

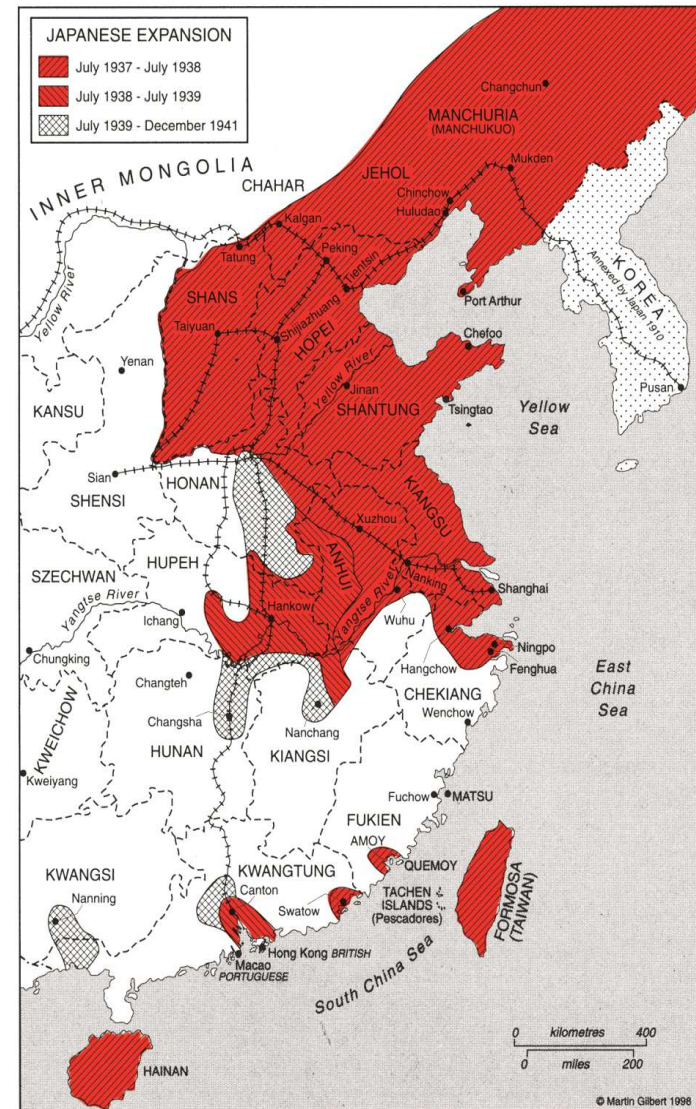
China's U. S. Constitution Commemoratives: Through-the-Line Usages

On July 4, 1939, China issued four stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. The Japanese attempted to prohibit their use in the occupied areas and, after Pearl Harbor, even visited stamp shops and collectors to confiscate the stamps. In 1931 Japan had conquered northeastern China and created the puppet state of Manchukuo. The Japanese were angered by the map on the stamps which still showed Manchukuo as part of China and by the presence of the United States flag next to China's flag.

Japan had invaded China in 1937, but the Japanese let the Chinese continue to produce the stamps. Shanghai fell in November 1937, and Canton, the last remaining seaport, fell in October 1938. Thereafter, China was almost completely isolated from the rest of world. By 1939 China was divided into "Occupied China" and "Free China."

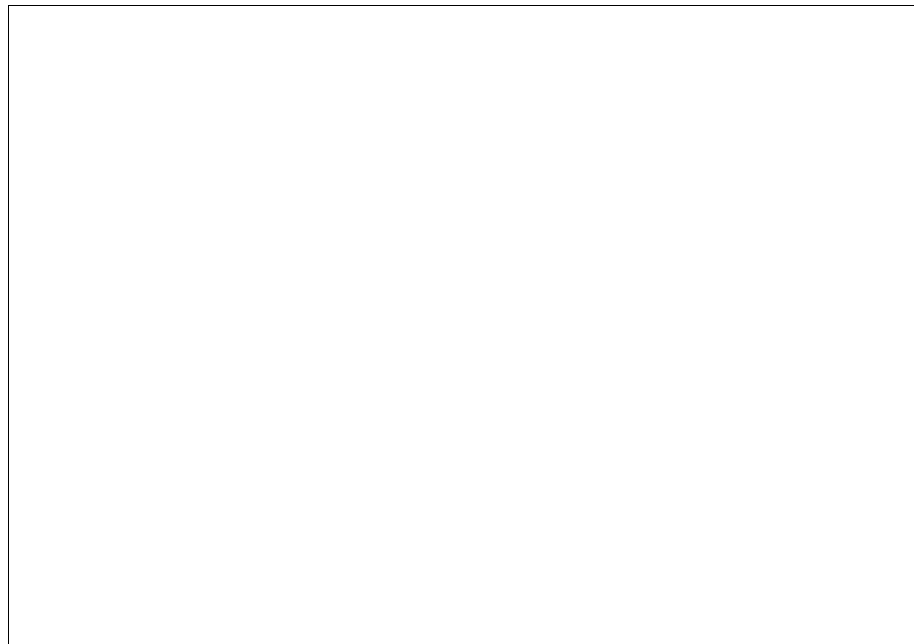
These covers were mailed from within, or evaded or transited, Occupied China. Most covers are international because this did not endanger the recipient.

To circumvent the blockade, Hong Kong provided international airmail connections until it fell in December 1941. Surface mail from western China went by rail through Indo-China, until the Vichy French agreed to close that route in June 1940. Some mail from Free China went via cities in Occupied China. Various deceptions were used to send mail from Shanghai. Some mail went west on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In the south, the coastal province of Fukien, with its many estuaries, was ideal for smuggling to Hong Kong. Some mail was hand carried by individuals and posted at sea. In the spring of 1940 the Burma Road was reopened.



PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

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Die Proof of engraved portion of design

Issue Date:	July 4, 1939	Quantity	2,000,000 each
Sale suspended:	March 31, 1940	Sheet size:	100 (10 x 10) with gum
Demonetized:	May 1, 1940	Perforation:	Gauge 12
Without plate numbers or printer's imprints			
Printing process:	Engraved, with flag by offset lithography		
	First Chinese stamp printed using two processes.		
Printer:	American Bank Note Co. (appears below frame in Chinese)		

INTERNATIONAL RATES DURING THIS TIME FRAME

Date	Postcard	Letter		Fees to UPU Countries			
		First 20g.	Succ. 20g.	Registered	A.R.	Express	Reg. Exp.
2/1/36	.15	.25	.15	.25	.25	.50	.75
9/1/39	.30	.50	.30	.50	.50	1.00	1.50

One by one all the seaports fell.

Instructions from Kunming advised against use in Occupied China.

An airmail surcharge was applied based upon the route taken, airline(s) involved, and destination.