

Thai Stamps from 1883

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A Brief History of Stamps

On 6th May 1840, Great Britain was the first country in the world to enable its citizens to pay for the postage of letter by the affixation of gummed stamps. Sir Rowland Hill reformed the British postal system by simplifying the method of paying for postage of mailed items. Previous to this innovation, the prepayment of postal charges was not possible. The sender was required to take the item to be mailed to a Post Office counter where the clerk calculated the actual postal cost by a complicated process, which took into account the item's weight, distance of travel, routing—whether by sea or land—and other considerations. The postal cost was paid in cash, and the envelope endorsed, by hand and a cancellation stamp, to show that postage and tax had been paid. Such covers, originating from this time of pre-philately, are highly sought after by collectors. Until the latter part of 17th century, such covers, hand endorsed and with a cancellation stamp, did not exist; letters then being only provided with a payment note written by hand.

Sir Rowland Hill can therefore be assigned the title, "Inventor of the Postage Stamp." On 6th May 1840, the first postage stamp appeared—the One Penny Black (*fig. 1*). Two days later, on 8th May, the Two Pence Blue was issued. Despite the antiquity of these two stamps, they are by no means rare. There were eleven issues of the One Penny Black, and two issues of the Two Pence Blue, made from different sets of engraving plates, and depending on its condition, a cancelled One Penny Black sells nowadays for a price of less than DM 1,000. The price for an uncancelled stamp, or one in mint condition, is ten to twenty times higher. The current price for a Two Pence Blue is twice that of a One Penny Black, cancelled or uncancelled.

The widespread belief that both the orange and blue Mauritius postage stamp (as single stamps) are the most expensive, or most famous, stamps in the world, is not correct. They may well be in the third rank of the famous stamps of the world. Both stamps were printed on 20th September 1847, in a quantity of five hundred each, for use on the mailing of an invitation for an evening ball,

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given by the wife of the British Governor of Mauritius, Lady Gomm. Only two uncanceled and eleven canceled orange stamps, and six uncanceled and six canceled blue stamps, have come to light. Consequently 975 stamps, of both colours, are still missing. Adding to their rarity value is the fact that, in error, the stamps were endorsed with the frank "Post Office" instead of "Postage Paid" (*fig. 2*). One letter carrying both of the Mauritius stamps was, on 3rd November 1993, sold by auction in Zurich, Switzerland, for five million Swiss Francs. Besides the One Cent British Guyana stamp, described below, this cover, bearing both the One Penny Orange and the Two Pence Blue, carries the highest philatelic rank.

The most expensive stamp in the world is the violet/pink British Guyana stamp, of which only one is known to exist (*fig. 3*). This stamp was issued in 1856, and is not surpassed in its ugliness. The stamps were printed, on coloured paper and in black ink, on a small printing press in Georgetown, the capital of British Guyana. The production was so simple that the stamp looks as though it was produced by hand-stamp printing. The picture on the stamp shows a sailing ship, surrounded by a simple line drawing, and captioned with the Mo Ho of the small colony, a quotation from Horace, *Damus Petirinus Que Vicissim*—"We give and demand the equivalent." Because this stamp contains a misprint, and there is only one in existence, it enjoys the reputation of being the rarest in the world. Only a four-cent stamp was printed on violet/pink paper.

Another world ranking rarity is the "Nine Kreuzer Baden," black on a blue/green background, and issued from August 1851. Only three cancelled stamps are known, two being on covers. This stamp is estimated, by the 1988 edition of the German Special Michel Catalogue, to have a value of three million German Marks. This stamp also bears a misprint, as the original colour should have been black on a pink/lilac background (*fig. 4*). Whilst on the subject of world ranking rare stamps, I must mention the first stamp issued in Sweden, with a face value of three Shillings, printed in yellow/orange colour. This is also a misprint as the original colour was intended to be a bluish green. Only one piece is known to exist, which was issued on 1st July 1858, and is estimated by the German Michel Catalogue to have a value of 1.3 million German Marks (*fig. 5*).

