying Branch Office of the same bank. It is franked with a single copy of the registered express stamp paying the 40 fen charge for that category of mail. The Suwan [Border Area] circular cancels on the front and back (Figure 17) indicate the cover was mailed from the Second Sub-district of the Communications Bureau and the oval chop is the dispatch cancel of the Second Branch Office of the Central China Bank. The number “211” in the rectangular box is the registration number.

---

7 Yang EC286b; Mizuhara HZ99a; PPTP K.HZ-24(5)a
8 Yang EC286c; Mizuhara HZ99b
Initially, the stamps for private individuals, printed matter and registered express were printed on a single sheet of 24 stamps consisting of eight stamps of each design. Two views have emerged, however, as to the format of the sheet. Mizuhara postulates that the sheet is roughly square with the private individual stamps (arranged 2 x 4) and the printed matter stamps (arranged 4 x 2) each being upright, and the registered express stamps (arranged 2 x 4) rotated 90º counter-clockwise\(^9\) (Figure 18). The second view is stated in Volume B of the East China Volume of *A Stamp History of China’s Liberated Areas* (Stamp History). It postulates that the sheet is a tall rectangle with the private individual stamps (arranged 2 x 4) and the printed matter stamps (arranged 4 x 2) each being rotated 90º clockwise, and the registered express stamps (arranged 2 x 4) upright\(^10\) (Figure 19).

\(^9\) Mizuhara, p. 24.
precludes the existence of the tête-bêche pair of the first print registered express stamps listed in Yang.\textsuperscript{11} Significantly, neither Mizuhara nor PPTP list such a tête-bêche pair. Such tête-bêche pairs exist, however, on the second print Suzhong Pictorial stamps as they were printed in a different format despite having the same design.

A later printing only included the private individual and printed matter stamps. There were 11 private individual stamps and 13 printed matter stamps on each sheet of 24 (arranged 4 x 6) as shown in Figure 20\textsuperscript{12}.

(Figure 20: discussion of overprints on printed matter stamps to follow)

The remaining first print Suzhong Pictorials were each printed in sheets of their own. The soldier and children design (Figure 3 above) was retained as the stamp intended for use for party, government, or military letters and documents that did not require registration but merely had to be verifiable (平). It was printed in both red orange\textsuperscript{13} (Figure 21) and orange yellow\textsuperscript{14} (Figure 22), but its denomination was increased from 15 fen to 20 fen. The plate used for this stamp consisted of twelve images (arranged 2 x 6) and each sheet consisted of two plate images arranged tête-bêche (Figure 23).

\textsuperscript{11} Yang EC286a
\textsuperscript{12} Rare Collection, p.89.
\textsuperscript{13} Mizuhara HZ97b
\textsuperscript{14} Yang EC284; Mizuhara HZ97a; PPTP K.HZ-24(3)
A variety of the stamp known as the “bird in sky” is found at position 7 of each imprint of the plate (two per sheet). The “bird” is located towards the upper left of the design just below the denomination. A larger image is shown in Figure 24. The cover shown in Figure 25 also shows this variety. It was sent on August 9, 1945, several weeks before Japan’s surrender, from the Communications Administrative Branch of Huainan to the Deputy Director of the General Communications Bureau of Huaibei. Unlike the stamps issued by the Suzhong District for private individuals, stamps for official use could be used in districts other than Suzhong.
(Figure 25)

The fifth and last of the first print Suzhong Pictorials was the soldier holding a rifle and bayonet design intended for use for party, government, or military letters and documents that required registered confidential treatment (密). This stamp, too, is almost identical to the corresponding black essay (Figure 5 above) although printed in blue\(^\text{15}\) (Figure 26). As with the registered express stamp, it was determined that the 25 fen denomination was too low to cover the cost of the service provided and the stamp was surcharged in red “Change for use as 40 fen” (改作四角) (in a small square at the upper right of the stamp, reading top to bottom, right to left). The plate used for this stamp also consisted of twelve images (arranged 6 x 2) and each sheet consisted of two plate images arranged tête-bêche (Figure 27). A variety of this stamp with the surcharge shifted towards the center also exists (Figure 28). There have been no reports of this stamp being found without surcharge.

