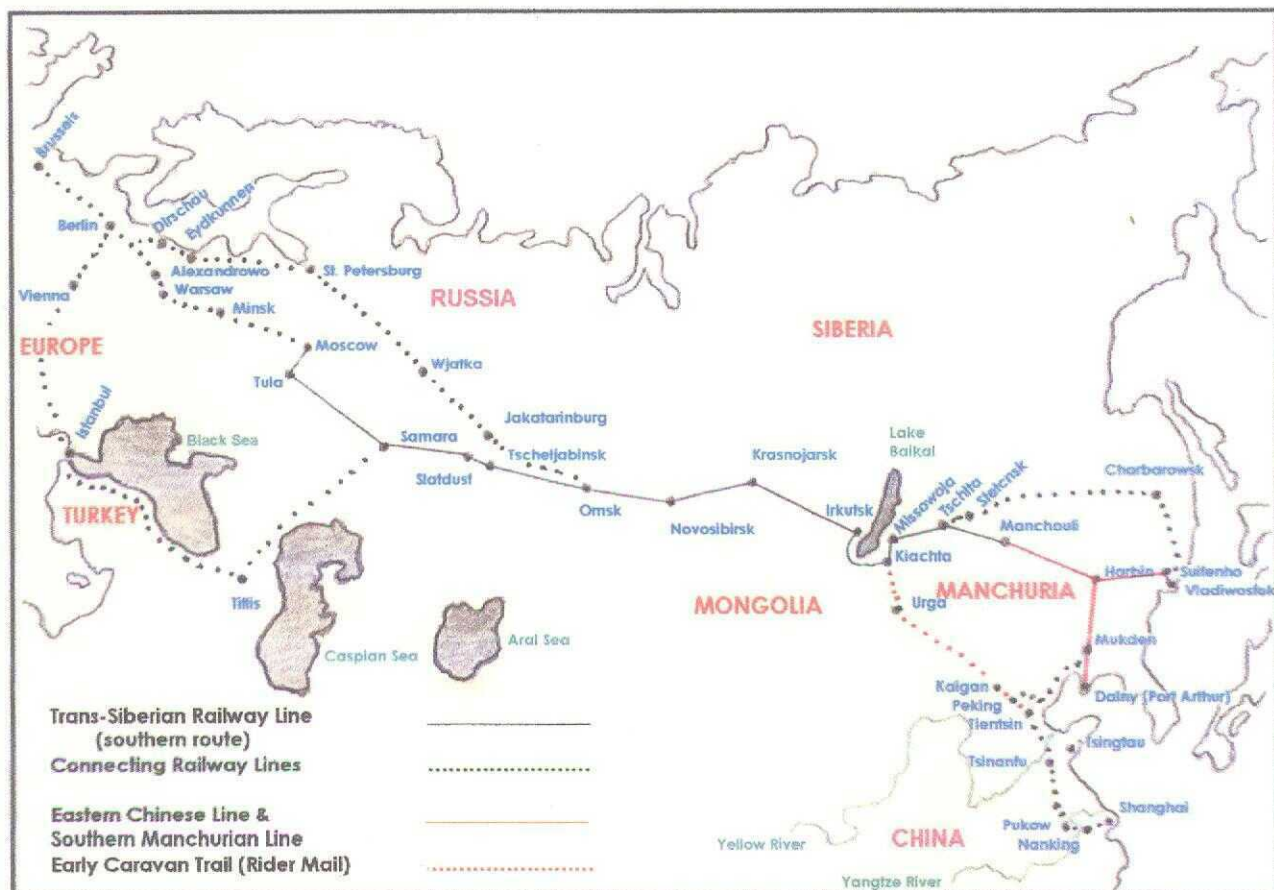


# THE EVOLUTION OF '*via Siberia*' MAIL .. 1897-1945



## BACKGROUND

In an effort to connect Eastern & Western Russia, develop the vast territory of Siberia, improve and shorten the transmission time for mail and commerce as well as eventually connect with China, Russian Czar Alexander III authorized the building of a '*Trans-Siberian*' railway on 17 March 1891.

Construction started at both the European and Asiatic ends and was completed in several phases over the period 1891-1916, completing a track length of approx. 9,259 km (5,723 miles) spanning seven time zones!

A major benefit of the completed railway network was the possibility of moving mail from China and the Far East to Europe about twenty days faster than using standard sea routes and improved mail movement to the United States, Africa as well as Latin America.

During the period of 1897-1945, '*via Siberia*' mail routes were influenced by historic events including uprisings, revolutions, wars, epidemics and expansion of Pacific sea routes. With the rise of airmail, long-distance mail movement by train '*via Siberia*' commenced its decline, albeit such continued to be of importance well into the 1940s.

## EXHIBIT PURPOSE

This postal history exhibit shows the evolution of mail endorsed or routed '*via Siberia*' from trial & early mail, through periods of war & revolution as well as expansion of mail services upon connection of the Trans-Siberian Railway network with the Southern Manchurian & Eastern Chinese Railways, thereby enabling movement of Far East, German Pacific Colony and other mail to/from Europe as well as mail to Africa, North & South America.

## EXHIBIT OVERVIEW

- I. Map & Background,  
Exhibit Overview
- II. 1897-1903  
Trial & Early Mail
- III. 1904-1905, 1906  
Russo-Japanese War & Resumption of Mail Services
- IV. 1907-1913  
Expansion of Mail Services
- V. 1914-1918  
World War I & Effects
- VI. 1917-1920  
Russian Revolution & Civil War Period
- VII. 1921-1922, 1923-1931  
Resumption & Expansion of Mail Services
- VIII. 1931-1939  
Hostilities & War in Manchuria & China
- IX. 1939-1945  
World War II & Effects
- X. Epilogue

## TEXT COLOR-CODING

**BLACK:** General historical, geographical & postal rate/route/marketing information.

**BLUE:** Chapter-Start-Page Heading & important annotative information.

Blue-matted examples indicate particular importance & scarcity.