Switzerland was the first country in mainland Europe to issue postage stamps. On 1st March 1843, the first two stamps were issued in the Canton of Zurich (*fig. 6*), followed by the Canton of Basel with a 21/2 Rappen stamp (*fig. 7*), the so called *Baseler Täubchen*—"The Little Dove of Basel." In the Germanic states, stamps too began to appear. The famous black One Kreuzer stamp, from Bavaria, was issued on 1st November 1849 (*fig. 8*), which, depending on its condition and the type of original engraving plate used, fetches very variable prices.

There then followed, in the “Old German Countries,” one stamp after another. On 1st July 1850, Saxony issued a three-Pfennig stamp in red; the much in demand *3er Sachsen* (fig. 9); and Prussia (fig. 10) followed on 15th November of the same year. The first Hanoverian stamp (fig. 11) was issued on 1st December 1850. The last “Old German Country” to issue a stamp, on 1st January 1868, was the Norddeutscher Postbezirk—The North German Postal District—which included the states of Bremen, Brunswick, Hamburg, Lübeck, Mecklenburg–Schwerin, Mecklenburg–Strelitz, Oldenburg, Prussia, and Saxony (fig. 12). Prussia had already taken over the postal administration of Hanover, Sleswig–Holstein, and the postal areas of Thurn and Taxis. The first stamps of the new German Empire, which was founded on 18th January 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles after the Franco–German War of 1870/71, were issued on 1st January 1872 (fig. 13).

Brasilia was the first non-European country to issue stamps, in 1843. Because of their size, and their peculiar look (fig. 14), these Brazilian stamps acquired the nickname “Oxeyes.” By 1860, postage stamps had been introduced in most countries, though not in Thailand, where the first stamps were issued on 4th August 1883.

From the ten years since their inception in 1840, only 154 stamps had been issued worldwide. By 1860, the number had increased to only 913. By 1880, there were 4,848 in issue; by 1900—15,428; by 1920—38,000, and by 1950, the world was awash with more than one hundred thousand different postage stamps. By 1972, the number had increased to more than 150,000.

The Inception of Stamps in Thailand

As previously mentioned, Thailand, then called Siam, issued its first set of five stamps on 4th August 1883, with the values of one *solot*, one *att*, one *sio*, one *sik*, and one *salüing*. These were printed by the steel-plate recess printing method at the printers, Waterlow & Sons of London (fig. 15). A further value of one *fiang* was printed but not issued. Whilst the first five stamps issued in Thailand are estimated to only have a value of 2,500 Baht (3,000 Baht cancelled),¹ the unissued one *fiang* stamp (fig. 16) is worth around 30,000 Baht.

During the years 1883 to 1885, the British Post Office maintained a counter in New Road, Bangkok, where stamps of the Straits Settlement (Malacca, Penang, Singapore, together with Labuan, the Cocos Islands and Christmas Island) were sold overprinted with the letter “B”—Bangkok (fig. 17a&b). These stamps, nowadays, command tremendously high prices. For example, the first

uncancelled stamp, from a set of twenty-two stamps, three years ago, has an estimated value of 200,000 Baht, while the cancelled stamp was valued at 240,000 Baht. Now the price for both the uncancelled stamp and the cancelled stamp has risen to two million Baht.² These stamps can easily be forged by overprinting original Straits Settlements stamps, which are in plentiful supply and much cheaper, with the letter "B." Only stamps that have first been authenticated by an expert should be bought, and where this has been done, the stamps are endorsed, on the on the reverse side, with a small imprint of the name or symbol of the expert.