(Figure 26)  (Figure 27)  (Figure 28)

The cover shown in Figure 29 was sent on March 28, 1946, from the Prefectural Commissioner’s Office of the Second Administrative Division of the Suwan (Jiangsu-Anhui) Border Area to Zhang Dingzheng, the Commander, and Deng Zihui, the Political Commissar, of the Central China Military Region. The characters “ji kuai” (机快) are handwritten to the left of the addressees’ names and confirm that the letter was being sent as both confidential and express registered mail, the oval chop is the sender’s dispatch chop, and the registration number “658” is handwritten in the rectangular box. With the end of the War of Resistance against Japan in September 1945 and the formation of the Suwan Border Area General Communications Bureau, the Suzhong Pictorials (including those for private individuals) could be used throughout the Suwan Border Area.

\(^{15}\) Yang EC285; Mizuhara HZ98; PPTP K.HZ-24(4)
The total amount of postage assessed on any given item mailed was determined by the nature of the item sent and the weight. If the item being sent was a letter and it was being sent by any category of mail other than printed matter, one stamp was to be applied if the item weighed less than two liang (两) (a Chinese unit of measure equal to ten qian (钱) (50 grams)), two stamps if the item weighed more than two liang but less than four liang, and one additional stamp for each additional increment equal to or less than two liang. If the item or items being sent were official documents, each increment was increased from two liang to four liang (i.e., a five liang mailing of official documents required two stamps). No such item mailed could exceed three jin (斤) (a Chinese unit of measure equal to 500 grams). As for printed matter, one stamp paid postage for each increment equal to two or less than two jin, with a limit of 16 jin. Any package of printed matter in excess of 16 jin had to be split into two or more separate packages.

The Second Print of the Suzhong Pictorials

The second print of the Suzhong Pictorials was issued between September and November 1945. It consists of four stamps: the 10 fen peasant, child, and ox design for mail from private individuals (Figure 30), the 20 fen with the soldier and two children design for ordinary verifiable party, government, and military documents and letters (Figure 31), the 25 fen soldier holding a rifle and bayonet design for registered confidential party, government, and military mail (surcharged to 40 fen) (Figure 32), and the 30 fen soldiers studying/battle scene design for party, government, and military registered express mail (surcharged to 40 fen).

---

16 Yang EC287-290; Mizuhara HZ100-103; PPTP K.HZ-25(1-4)
17 Yang EC287; Mizuhara HZ100; PPTP K.HZ-25(1)
18 Yang EC288; Mizuhara HZ101; PPTP K.HZ-25(2)
19 Yang EC289; Mizuhara HZ102; PPTP K.HZ-25(3)
20 Yang EC290; Mizuhara HZ103; PPTP K.HZ-25(4)
(Figure 33). The design of each of these stamps was identical to the corresponding first print stamp because the plates used for the original stamps were reused for these.

(Figure 30) (Figure 31)

(Figure 32) (Figure 33)

Each design was printed on its own sheet and, according to Mizuhara, each sheet of the private individual, ordinary, and registered confidential stamps consisted of a block of eight (arranged 2 x 4). The block of ordinary stamps shown in Figure 34 with perforations along the right margin potentially renders this questionable at least as to the 20 fen stamp, because one would have expected the right margin of a 2 x 4 block to be imperforate as is the stamp on the cover shown in Figure 38 below. The sheet for the registered express stamps also consisted of a block of eight (arranged 2 x 4) but this block of eight was composed of two blocks of four arranged tête-bêche²¹ (Figure 35). All of the second print stamps were perforated 11½, but not usually along the outside margins. All stamps were printed in dark green and the surcharges on the registered confidential and registered express stamps were printed in red, positioned as they were on the first print stamps. The “bird in sky” variety found on the 20 fen stamp for ordinary verifiable party, government, and military documents and letters is also found on the second print stamps, this time on the first stamp in the second row (position 3?) of the sheet (Figure 34). There may be more elsewhere in the sheet.

²¹ Yang EC290a; Mizuhara HZ103a
The Figure 36/37 cover was mailed in either late 1945 or early 1946 from the Bank of Huaiyin to Chen Jian, the Manager of the Baoying Branch of the Central China Bank. The envelope was folded from old postal forms as wartime shortages restricted availability of paper. While it seems probable that the letter was mailed from Huaiyin, the cancel, a Suwan Border Area General Communications Bureau cancel, specifies neither the place nor time of mailing.