**MAROON:** Postal Rate Information

II. TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903

First Trial Mail  
(Dec. 1896 – Jan. 1897)

Despite limited rail operation westward up to Lake Baikal, Siberia, the German Reichspost, with authorization from the Russian Post Office, organized **A FIRST SIX-WEEK TRIAL MAIL-RUN, COMMENCING FROM THE GERMAN POSTAL AGENCY AT TIENSIN, CHINA, TO GERMANY BETWEEN DECEMBER 1896 – JANUARY 1897,** using the caravan rider route from China to Kiachta, Manchuria, with transit by laying of tracks across frozen Lake Baikal.

Mail required to be endorsed "*Via Siberia*" to avoid being handled as sea-route mail.

Because of partially incomplete rail construction west of Irkutsk as well as the effects of winter, this first-trial run **EFFECTIVELY TOOK THREE WEEKS LONGER** for mail to reach its destination than for mail sent by sea routing.



27 JANUARY 1897

Cert. Steuer, ex Zistl

Commercial mail postmarked at the German Agency at Tientsin, China, sent to Hamburg, Germany.

Route:

Rider mail over the heretofore caravan route Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Kiachta (*Kyakhta*) to/and across frozen Lake Baikal (tracks laid prior to introduction of an ice-breaking ferry in 1903).

40 Pfennig...  
UPU International Double-Weight (30 grams)  
Letter-Rate.

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
1897-1903

**Second Trial Mail**  
(Dec. 1898 – Jan. 1899)

Upon completion of rail construction up to Irkutsk & Lake Baikal,  
GERMAN REICHSPPOST ISSUED OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION 66/1897,  
7 DECEMBER, ANNOUNCING A SIX-WEEK  
**'VIA SIBERIA'** TRIAL MAIL-RUN  
BETWEEN 15 DECEMBER 1898 – 31 JANUARY 1899.



23 DECEMBER 1898

Civilian mail postmarked at the German Agency at Tientsin, China,  
sent to Sagan, Germany. 39-day transit time.

Arrival Postmark:  
(Reverse)  
"Sagan,  
31 January 1899"

Route:  
Rider mail over the heretofore caravan route Tientsin-Peking-  
Kalgan-Urga-Kiachta (*Kyakhta*) to/and across frozen Lake Baikal  
(tracks laid prior to introduction of an ice-breaking ferry in 1903).

20 Pfennig...  
UPU International Single-Weight (15 grams)  
Letter-Rate.

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
**1897-1903**

**Third Trial Mail**  
**(February-March 1899)**

Despite an earlier trial attempt, the  
**FIRST EFFECTIVE MAIL TRIALS TOOK PLACE WINTER 1898 - 1899,**  
when commercial mail sent  
through the German Postal Agency at Tientsin, China, to Germany,  
effectively having taken  
**39-40 DAYS ..**  
**TRANSIT TIME EQUALING THE TIME FOR MAIL SENT BY THE 'VIA SUEZ' SEA ROUTE.**



**8 FEBRUARY 1899**

Cert. Steuer

**Commercial single-weight mail sent from Tientsin, China,  
to Bremen, Germany. 40-day transit time.**

**Route:**

**Rider mail over the heretofore caravan route Tientsin-Peking-  
Kalgan-Urga-Kiachta (Kyakhta) to/and across frozen Lake Baikal (tracks laid  
prior to introduction of an ice-breaking ferry in 1903).**

**Arrival Postmark:**

(Reverse)

"Bremen,

20 March 1899, 7-8 AM"

(Haller Experimental Machine Postmark)

**20 Pfennig...**

**UPU International**

**Single-Weight (15 grams) Letter-Rate.**

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
1897-1903

**Russian Post Office in China**  
Mail to Europe 1901

**DESTRUCTION OF A LARGE PART OF THE NORTHERN CHINESE RAILWAY,**  
connecting to the partially completed eastern Chinese rail line,  
**DURING THE BOXER REVOLT (1900-1901) NECESSITATED MAIL MOVEMENT BY SEA**  
**OR BY RIDER MAIL OVER THE EARLIER CARAVAN ROUTE**  
to Kiachta in Manchuria with subsequent movement to Myssowaja station  
location on the Trans-Siberian Railway Route, crossing frozen Lake Baikal.

**SEA-MAIL VIA BRINDISI**  
(Suez Canal to Italy)

**1 MARCH 1901**  
(Gregorian Calendar)

View-card, postmarked  
Shanghai, Russian Post  
Office, sent to Chaux de  
Fonds, Switzerland,  
with route endorsement  
"Via Brindisi".  
32-day transit time!

Transit & Arrival Postmarks:  
"Hong Kong,  
5 March 1901"

"Chaux de Fonds,  
2 April 1901"

5 Kopeck:  
Russian Post Office  
International  
Postcard-Rate,



**RIDER MAIL OVER  
CARAVAN ROUTE TO  
TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL  
CONNECTION**

**21 MARCH 1901**  
(Gregorian Calendar)

Commercial mail,  
postmarked Tientsin,  
Russian Post Office, sent  
to Bordeaux, France, with  
route endorsement  
"Par la Russie".