On 1st July 1885, the one *solot* stamp was provided with a surcharge overprint reading "*one tical*," in five different printing varieties. These too command high prices (*fig. 18*). The next edition of Thai stamps appeared on 1st April 1887, with eight different values (*fig. 19*), and was printed by Thomas de La Rue of England. These stamps, if in mint condition, only command a price of about 4,000 Baht, but the numerous surcharge issues that followed are a gold mine for dedicated collectors, due the vast quantity of errors—double printing, reverse printing, omission of characters etc. These stamps can obtain considerable prices, with the most expensive being advertised in Sakserm Siritwong's catalogue at 600,000 Baht (*fig. 20*).

A further set of five stamps, the so-called "Rejected Die," was printed in 1887 at the firm of Giesecke & Devrient of Leipzig, Germany, but was rejected by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). However, in error, a number of these stamps were issued at three post offices—in Battambang, Korat, and Phuket. When the mistake came to light, all the remaining stamps at the three post offices were immediately withdrawn, and together with the stock in Bangkok, were burned. These stamps are therefore very valuable, and an unused set has an estimated value of 180,000 Baht. The highest values of these sets are four and ten *atts*, and no original used stamps are known to exist. The existing cancelled stamps, of the lower values, have been mostly provided with a cancellation stamp by an obliging post office official, and the stamps have never been used for their intended purpose of paying the postage on a letter (*fig. 21*).

A permanent set of stamps with sixteen values, each featuring the visage of King Chulalongkorn, was issued in September 1899, again printed by Giesecke & Devrient of Leipzig, Germany. Only 100,000 of the twenty-four *atts* stamps were printed, which is a modest edition (*fig. 22*). In September 1902, the postmaster of Battambang (now in Cambodia), without authority, overprinted by typewriter his stock of the three and twelve *atts* stamps of this edition with the values two and three *atts*, indicating a surcharge on these stamps, as his supply of the correct value stamps had not arrived from Bangkok. 350 and 360 stamps respectively were "produced" in this way, and when the practice became known in Bangkok,