The cover shown in Figure 38 was sent in either late 1945 or early 1946 from the Public Security Bureau of the Suwan Border Area to Zeng Shan, the Minister of the Organizational Bureau of the Central China Branch of the CCP. The use of the 20 fen ordinary mail stamp indicates the envelope probably held party documents; the number 4174 stamped in purple on the face of the cover is a tracking number (the character before the number, “総” (zong), indicates it was sent from the District General Communications Bureau). The cancel is an undated Suwan Border Area General Communications Bureau cancel.
A second cover to Zeng Shan, this time mailed from the First Prefectural Party Committee of the Suzhong Border Area, is shown in Figure 39. It was mailed in early 1946 and is franked with both the second print 25 fen soldier holding a rifle and bayonet design for registered confidential mail (surcharged to 40 fen) and the second print 30 fen soldiers studying/battle scene design for registered express mail (surcharged to 40 fen). It is possible that the use of two stamps indicates a letter weighing more than two but less than four liang. It is also possible, the cover shown in Figure 29 notwithstanding, that confidential registry service and express registry service were distinct, and each had to be paid separately. The registration number, “1343,” is handwritten at the upper right.
A local cover used in Huaian, the capital of the Suwan Border Area, sent by the Suwan Border Area Department of Finance to Zhang Dingzheng, the Commander, and SuYu, the Deputy Commander, of the Central China Military Region is shown in Figures 40 and 41. It is franked with the second print registered express stamp and, while it does not show a registration number on its face, the paper remnant at the upper left on the face of the cover may be what is left of a registration slip. Although the Suwan General Communications Bureau cancel on the stamp does not contain a handwritten date in the space provided, it is most likely the item was mailed in early 1946.

**Overprints on the First Print and Second Print Suzhong Pictorials**

Following the defeat of Japan and the commencement of what would prove to be a short-lived period of cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists, the demand for mail services by private individuals increased markedly and, in some areas, shortages of stamps for private mail arose. This resulted in several sub-districts taking existing stocks of first print 10 fen printed matter stamps and second print 40 fen on 30 fen registered express mail stamps and overprinting them for use for private mail.

Between September and November 1945, the Communications Bureau of the Third Sub-district of the Suzhong District (based in Rugao County) used a wood chop to overprint a quantity of the 10 fen printed matter stamps with the characters “For temporary use as private mail” (暂作便邮) in one of violet, red or black. Because a vertically-oriented chop was used to overprint a horizontally-oriented stamp, and because the overprint was sometimes applied with the characters “暂” and “便” toward the left of the horizontal stamp and sometimes toward the right, the determination of which placement is “correct” and which is “inverted” is somewhat arbitrary. PPTP is the only catalog which lists the “inverted” variety and may have chosen the variety with the characters “暂” and “便” toward the left as the “inverted” variety because it occurs only with the purple overprint while the “normal” can be found in all three colors. The inverted overprint is shown on the sheet pictured in Figure 20 and in Figures 43 and 43a, below. This group of stamps is often referred to as the “Rugao Overprints.”

---

22 Yang EC291-293; Mizuhara HZ104a-c; PPTP K.HZ-27(1-3)
23 Rare Collection, p. 88.
24 PPTP K.HZ-27(1)a
The Communications Bureau of the First Sub-district of the Suzhong District was in Xinghua. Faced with the same problems as were faced in Rugao, it also used a wood chop to overprint a quantity of both the 10 fen first print printed matter stamps and the 40 fen on 30 fen second print registered express mail stamps with the characters “Change for use as private mail” (改作便邮) in violet (Figures 44 and 45).

The overprint reads from left to right, top to bottom. The overprinted 10 fen stamp also exists with an inverted overprint (Figure 46).

These stamps were issued between September and November 1945 and are sometimes known as the “Xinghua Overprints.”

During the same period that the Communications Bureau of the First Sub-district of the Suzhong District was preparing the Xinghua Overprints discussed above, it also prepared and issued two additional overprinted stamps, these on the 40 fen on 25 fen first print registered confidential mail stamps. This overprint converted the registered confidential mail stamps to registered express mail stamps using the characters “Change for use as express mail” (改作快邮) reading from top to bottom, right to left. One of the overprints was prepared by hand using a wooden chop (Figures 47 and 48), the other by machine (Figures 49 and 50). Both overprints were in violet, were about the same size as the prior surcharges which read “Change for use as 40 fen” (改作四角) and were placed directly below the original surcharges.

---

25 Yang EC295-296; Mizuhara HZ106-107; PPTP K.HZ-29(1-2)
26 Rare Collection, p.90.
27 Mizuhara HZ106a
28 Rare Collection, p.90.
29 Yang EC297a; Mizuhara HZ109; PPTP K.HZ-30(1)
30 Yang EC297; Mizuhara HZ108; PPTP K.HZ-30(2)
A discussion of the overprints created in the Fourth Sub-district of the Suzhong District requires a brief return to the initial structuring of the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau. When first established in 1941, the Suzhong District was divided into three sub-districts, initially referred to as the Central, West, and East Sub-districts. These were later renamed the Second, Third, and Fourth Sub-districts, and a First Sub-district was added. In response to the Japanese and RNG Mopping-up and Pacification Campaigns, the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Sub-districts were assigned the code designations “A,” “B,” “C,” and “D,” respectively. Counties within sub-districts were also assigned code designations using Roman numerals.