Route:  
Rider mail over the  
heretofore caravan route  
Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-  
Urga-Kiachta-Myssowaja  
with tracks across frozen  
Lake Baikal (introduction  
of an ice breaking ferry  
first in 1903).

10 Kopeck:  
UPU Single-Weight  
(15 grams)  
International  
Letter-Rate.



**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903**

**Russian Post Office in China  
Caravan-Route Connected Mail 1902**

**COMPLETION OF THE RUSSIAN-FINANCED EASTERN CHINESE RAIL LINE AND REPAIRS TO THE NORTHERN CHINESE LINE FROM THE BOXER REVOLT WAR DAMAGE CONTINUED UNTIL ABOUT 15 FEBRUARY 1902, RESULTING IN EARLIER RUSSIAN WESTBOUND MAIL FROM CHINA TO MOVE OVER THE EARLIER CARAVAN ROUTE**  
**to Kiachta in Siberia with subsequent movement to Mysowaja Station location on the trans-Siberian railway route for crossing frozen Lake Baikal.**

**TIENTSIN-ORIGIN MAIL TO GERMANY**



**29 JANUARY 1902 = 11 FEBRUARY 1902**  
 (Julian Calendar) (Gregorian Calendar)

View-card, postmarked Tientsin, Russian Post Office,  
 sent to Kolberg, Germany,  
 via the Caravan Route in winter to the railhead and by rail to destination.  
 33-day transit time to Germany.

**Transit Postmarks:**

**Arrival Postmark:**

“Troitskosavsk,  
 15 February 1902”  
 (Julian Calendar)  
 = 28 February 1902  
 (Gregorian Calendar)

“Moscow  
 1 March 1902”  
 (Julian Calendar)  
 = 14 March 1902  
 (Gregorian Calendar)

“Kolberg,  
 16 March 1902”

**5 Kopeck:  
 Russian Post Office  
 ‘Via Siberia’  
 Postcard-Rate,**

**Route:**

Caravan rider mail over the heretofore caravan route  
 Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Kiachta-Mysowaja Station  
 and across frozen Lake Baikal  
 (initially.. by rail tracks laid over the ice/after 1903.. by ice breaking ferry).

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**

**1897-1903**

**Russian Post Office in China..**

**Re-Opening Chinese Rail Route  
to Siberia 1902**

**BY 15 FEBRUARY 1902, COMPLETED REPAIRS TO THE EASTERN CHINESE RAILWAY  
(from Boxer Revolt Destruction)  
ENABLED THE RUSSIAN POST OFFICE IN CHINA TO AGAIN ROUTE MAIL OVER THE  
NORTHERN SECTION OF THE EASTERN CHINESE RAILWAY TO MANCHURIA,  
AVOIDING THE HERETOFORE CARAVAN ROUTE COMMENCING AT PEKING.**

**SOLDIER'S MAIL  
THROUGH THE  
RUSSIAN POST OFFICE  
IN CHINA TO GERMANY**

**21 DECEMBER 1902**  
(Julian Calendar)  
**= 3 JANUARY 1903**  
(Gregorian Calendar)

View-card postmarked at  
the Russian Post Office at  
Peking, China, sent to Gera,  
Germany, with route  
endorsement  
"über Russland"  
("Via Russia").  
27-day transit time.

Route:  
Peking-Mukden-Harbin-  
Manchouli-Kiachta-Irkutsk-  
Omsk-Moscow-Berlin-Gera

Arrival Postmark:  
"Gera,  
30 January 1903"



**RUSSIAN POST OFFICE  
ROUTE ENDORSEMENT TO  
GERMANY**

**10 AUGUST 1903**  
(Julian Calendar)  
**= 23 AUGUST 1903**  
(Gregorian Calendar)

View-Card written  
(22 July 1903) and postmarked  
at Tientsin, Russian Post  
Office, sent to Obermodern,  
Alsace, Germany, with  
route cachet marking  
"Via Siberia" .. "Germany".  
21-day transit time.

Route:  
Tientsin-Mukden-Harbin-  
Manchouli-kiachta-Irkutsk-  
Omsk-Moscow-Berlin-Gera

Arrival Postmark:  
"Obermodern,  
13 September 1903"



**5 Kopeck..  
Russian 'Via Siberia' Postcard-Rate.**



**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903**

**German Post Office Mail to Japan  
Via Re-Opened Chinese Rail Route  
to Siberia & Vladivostok 1902**

**RUSSIAN REPAIRS ON THE EASTERN CHINESE RAILWAY HAVING BEEN COMPLETED,  
'VIA SIBERIA' INTERNATIONAL TRANSIT MAIL TO JAPAN FROM GERMANY  
WAS ACCEPTED AND POSSIBLE.**

**DESPITE A FORMAL GERMAN-RUSSIAN POSTAL AGREEMENT HAVING NOT YET BEEN  
CONCLUDED FOR 'VIA SIBERIA' MAIL TO GERMAN POST OFFICES IN CHINA  
UNTIL OCTOBER 1903**



**GERMAN MAIL TO A SHIP AT YOKOHAMA, JAPAN**

**3 NOVEMBER 1902**

**Polish-origin view card, postmarked at Berlin sent to  
"Heinrich Grueger on-board 'Ship Francisco'  
Routed "via Moscow-Vladivostok to Yokohama".  
30 days total transit time.**

**Transit Postmark:**

**"Vladivostok**

**14 November 1902**

**(Julian Calendar)**

**= 27 November 1902**

**(Gregorian Calendar)**

**Yokohama Arrival Postmark:**

**"Yokohama, December 2 1902"**

**Having not located the recipient or ship, the Yokohama Post Office  
placed the mail in 'General Delivery' status and postmarked the mail..  
"Advertised Yokohama, January 1, 1902"**