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

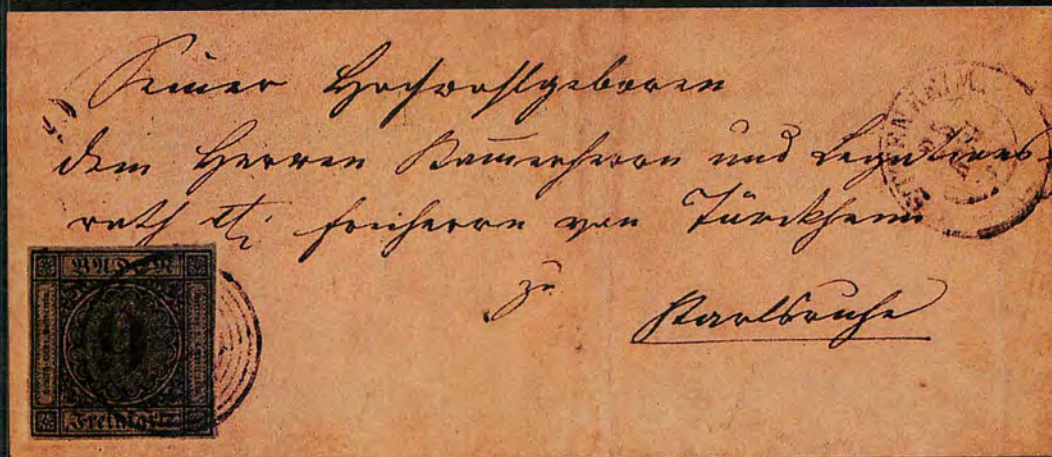


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6





Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 10



Fig. 13

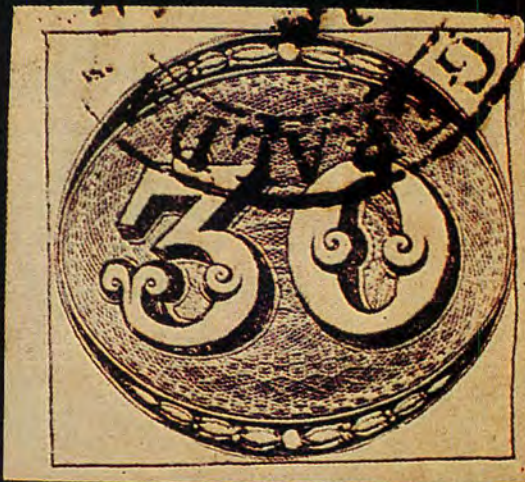


Fig. 14



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16



Fig. 17A



Fig. 17B



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

Fig. 23



Fig. 22



Fig. 24



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

Fig. 29A



Fig. 29B

Fig. 29C



Fig. 30

Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34



Fig. 35





Fig. 36



Fig. 37



Fig. 38A

Fig. 38B

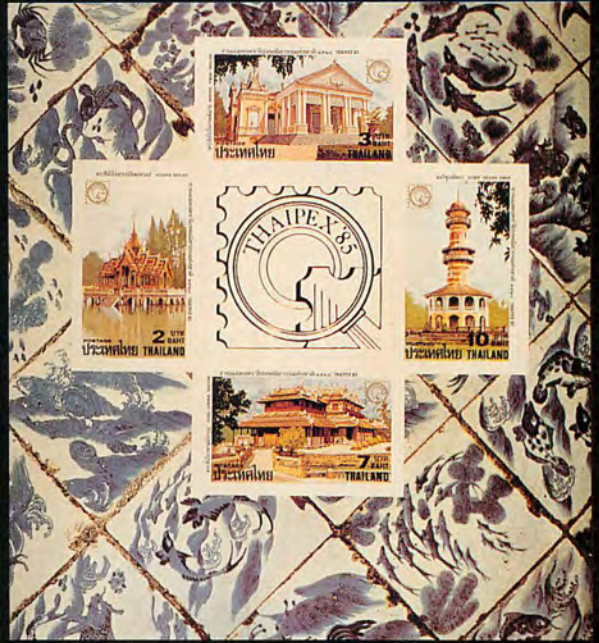


Fig. 39



Fig. 40



Fig. 41

the postmaster was ordered to stop the procedure immediately. Original used stamps of this kind are very rare, particularly as stamp collecting was not, at that time, a popular pastime in Thailand, and so many of the rarities of today were likely to have been discarded after serving their intended purpose. These stamps are estimated to have a value, if unused, of 300,000 Baht and 360,000 Baht if cancelled.³ These stamps are easily forged, as the overprinting is easy to counterfeit, so people should only buy such stamps that have first been authenticated by an expert (*fig. 23*).

Another interesting edition of three stamps was issued in April 1907, where the stamps each bore the words "Siam postage," and were overprinted with a surcharge of either ten, twenty or forty ticals, then very high face values (*fig. 24*). They were used particularly on mail bags, and the cancellation marks were seldom perfectly effected. These are very rare, and are only seldom available for sale. Besides being used on mail bags, these stamps were much used by the Chinese community as a method of paying for the transport of large packets containing many letters. As they were handled by many people in their transit, the quality is rarely perfect. The ink dyes used on these stamps are very sensitive, so stamps that still show strong colours are more valuable than those where the colour has faded. There are many forgeries of these stamps.

A very nice edition of seven values was issued on the 11th November 1908 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The three highest value stamps were replacements for the "mail bag" stamps described above, and the ink dye colours too have not held well (*fig. 25*).

After the death of King Chulalongkorn on 23rd October 1910, another permanent set of stamps was commissioned, with twelve values and each containing the visage of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). These were issued on 15th October 1912, and were printed by the Government Printing press in Vienna, Austria (*fig. 26*). A reprint of eleven of the twelve values followed, this time printed by Waterlow & Sons, London, and called the "London Issue." There are fine, and almost insignificant differences in design between the London and the Vienna issues, as well as some changes in the face values of the lower value stamps. The "London Issue" is the most sought after and the most expensive of the two sets.