One of the primary purposes of the codes was to disguise, at least to an extent, the point of origin of items sent through the mail. Accordingly, the codes were often used in cancels in lieu of a county, city, or town name. The First Sub-district (“A”) included cities and towns near the border between Anhui and Jiangsu Provinces such as Baoying, Gaoyou, and Jiangdu toward the west; the Second (“B”), Dongtai, Taibei, and Xinghua east of the First Sub-district; the Third (“C”), Ruxi, Taixing, and Taixian south of the Second Sub-district; and the Fourth (“D”), Nantong, Haimen, and Rugao to the east. The “D IIII” cancel on the first print 10 fen private individual stamp shown in Figure 51 would have come from somewhere in the Fourth Sub-district while the “A VII” cancel on the second print 10 fen private individual stamp shown in Figure 52 would have come from somewhere in the First Sub-district.

![Figure 51](image1)
![Figure 52](image2)

Under this system, Nantong County had been given the code designation “D II.” In Nantong, the problem of too few stamps for private individuals was resolved by overprinting a quantity of the 10 fen first print printed matter stamps with the characters “Change for use as private mail” (改作便邮), reading top to bottom, left to right, with the code “DII” centered in the overprint. The overprint, in violet, was applied by hand with a wooden chop that had been prepared in the town of Jinshazhen. There are two types of overprint, one with a 2 mm dash on each side of the “DII” code (Figure 53), and one without such dashes. The stamp with dashes on either side also exists with an inverted overprint (Figure 54). It is possible the stamp without dashes also exists inverted, but it is quite hard to tell as the dashes are often printed incompletely or very lightly. These stamps were issued between September and November 1945 and are sometimes known as the “Nantong Overprints.”

---

31 Yang EC294; Mizuhara HZ105; PPTP K.HZ-28(1)
32 Mizuhara HZ105c
33 Yang EC294a; Mizuhara HZ105a; PPTP K.HZ-28(1)a
With the end of the War of Resistance against Japan, a fundamental change took place in the organization of the Suzhong District, the Suzhong District General Communications Bureau and all their respective sub-districts and sub-district communications bureaus. In November 1945, the Suwan Border Area government and the Suwan Border Area General Communications Bureau were established, and, on December 1, all the Suzhong District and sub-district organs were subsumed into it.

The last set of overprints on the Suzhong Pictorials was issued in early 1946 by the Suwan Border Area General Communications Bureau. It consists of four stamps (the Suzhong first print 20 fen ordinary mail, 40 fen on 25 fen registered confidential mail, and 40 fen on 30 fen registered express mail stamps, and the Suzhong second print 10 fen stamp for private individuals), each overprinted in black with the initials “K. A.” (Figure 55-58). The “K. A.” overprint appears to derive from the new name of the border area and its communications bureau. As noted above, the term “Suwan” refers to Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces. Before the development of the pinyin system of romanization in the 1950s, the accepted romanization of Jiangsu was “Kiangsu,” hence “Kiangsu-Anhui.” The “K. A.” overprints were denominated in Central China Currency which, as noted earlier, was equivalent to and replaced Jianghuai Currency following the formation of the Suwan Border Area government. The “K. A.” overprints are not known either used or on cover.

All the Suzhong Pictorials and their various surcharges were withdrawn from use on April 1, 1946. By then the Suwan Border Area Mao portrait stamps had already been issued and the Suwan Border Area train stamps were soon to follow.  

---

34 Yang EC298-300; Mizuhara SW1-3A; PPTP K.HD-38(1-4)
35 Yang EC308-319 Mizuhara SW11-21; PPTP K.HZ-29(1-10), K.HZ-33(1-2)
36 Yang EC322-331; SW24-33; PPTP K.HZ-32(1-6), K.HZ-34(1-3)
37 The authors wish to thank William C. Y. Kwan for permission to use the images in Figures 14, 23, 27, 47, 48, and 53. The images in Figures 10-13, 15-17, 21, 22, 24-26, 28-41, 43, 43a, 49-52, and 54-58 are from the collection of co-author Richard Cates.