**10 Pfennig: UPU International Postcard-Rate**

**Route:**

**Berlin-Moscow-Omsk-Irkutsk-Kiachta-Manchouli-Harbin-Vladivostok  
(by vessel to) Yokohama**

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
1897-1903

**Preemptive 1902 Kiautschou-Germany Mail**  
German Kiautschou – Russian Double-Franking

**BETWEEN SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1902,  
THE GERMAN TSINGTAU (KIAUTSCHOU) POST OFFICE IN COOPERATION WITH THE CHEFOO RUSSIAN  
POST OFFICE, PREEMPTING A GERMAN-RUSSIAN POSTAL AGREEMENT, ACCEPTED KIAUTSCHOU-  
FRANKED MAIL SENT TO GERMANY SUBJECT TO RUSSIAN-FRANKING APPLIED AT CHEFOO.**

Since the Eastern Chinese Railway Line from Post Arthur to Harbin connected to the Manchurian Railway Line was complete & war-damage repaired, such mail no longer had to travel over the earlier caravan route from Peking, albeit was contrary to UPU Regulations and subsequently rescinded by the German Postal Authorities at Shanghai.



**27 November 1902**

Registered sealed cover, postmarked at Kiautschou, then Chefoo,  
sent to Neuffen (Württemberg), Germany.

26-day transit time to Germany.

**Transit Postmarks:**

Origin:  
"Chefoo Russian Post Office"  
29 November 1902"

(Gregorian Calendar

Dispatch:

"Chefoo,

16 December 1902 = 29 November 1902

(Julian Calendar)

(Gregorian Calendar)

20 Kopecks...

10 Kopecks ..

Single-weight UPU

International Letter-Rate

+ 10 Kopecks ..

Registration Fee

Arrival Postmark:

(Reverse)

"Neuffen,

25 December

1902"

30 Pfennig...

10 Pfg.. Single-weight

Domestic German-

Letter Rate

+ 20 Pfg.. Registration

Fee

**Route:**

Tsingtau-Chefoo-(by sea to) Port Arthur- (by train to) Harbin, Manchuria-Irkutsk,

Samara-Moscow-Berlin-Köln-Stuttgart-Neuffen

**Only known registered German Kiautschou-Russian Double-Franking usage.**

TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903

German East-Bound Mail to China  
Closed to 'via Siberia' Mail  
1903

**ANNOUNCEMENT IN GERMANY IN EARLY 1903 OF THE FUTURE  
OPENING OF THE TRANS-SIBERIAN ROUTE FOR GERMAN MAIL  
TO THE FAR EAST**

resulted in some early non-valid mail being endorsed for that route  
with such subsequently being re-directed by sea.



RE-ROUTED MAIL TO TSINGTAU, CHINA, USING SEA ROUTE  
SINCE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL ROUTE STILL CLOSED TO GERMAN POST OFFICE MAIL

17 JANUARY 1903

Postal stationery reply-card, postmarked at Wilhelmshaven,  
route endorsed "via St. Petersburg - Port Arthur", sent to  
Tsingtau, Kiautschou, China,

Since the Trans-Siberian Network Route was not yet open to German-origin mail,  
the route endorsement was altered by the German Post Office to

"Bp XI route closed... (route) via Bp 21" =  
(by rail) Wilhelmshaven-Leipzig-Hof-Munich-Naples  
(by sea) Naples-Tsingtau

41-day transit time.

Arrival Postmark:  
"Tsingtau, Kiautschou,  
27 February 1903"

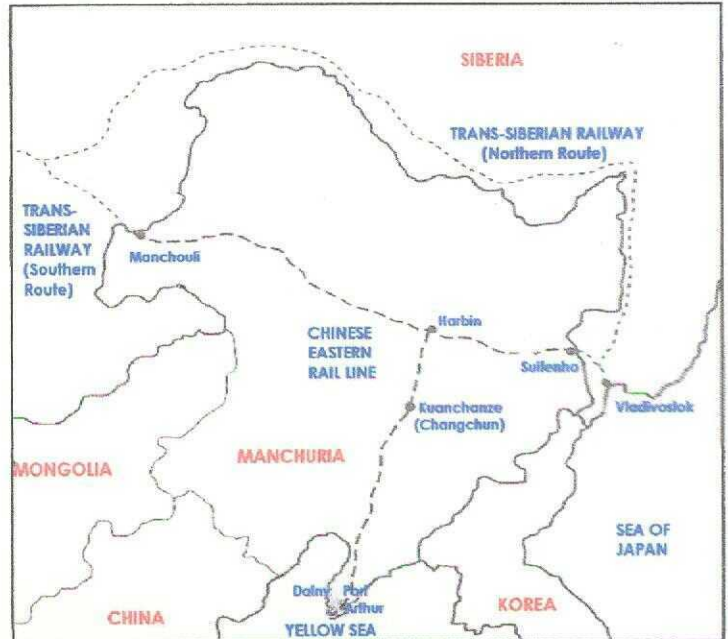
10+10 Pfennig:  
UPU International Postcard-Rate.