On 11th January 1918, a new set of eleven values was issued, all very valuable today, on which some of the "London Issue" stamps were overprinted with a red cross. The highest value of twenty Baht was only produced in an edition of 500. When issued, these stamps carried a surcharge, which was donated to the Thai Red Cross. An uncanceled set of these stamps is valued at 80,000 Baht, with a cancelled set at 70,000 Baht (*fig. 27*).⁴

The next interesting issue came out on 2nd December 1918, with nine of the twelve values from the "London Issue" set being over stamped with the word "Victory" (fig. 28). During the First World War, Thailand had remained neutral until 1918, when it joined the Allies. It then sent a detachment of troops to the European Western Front, but they never saw action as the War ended in November 1918, just as they had arrived in France, though nineteen died from various causes. Their ashes are interred in the World War One Monument, which stands in a small park near the Pramane Ground. Forgeries of both the Red Cross sets and the Victory sets are known.

In February 1920, two sets of new stamps were issued, each with six values. On 17th December of the same year, another set, with seven values, was issued, overprinted with a tiger's head. The surcharge on these stamps was donated to the Boy Scouts' Fund (fig. 29). The collector's value on these stamps is high, and is another reason to be wary of counterfeit copies, as they are easy to forge.

A very nice edition of six values, known as the "Coronation Stone," was issued on 1st March 1926 to celebrate the 15th anniversary of King Vajiravudh, but were just used as normal stamps because of the death of the King the previous year (fig. 30). A new permanent set of fifteen values was issued in April 1928, bearing the countenance of King Prajadhipok (Rama VIII), who was a son of King Chulalongkorn (fig. 31). This set was printed by the steel-plate recess printing method, by Waterlow & Sons of London. King Prajadhipok abdicated in 1935, in favour of his ten year old nephew, Ananda Mahidol (Rama VII), who was represented by a Regent Committee whilst he attended school overseas. In 1940 the name of Siam was changed to Thailand, briefly being renamed Siam from 1946 until 1949, then reverting to Thailand again from then on. These changes in the country's name were reflected in the stamps issued during that period.

On 17th April 1941, a very nice set of permanent stamps, in twelve values, was issued, again printed by the steel-plate engraving recess method by Waterlow & Sons (fig. 32), the *satang* values each carrying the portrait of King Ananda Mahidol. At the start of the Second World War, Thailand declared itself neutral, but signed a support treaty with Japan, which allowed for the advancing Japanese troops, in December 1941, to pass through Thailand on their way to Malaya and Singapore. On 18th October 1943, the Japanese occupying force in Malaya ceded to Thailand the sovereignty of the four northern Malayan states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu. In anticipation of this event, on 15th January 1943, a permanent set of six stamps was issued, lithographically printed by the Defence Ministry in Bangkok (fig. 33). Another expensive set was issued for these four new Thai provinces, on 15th November 1943, as a provisional edition. The

stamps were printed, by lithograph and ungummed, on violet typing paper in Kota Bharu (*fig. 34*). After Japan's capitulation on 14th August 1945, these four provinces were returned to Malayan control.

Following the untimely death of King Ananda Mahidol on 9th June 1946, his younger brother, Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) was declared King, though under a Regent Committee, as he was not yet of age. On 5th December 1947, the same day as the King reached his majority, a new set of five stamps was issued to mark the occasion, printed by lithograph by the Ministry of Defence in Bangkok (*fig. 35*). On 5th May 1950, the coronation of King Bhumipol took place, and on the same day a set of eight stamps was issued (*fig. 36*), printed by the steel-plate engraving recess method by Waterlow & Sons.

To celebrate the 15th Wedding Anniversary of King Bhumipol and Queen Sirikit, on 28th April 1965, a set of two values was published, which was printed in auto type by the State printing Press of Tokyo, Japan (*fig. 37*).

