


BURMA: POST WAR TRANSITIONAL ISSUES 1945-1947

This exhibit is a study of Burma stamps issued from 1945 to 1947 and their uses. This brief period covers the all-important time in Burma's history following the World War II Japanese Occupation as it transitioned from a British Colony to total independence. Three different stamp issuing entities were involved. Some stamps are shown used after independence in 1948 while they still remained valid.

Exhibit Plan:

- 1945 British Military Administration Issue
 - Military Administration Stamps & Varieties
 - Military Administration Stamp Uses
- 1946 British Civil Administration Issues
 - Civil Administration Stamps & Varieties
 - Civil Administration Stamp Uses
 - Civil Administration Official Stamps & Uses
 - Civil Administration Victory Issue
- 1947 Interim Government Issues
 - Interim Government Stamps & Varieties
 - Interim Government Stamp Uses
 - Interim Government Overprint Varieties
 - Interim Government Official Stamps & Uses

 Indicates research or discovery. Rarity statements are in **dark red**.
Significant items are double framed in dark red.

Burma currency: 12 pies = 1 anna
16 annas = 1 rupee

Some rates use the tola as the unit of weight rather than the ounce.
1 tola = .41 oz.

NON-PHILATELIC USE ON THE FIRST DAY

The Japanese Occupation of Burma was ended by the British Military in 1945.

Military Administration stamps were first available at Mandalay.

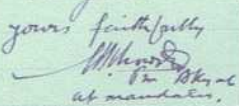
All other covers used on the first day known to the exhibitor are philatelic souvenirs.



To: Major R.O. Steele C.A.S.(B) Mandalay, 8.6.45

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to report that I have brought all the equipment except three tents which were very heavy to load in the plane. These tents were handed over to C.A.S. supply base Akyab.

yours faithfully

 W. H. H. at Mandalay.

Reduced scan of contents

Mandalay-June 8, 1945 (the day the Mandalay post office reopened)
 2 annas for the 1st tola to India. Addressed to Major Steele at C.A.S(B)-Civil Affairs Services Burma, located in Calcutta at this time.
 Boxed DGA/3 Censorship handstamp not reported used at Mandalay.

BURMA: POST WAR TRANSITIONAL ISSUES 1945-1947-A SYNOPSIS

Purpose and Scope: This is an exhibit of the post war stamps of Burma issued following the World War II Japanese Occupation until Burma gained complete independence from Great Britain on January 4, 1948. Some Interim Government overprint uses are shown beyond that date as they were still valid and new SERVICE stamps were not issued until 1949. The exhibit is the result of over 30 years of study and acquisition.

Treatment & Importance: The exhibit is organized as shown in the title page plan. It is developed showing the stamps, varieties, and uses. Many of the varieties are uncatalogued. Important new knowledge is presented about fakes. Since these issues were primarily "Make-Up Issues" the covers are shown by types of use rather than by stamp denomination. The material shown is of major importance to the story of this transition period in the history of Burma.

Essay Proof Material: The definitive stamps in this exhibit were first designed in 1938 before the war. I have a nice showing of essay proof material for that issue in another exhibit. There was no need to produce new archival material for the stamps in this exhibit as they were the same design with either overprints or new colors. Two official cards do exist showing the pre-war stamps and the proposed new colors for the 1946 Civil Administration Issue. Hopefully one of them will someday become available. There is also a proof card for the 1946 Victory Issue, whereabouts unknown.

Scarcity of Covers: The scarcity of covers results in some balance problems. The Military Administration stamps were not issued until June 1945 and were only valid for the remainder of that year. Burma was devastated and disorganized following the war. Foreign mail service was not available until August. Air mail and registration were not available until October. Little material has survived.

The Civil Administration stamps were issued in 1946 and were valid until October 1947. While more common than Military Administration covers, they remain surprisingly elusive on cover, especially the SERVICE overprints. It took some time for Burma to get back on its feet. Somewhat more common are those with Interim Government overprint stamps even though the shortest time frame is involved.

High Values on Cover: They seem to be almost non-existent. I have never seen a commercial cover with the 10 rupees Military Administration stamp and that is because letters were limited to 2 oz. and there was no insurance service and no parcel service. There was no possible rate that would have required 10 rupees. The only way it can be shown is on a philatelic cover and that is what I have done. In fairness, at the time it was printed they would have assumed there would eventually be a use for it. Two years ago, I received a scan of a 10 rupees Civil Administration stamp on cover from a specialist collector in Singapore. His was the only example known to me at the time. Fortunately, I have since found a cover of my own. The 10 rupees interim government stamp on cover shown in frame 5 and the interim government SERVICE stamp on cover shown in frame 8 are both the only such covers known based on my published census.



This is the only reported Interim Government 10 Rupees Official on commercial cover. Exhibitor's published census.

Research and Study: Many of the stamp and overprint varieties shown are personal discoveries as the result of patient study and observation. Many of them are not listed in any specialized catalog or anywhere in the philatelic literature, at least not until I write the articles.

Why So Many Interment Government Overprint Varieties: 1. The overprinting was done at Rangoon where they had no previous experience. 2. They were only going to be used for three months and quality may not have been a high priority. 3. The overprint plate was not needed in 1948 after independence and may have been used by someone to create some varieties for collectors. See frame 7 pp 15 and 16.

Revenue Uses: Burma had revenue stamps and postage stamps were not intended for revenue use. There was no revenue stamp for the fee on receipts and postage stamps were sometimes used. A number are shown as they are part of the story. The Revenue Reverend web site, www.revrevd.com, catalogues revenue stamps from several countries including Burma and he has a section where he shows postage stamps of Burma used as revenues. Some of the denominations showing revenue use in this exhibit are not shown on his website.

Recent Feedback: At RMSS 2018 Peter McCann worked with me to develop a new title and first paragraph on the title page to help juries appreciate the importance of the three issues shown in the history of Burma.

At Okpex 2018 Liz Hisey and Tim Wait scored it well but had some problems with the running headings not being totally consistent with the chapters as listed on the title page. They were right, and the problem has been addressed.

At AmeriStamp Expo Mesa in 2019 Colin Fraser wanted to see a bit more rarity. Items like the block on the next page helps that.

Burma Credentials: I am the secretary of the Burma (Myanmar) Philatelic Circle based in the UK. It has members from around the world, but I am the first officer not living in the UK,

New Material: This block of 1 pie stamps with inverted watermarks is one of two known. The other was part of the sale of Derek Filby's material by Cavendish in 2018. This one is the first certified by RPSL and through my efforts it was first listed by Gibbons in 2019.



References:

Scott does not provide much information.

Gibbons provides more information but has the following problems:

Usage is implied for the Military Administration stamps as early as April 1945, but no covers are known until June 8, 1945 from Mandalay. Several varieties shown in the exhibit were not listed until the 2011 catalogue. Even then they listed the 3 ½ annas "curved plough handle" as 27c when it should have been 57ba. That has now been corrected.

Murray Payne's Commonwealth KGV Catalogue is useful but 41b, 41c, 56c, and 56d do not exist. **(I was contacted for my input prior to the release of the last two editions.)**

The Gerald Davis book on Burma Postal History does not cover the time period.

The Proud book on The Postal History of Burma mostly does not cover the time period.

The best reference is Burma-The Stamps and Postal History of the Three British Kings 1901-1947 by James Song. Self-published 2020 in Singapore. **(On page xxii the author listed me at the top of the list of people thanked for help)**

Clicking this link will bring up numerous articles:

[2025 MSE References.pdf](#)