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903**

**'Chinese Eastern Railway' Expansion  
to Port Arthur & Vladivostok ..  
Tourist Mail**

**THE 1898 RUSSIAN-CHINESE LEASE AGREEMENT FOR THE 'LIAOTUNG PENINSULA' ENABLED THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT TO FINANCE & BUILD THE "CHINESE EASTERN RAILWAY LINE" in order to connect the Trans-Siberian, Manchurian and Eastern Chinese Rail Lines with the Russian City & Port at Vladivostok (officially opened in June 1903) along with the Liaotung Peninsula Ports of Dalny & Port Arthur (Opened 15 February 1902) .. EXPANDING THE 'TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL NETWORK'.**

**The Northern All-Siberia 'Amur' Russian Rail Line would not be completed until 1916.**



**CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO EARLY PASSENGER TRAFFIC USING THE EXPANDED TRANS-SIBERIAN NETWORK RAIL ROUTE**

**16 MAY 1903**

**Over-franked mail sent by a German located at Tsingtao, Kiautschou, (German Protectorate Lease Territory) to "Agnes Lemke", wife of German 'Paul Lemke' of Hawaii-fame, indicating....**

*"I can today advise that I will be returning home next week. In order to visit you, I wanted to return by way of America. However, because of the disproportionate cost, I decided at the last moment to take the train from Port Arthur through Russia..."*

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903**

**French Post Office in China  
Transit Mail to Europe  
1903**

**FRENCH & RUSSIAN POST OFFICES' CONCLUDED AGREEMENT, effective 1 January 1902, ENABLED MOVEMENT OF FRENCH POST OFFICE MAIL, without having to affix both French, Russian or Chinese postage, OVER THE TRANS-SIBERIAN ROUTE.**

TRANSIT MAIL FROM KOREA THROUGH THE SHANGHAI FRENCH POST OFFICE ROUTED SHANGHAI-DALNY AND RAIL BEYOND TO GERMANY

20 SEPTEMBER 1903

Korean postal stationery card mailed at Incheon by a German sailor aboard HMS Prince Bismarck, heavy cruiser and flag ship of the German East Asia Cruiser Squadron on its third Korea voyage (20-22 September 1903). 35-day transit time.

Transit Postmark:  
(French Post Office)  
"Shanghai, China,  
28 September 1903"

Arrival Postmark:  
"Berent,  
25 October 1903"

4 Cents..  
UPU International  
Postcard-Rate.



TRANSIT MAIL THROUGH THE SHANGHAI CHINESE POST OFFICE TO ENGLAND ROUTED SHANGHAI-DALNY AND RAIL BEYOND

30 NOVEMBER 1903

Chinese mail routed through the French Post Office (China was not yet a member of the UPU) to London, England, with route endorsement "Via Siberia".

Transit Postmark:  
"Shanghai,  
30 November 1903"

4 Cents:  
UPU  
International  
Postcard-Rate.

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
1897-1903

**Russian Post Office in China**  
Mail to France  
1903

Even before official opening of the completed Eastern Chinese Railway as part of the Trans-Siberian Network, WEST-BOUND MAIL THROUGH THE RUSSIAN POST OFFICE MOVED OVER THE NOW FULLY REPAIRED NORTHERN CHINESE RAILWAY TO THE EASTERN CHINESE LINE, OR BY SEA FROM SHANGHAI TO DALNY AND THEN BY RAIL BEYOND.

MAIL FROM PEKING  
USING THE LAND ROUTE

14 APRIL 1903  
(Gregorian Calendar)

Letter through the Russian Post Office at Peking to Paris, with route endorsement "... Transsiberienne"

26-day transit time.

Arrival Postmark:  
"Paris,  
10 May 1901"

10 Kopeck..  
UPU Single-Weight  
(15 grams)  
International  
Letter-Rate.



MAIL FROM SHANGHAI  
USING SEA ROUTE TO  
DALNY AND RAIL  
BEYOND

16 MAY 1903  
(Gregorian Calendar)

View-card, postmarked Shanghai, Russian Post Office, sent to Paris, with route endorsement "Par Transsiberien".

25-day transit time.

Arrival Postmark:  
"Paris,  
10 June 1901"

5 Kopeck:  
Russian 'Via Siberia'  
Postcard-Rate



**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL**  
**1897-1903**

**Russian Post Office in Tomsk..**  
**Siberian Mail to North Africa**  
**1903**

**THE CITY OF TOMSK IS CONNECTED TO THE MAIN LINE OF THE  
TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY IN ASIAN-RUSSIA.  
Overseas-bound mail from there traveled by rail to  
Moscow for forwarding beyond.**



**REGISTERED MAIL TO ALGERIA VIA THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL ROUTE  
TO MOSCOW, BY RAIL TO GERMANY-FRANCE  
AND BY SEA FROM MARSEILLES TO ALGERIA**

**26 MARCH 1903**

(Julian Calendar)

**8 APRIL 1903**

(Gregorian Calendar)

Registered UPU postcard through the Russian Post Office at  
Tomsk, Siberia, Russia, sent to Algiers, Algeria,

17-day transit time.

Arrival Postmark:

"Algiers,  
25 April 1903"

**16 Kopeck**

**5 Kopeck.. UPU International  
Postcard-Rate**

**+ 10 Kopeck.. Registration fee**

**+ 1 Kopeck.. Convenience franking**

TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903

Russian Post Office in China  
Double-Franching Mail to Germany  
1903

Since China was not a member of the UPU until March 1914,  
EARLY FOREIGN-BOUND MAIL FROM CHINA HAD TO BE SENT THROUGH A  
FOREIGN POST OFFICE WITH BOTH CHINESE FRANKING  
AND THAT OF THE FOREIGN POST OFFICE.