Between the above mentioned editions, further stamps were issued, some of which command reasonable prices in the stamp catalogues. The stamp issues that have been singled out in this article are either of special interest because of their rarity, or because of their special features. Many other issues of stamps have occurred during the reign of King Bhumipol, and during those of his predecessors, but space limitations prevail, and only those issues of special philatelic significance are discussed in the remainder of this article.

On 12th August 1972, the first stamp sheet in Thailand was issued, depicting four different stamps, showing the national costumes of Thai women. The sheet was an edition of 50,000 pieces each perforated—a "Souvenir sheet." It has an estimated value of 50 Baht at today's prices. The sheets and stamps were printed in offset by Bradbury Wilkinson of Great Britain (*fig. 38*). Further "Souvenir Sheets" have been produced, perforated as well as unperforated, with the latter being generally more expensive to purchase, due to a more limited print-run.

On 4th August 1985, on the occasion of Thaipex (the Thai Philatelic Exhibition), a commemorative stamp sheet was issued, both perforated and unperforated. The unperforated sheet had a total edition of only 2,000 pieces. This sheet has an estimated value of 8,000 Baht (*fig. 39*). On the occasion of the 60th Birthday of King Bhumipol, a special one hundred Baht stamp with gold embossed printing was issued, produced by Cartor S.A. of France, in an edition of 200,000 on small sheets—ten stamps to each sheet (*fig. 40*). In addition to this issue, a distinctive edition of only five hundred pieces was also produced, printed unperforated on carton paper.⁵ For the 60th Birthday of Queen Sirikit, on 12th August 1992, a commemorative stamp was issued, this time in an edition of 600,000 (*fig. 41*), in the same style and by the same printers as the stamp produced for King Bhumipol's 60th Birthday.⁶

The Thai Post Office now charges a higher price for these commemorative stamp sheets than the nominal face value of the stamps they contain. Now stamp sheets are issued in varying numbers and designs each year, in both perforated and unperforated issues. Since 1957, the Post Office issues first-day covers, which are only available on the day of issue of the particular stamp. First-day covers, especially older ones, command better prices than non-first day cover stamps and covers. Unfortunately, many of these older covers have deteriorated and yellowed due to Thailand's humid climate.

In comparison to many other countries, Thailand has issued fewer new stamps. From 1883 to November 1994, only approximately 1,830 different stamps had been issued. The average number of new stamps issued each year is approximately forty-two, not including stamp sheets. Though the Federal Republic of Germany averages only approximately forty new stamps each year, there has been a much greater diversity of stamps issued over the years, taking into account the stamps issued during the German occupation of parts of Europe during the two World Wars; the stamps of the Old German States and former German colonies; and the stamps of the former Democratic Republic of Germany (DDR) and of Berlin.

In Thailand, one to three million stamps are printed for special editions, which is modest compared to Germany, which issues, for special editions, an average of thirty million stamps. Older issues in Thailand were, of course, printed in much smaller quantities.

The following printing presses are currently used by the Thai Post Office for the production of their stamps:

- Leigh-Mardon, Australia
- Suomen Pankin Setelipaino, Finland
- Cartor S.A., France
- Harrison & Sons, Great Britain
- Waddington of Kirkstall, Great Britain
- The Government Printing Press, Tokyo, Japan
- Joh. Enschede en Zonen, The Netherlands
- Thai British Security Printing Public Company Ltd.

Germany previously printed many stamps for Thailand, especially during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, but since then, only one stamp—the Children's Day stamp of 11th January 1975—has been printed on a German press—the Government Printing Press of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Residents of Thailand wishing to learn more about philately will find the information contained in the Appendix below useful in gaining a greater knowledge of stamps and stamp collecting.

Until relatively recently, stamp collecting in Thailand was not a very popular pastime amongst most Thai people, so it was possible for the avid collector to pick up prize pieces at very reasonable prices. As a result of Thailand's economic growth over the last few years, greater numbers of Thais have the resources and time to indulge themselves in philately, and accordingly this is reflected in the much higher prices being shown for Thai stamps in the stamp catalogues.

Appendix

Museums

Bangkok has one stamp museum, at the Sam Sen Nai Post Office, Phahon Yothin Road, Saphan Kwai, Bangkok 10400, which is open for visitors on weekends and holidays only, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A similar museum in Chiang Mai is at the Mae Ping Post Office, Praisani Road, on the same days and times as in Bangkok.

Subscriptions

New editions of Thai stamps can be obtained the following address:

Philatelic Division, The Communications Authority of Thailand, (CAT), 99 Chiang Wattana Road, Thung Song Hong, Don Muang, Bangkok 10002.

CAT also produces a newsletter, *The Philatelic Bulletin*, which describes new issues.

Stamp Clubs

Stamp clubs exist in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, with the latter having over 500 members. It can be contacted at P.O. Box 222, Chiang Mai General Post Office, Charoen Muang Road, Chiang Mai 50000.

Catalogues

The following stamp catalogues inform their readers of edition numbers, prices, issue dates, printing types and methods, reason for the edition etc. of Thai stamps, and other stamps from around the world:

Yvert-Tellier, France

Michel, Schwaneberger Verlag, Muthmannstr. 4, 90939 Munchen, Germany

Stanley Gibbons, Great Britain

Bolaffi, Italy

Zumstein, Switzerland

Kovadhana, Thailand (now ceased publication)

Sakserm Siriwong, Thailand (see Stamp Shops below)

Thai (Siam) Stamps Catalogue 1995, The International House of Stamps (Siam) Co. Ltd., 434, Thadindeang Rd., Klongsan, Bangkok 10600.

Tel. (02) 433-0326-4, Fax. (02) 438-6614.

Scott, U.S.A.

Stamp Shops

In comparison to Europe and North America, Thailand has only a few stamp shops, mainly in the Bangkok New Road area, close to the Main Post Office. On every Saturday and Sunday, a stamp fair takes place in the grounds of this Post Office, where many dealers sell their stock. The most prominent dealer in Thailand is probably Khun Sakserm Siriwong. His shop is in the World Trade Centre, A 407 4th Floor, Rajadamri Road, Bangkok 10330. Tel.: (02) 255-9599. He also sells many rarities from other countries, and is the Editor of the Sakserm Siriwong Catalogue. In Chiang Mai, Khun Ruangrit Leekitwatana has a shop at 105/6 Rajadamnern Road, Tambon Phra Sing, Amphur Muang Chiang Mai, 50000. Tel.: (053) 276776.

Thaipex Stamp Fair

Every alternate year in October, at the Queen Sirikit Cultural Centre, Bangkok, the ten day Thaipex (The Thai Philatelic Exhibition) takes place, where many dealers from Thailand and other countries are represented. Even several foreign post offices are represented, where current issue stamps can be bought at their face value, though, regrettably for the author of this article, there has not yet been representation by the German Post Office. The centre piece of Thaipex is the display of the rarest stamps in the world, coveted by every stamp collector, and rare covers, depicting momentous occasions in world history. During one Thaipex, held from 1st to 10th October 1993, each day a sheet of twenty-five Baht stamps was issued, each depicting the head of King Bhumibol, and printed in a different colour on each day. This was a unique occurrence, and a one-sheet set currently fetches approximately 1,200 Baht.

Auctions

Stamp auctions do take place from time to time in Thailand, usually under the auspices of one of the stamp clubs, but if one is interested in buying rare or expensive stamps, it is better to participate in overseas auctions, either personally or by letter. All the auction houses send out pre-sale illustrated catalogues. For Thai stamps, the following two auction houses almost always hold sales including a selection of Thai stamps for sale to the highest bidder:

Stanley Gibbons (Singapore), PTE Ltd., Raffles City, P.O. Box 1689, Singapore 9117. Tel.: (65) 336-1998, Fax.: (65) 338-8692.