CHINESE COMMERCIAL MAIL TO GERMANY FROM TIENTSIN  
USING RAIL ROUTE ... NEWCHWANG-HARBIN-IRKUTSK-  
MOSCOW-BERLIN-OSNABRÜCK, GERMANY

25 APRIL 1903

Commercial cover, postmarked by the Chinese Post Office at  
Tientsin, China, Russian Post Office postmark at Yingkou  
(Newchwang) on 1 May 1903 (Gregorian Calendar),  
sent to Osnabrück, Germany, with  
cachet route mark & hand endorsement  
"Via Siberia Germany"

22-day transit time.

Transit Postmark:  
"Newchwang,  
27 April 1903"

(Reverse)

Arrival Postmark:  
"Osnabrück,  
17 May 1903"



Reverse

30 Kopeck (Russian) & 30 Cents (Chinese)  
triple-weight (1.5 ounces/ 34 grams)  
international letter-rate.



TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903

Russian Post Office in China  
Registered Mail to Germany  
1903

NON-FINALIZED 'via Siberia' MAIL-ROUTING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GERMAN & RUSSIAN POST OFFICES NECESSITATED FAR EAST ORIGIN MAIL TO GERMANY TO BE SENT THROUGH THE RUSSIAN OR FRENCH POST OFFICES or, heretofore, by sea through a German Post Office in China.



Exp Eisold BPP

GERMANY-BOUND REGISTERED MAIL FROM SHANGHAI  
USING SEA ROUTE TO DALNY AND RAIL BEYOND

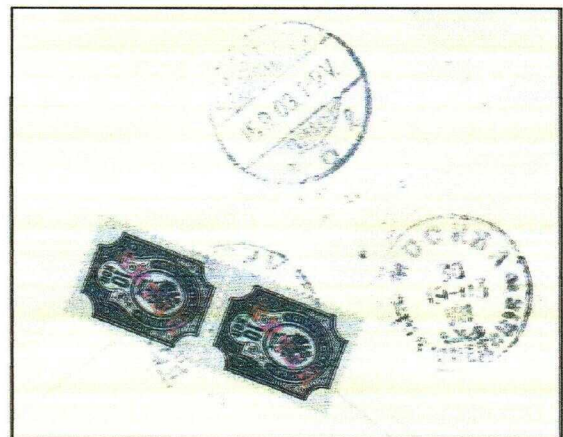
14 AUGUST 1903  
(Gregorian Calendar)

Registered commercial mail through the Russian Post Office at  
Shanghai, China, sent to Düsseldorf, Germany,  
Addressed to renowned German manufacturer of photo  
projection equipment, *Eduard Liesegang*.

32-day transit time.

Transit Postmark: (Reverse)  
"Moscow,  
12 September 1903"  
(Gregorian Calendar)

Arrival Postmark:  
"Düsseldorf \*6 I,  
15 September 1903"



Reverse

20 Kopeck:  
10 Kopeck.. UPU Single-Weight (15 grams)  
International Letter-Rate.  
10 Kopeck.. Registration fee

**TRIAL & EARLY MAIL  
1897-1903**

**Trans-Siberian Route Open for German  
Post Office Mail from/to China  
1 October 1903**

**AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GERMAN & RUSSIAN POST OFFICES TOOK EFFECT ON 1 OCTOBER 1903,**  
 permitting acceptance of German Post Office Mail from/to Europe or beyond routed over the  
 Trans-Siberian Network, albeit non-acceptance of printed-matter or parcel post mail.

**EARLY KIAUTSCHOU GERMAN POST OFFICE MAIL TO EUROPE  
OVER THE NEWLY OPENED 'VIA SIBERIA' ROUTE FOR GERMAN POST OFFICE MAIL**

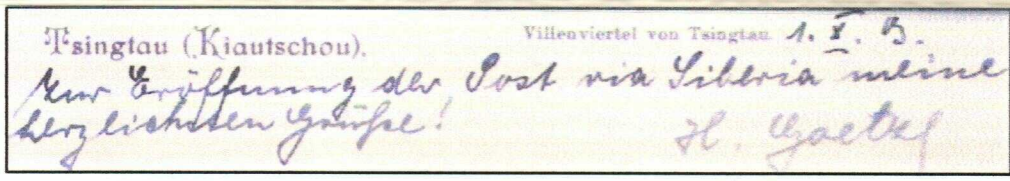
**1 OCTOBER 1903**

**View-card,  
postmarked at  
Tsingtao, Kiautschou  
Territory,  
route endorsed with  
text indicating  
first-day opening of  
'Via Siberia' Route,  
sent to Dresden,  
Germany.**

**5 Pfennig:  
German concession  
rate for mail to  
Germany from a  
German colony.**



Reverse



**5 NOVEMBER 1903**

**View-card,  
postmarked at  
Tsingtao, Kiautschou  
Territory, sent to  
Budapest, Hungary.  
24-day transit time.**

**Transit & Arrival  
Postmarks:  
"Moscow,  
13 November 1903  
(Julian Calendar)  
= 26 November 1903"  
(Gregorian Calendar)  
"Budapest,  
29 November 1903"**