Heinrich Köhler, Wilhelmstr. 48, P.O. Box 3680, 65026 Wiesbaden, Germany. Tel.: 0611-39381.

Stamp auctions at both firms normally take place twice yearly.

Stamp Albums

Only one stamp album exists containing original impressions of Thai stamps, edited by Lindner, Germany. Blank stamp albums are widely available from Post Offices and stamp shops. The single pages are covered by a plastic sheet, which protects the collector's stamps against damage.

Types of Printing Methods

Many philatelists are interested in the different methods of printing postage stamps. One recommended small book (for German speakers), which covers stamp production in detail, is Theodor Hopfer's *140 Jahre Briefmarkenherstellung* (140 Years of Stamp Production), published in 1980 by the Theodor Hopfer Publishing Company of Gottingen, Eschenweg 5, Germany.

Perforations

The first stamps produced in the world were issued unperforated, and the Post Office clerk had to cut the sheets to separate the stamps. Where stamps have been badly cut, this can reduce the current selling price. The first perforated sheets were produced in England, and the idea was patented in 1847, though no perforated stamps were issued until 1854. As stamps in Thailand did not appear until 1883, no Thai stamps were ever issued on unperforated sheets (apart from the commemorative issue stamp sheets). There are, however, unperforated specimen copies in existence, which command high prices in the sale rooms. Different printings of the same stamp can be determined by the difference in the "teeth" of the perforations, which vary between different printers. To assess the exact difference in the various different perforations, a "perforation key" is required.

Watermarks

Almost all Thai stamps are printed on watermarked paper, of which thirteen different types exist, to discourage counterfeiting. Different watermarks can be seen by the application of pure benzine, then putting the stamps on a dark background, but one needs to be careful, as the benzine can damage the colours of the stamp.

Further Reading

Apart from the stamp catalogues referred to above, further information on Thai stamps and stamp collecting can be obtained from the following publications.

Anatchai Rattakul *The Collection of Championship Class Stamps—A Study of the Thai Mail from 1688 to the end of the Chulalongkorn era*. 1989.

Bonnie Davis *Postcards of Old Siam.*, Times Editions, Singapore, 1987.

Bonnie Davis *Royal Siamese Postal Service—The early years*, Times Editions, Singapore, 1983.

Deutsche Briefmarkenzeitung (DBZ) [German Stamp Newspaper] DBZ-Verlag Deutsche Briefmarkenzeitung GmbH & Co., P.O. Box 1363, 56373 Nassau, Germany.

Hornung *Wie sammle ich richtig Briefmarken* (How I Collect Stamps Correctly), Verlag Werner Dausien, Germany, 1972.

Jakubek *Knaurs briefmarkenduch* (Knaurs Stamp Book), Droemersch Verlaganstalt Th. Knauer Nachf., Germany, 1976.

Pipat Choororavech *Postage Stamps of Thailand—Definitive issues during the reign of King Bhumibol*.

Karl J. Wirth *Postcard Catalogue*, Nürnberg, Germany, 1993.

Notes

1. According to a recent catalogue from Sakserm Siriwong, World Trade Centre, Bangkok.
2. Catalogue of Sakserm Siriwong, Bangkok.
3. Sakserm Siriwong catalogue. The German Michel Catalogue of 1994 lists a price of 8,150 German Marks for a mint condition set.
4. Sakserm Siriwong catalogue.
5. Sakserm Siriwong catalogue estimate. The German Michel Catalogue of 1994 estimates the values to be 4,000 and 3,500 German Marks respectively.
6. Sakserm Siriwong catalogue. The German Michel Catalogue estimates a value of 800 German Marks.
7. The Sakserm Siriwong catalogue puts the value of this sheet at 1,000,000 Baht.
8. This stamp has an estimated current value of 35,000 Baht.