**10 Pfennig:  
UPU International  
Postcard-Rate.**



**III. RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR  
1904-1905**

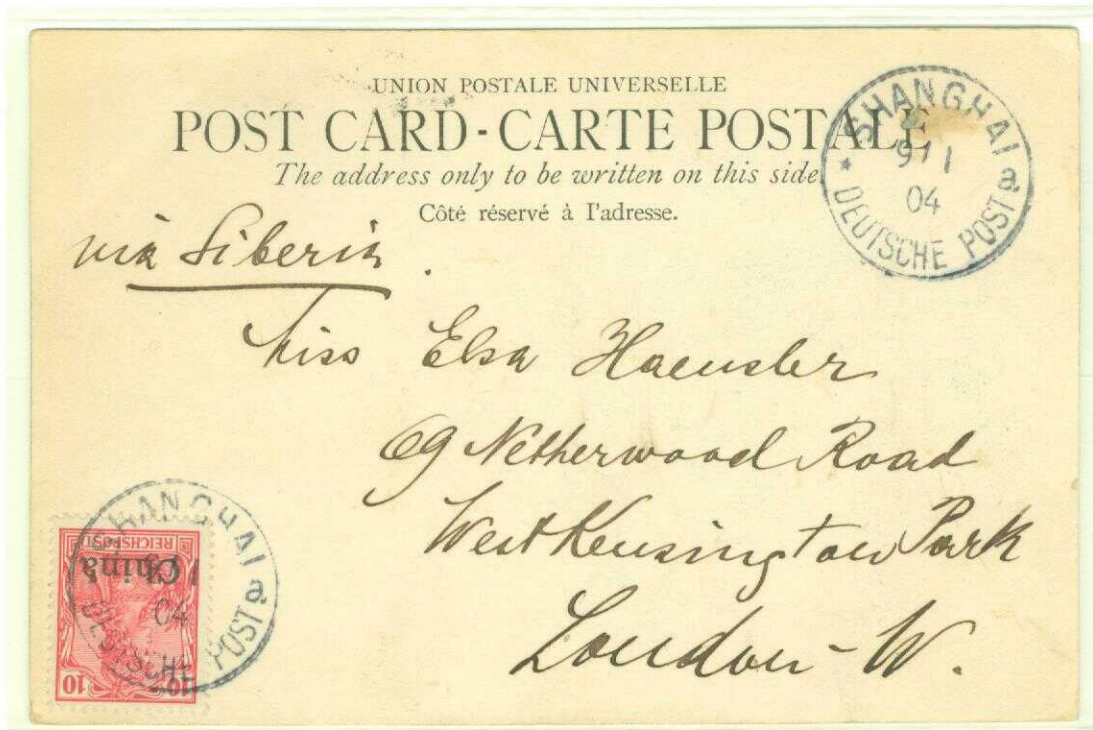
**Europe-Bound 'via Siberia' Mail  
Prior to Outbreak of War  
on 10 February 1904**

**GERMAN-POST-OFFICE MAIL WAS POSSIBLE ONLY FOUR MONTHS  
PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN  
RUSSIA AND JAPAN ON 10 FEBRUARY 1904,  
resulting in closure of all mail movement over the Trans-Siberian  
Network in Manchuria and China until late 1905.**

**GERMAN POST  
OFFICE IN CHINA  
MAIL TO ENGLAND**

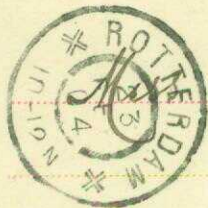
**9 JANUARY 1904**

Viewcard,  
postmarked at the  
Shanghai German  
Post Office, sent  
to London, England,  
with route  
endorsement  
"Via Siberia".



**via Siberia!**

Postkarte = Carte postale  
 ◦◦ Weltpostverein — Union postale universelle ◦◦  
 Levelező-Lap — Correspondenzkarte — Dopisnice  
 Karta korespondencyjna — Korespondenčni listek  
 Briefkaart - Cartolina postale - Post card - Brevkort  
 Открытое-письмо - TARJETA POSTAL - Довисна Карта



*Frieda Lambooy*  
*41 Ochtendvliet.*  
*Rotterdam*  
**HOLLAND.**



**GERMAN POST  
OFFICE IN CHINA  
MAIL TO HOLLAND**

**29 JANUARY 1904**

Viewcard,  
postmarked at the  
Shanghai German  
Post Office, sent to  
Rotterdam, Holland,  
with route  
endorsement  
"Via Siberia".  
25-day transit time.

**Arrival Postmark:**

**"Rotterdam,  
23 February 1904"**

**RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR  
1904-1905**

**Switzerland-Bound 'via Siberia' Mail**

**Prior to Outbreak of War  
on 10 February 1904**

**REGISTERED GERMAN POST  
OFFICE IN CHINA MAIL TO  
SWITZERLAND  
PRIOR TO  
RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**



**14 JANUARY 1904**

**Registered cover, postmarked at  
the Shanghai German Post Office,  
sent to Chur, Switzerland,  
with route endorsement  
"Via Siberia".**

**27-day transit time.**

Exp Bolthe BPP

**Arrival Postmark:  
"Chur,  
10 February 1904"**

**60 Pfennig:  
40 Pfg.. Double-Weight  
(15- 30 grams)  
UPU international  
Letter-Rate  
20 Pfg.. Registration fee**

**RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**  
**1904-1905**

**German Offices in China**  
**Mail Routed "Via Suez"**

**BETWEEN '9 FEBRUARY 1904 - LATE SUMMER 1905', FOREIGN-POST-OFFICES' -IN-CHINA MAIL WAS SENT BY SEA WITH ROUTE ENDORSEMENT "VIA SUEZ", since the trans-Siberian rail route was closed as a result of the Russo-Japanese War.**



**REGISTERED GERMAN-POST-OFFICE IN CHINA**  
**MAIL SENT TO GERMANY DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**

**13 APRIL 1905**

Registered bank mail, postmarked at the Tientsin German Post Office, sent to a military district office at Schönberg, Germany, with route indication "Via Suez".

39-day transit time.

**Service Postmark:**  
(reverse)  
"Schöneberg,  
22 May 1905"

**60 Pfennig:**  
40 Pfg.. Double-Weight (15-30 grams)  
UPU international Letter-Rate  
20 Pfg.. Registration fee

# RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

1904-1905

# Resumption of Mail Service

Caravan Route .. 1905

Although the Russo-Japanese War conflict continued until an armistice took effect on 31 August 1905,  
**OVERLAND MAIL SERVICE RESUMPTION EAST & WESTBOUND  
RESTARTED IN MAY 1905  
BY WAY OF THE OLD RIDER/CARAVAN ROUTE TO REACH THE  
EXISTING TRANS-SIBERIAN RAIL NETWORK AT MYSSOWAJA IN SIBERIA,  
BYPASSING THE CLOSED DAMAGED EASTERN CHINA RAIL ROUTE.**

Hostilities officially ended with the 'Russo-Japanese Treaty of Portsmouth' (New Hampshire) signed on 5 September 1905, albeit full resumption of the 'Via Siberia Route' over the Eastern China Rail Route over Manchuria was first again available on 12 February 1907.



## FRENCH-CHINA POST OFFICE POSTMARKED-MAIL TO FRANCE

22 MAY 1905

Cover, postmarked at Tientsin,  
with  
route endorsement  
"Voie Sibérie"  
sent to France.

30-day transit time.

(Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Myssowaja-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-France)

25 Centimes..  
Single-Weight  
UPU International  
Letter-Rate

# RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

1904-1905

# Resumption of Mail Service

Caravan Route .. 1905

With the opening of the overland Via Siberia Route, both German Post Offices in China and German Kiautschou endorsed mail 'Via Siberia' Route rather than over the longer 'Via Suez' Route.

## GERMAN-CHINA POST OFFICE MAIL TO GERMANY

12 SEPTEMBER 1905

Cover, postmarked at Tientsin, with route endorsement "*Ueber Sibieren*" sent to Siegburg.

Military Unit Validity Marking: "East Asiatic Occupation Artillery Brigade Depot"

Arrival Postmark: (Reverse) "Siegburg, 15 October 1905"

33-day transit time. (Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Myssowaja-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Siegburg)

10 Pfennig.. Single-weight concession letter-rate for mail to Germany.



## GERMAN-KIAUTSCHOU MAIL TO GERMANY

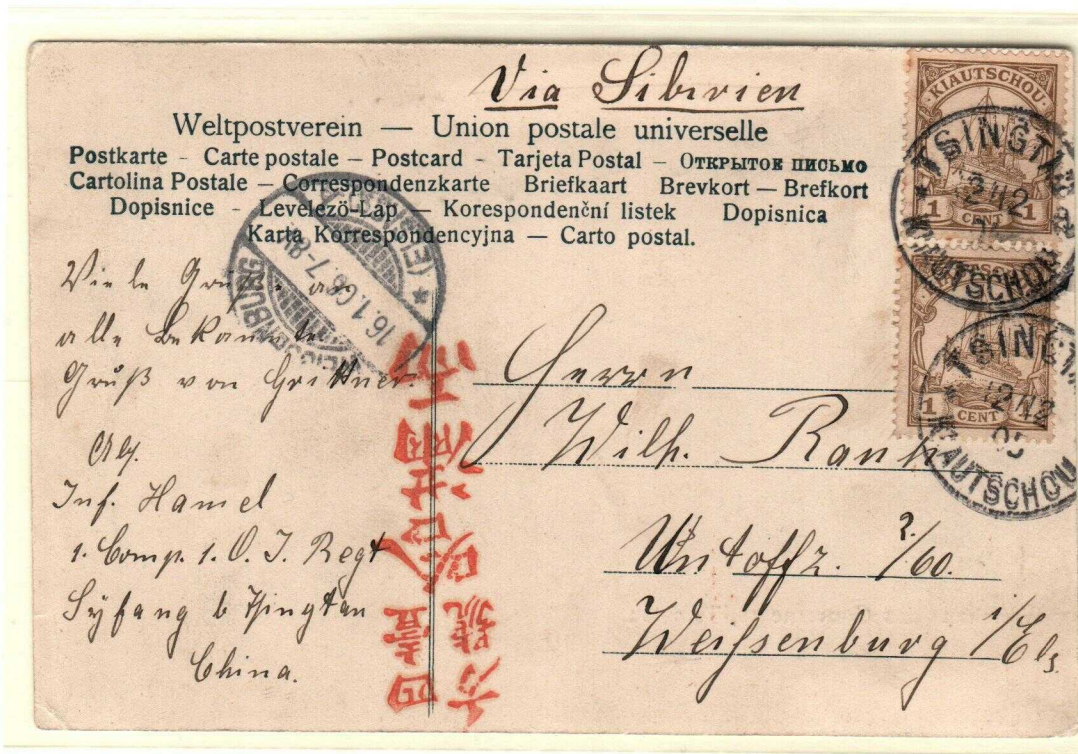
12 DECEMBER 1905

View-card, postmarked Tsingtao, Kiautschou, China, with route endorsement "*Via Siberia*" sent to Weissenburg, Province Alsace, Germany.

35-day transit time (Kiautschou-Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Myssowaja-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Weissenburg)

Arrival Postmark: "Weissenburg (Els), 16 January 1906"

2 Cents ... Postcard concession rate for mail to Germany



Chinese Handstamp (red) = Address of Sender.. "Hamel, No. 1, Sijfang"

Despite the resumption of mail services,  
**WINTER WEATHER-RELATED DELAYS,**  
 and continued non-operational track network in Eastern China,  
**OFTEN RESULTED IN MAIL TAKING AS LONG AS SEA-ROUTED MAIL.**



14 FEBRUARY 1906

Commercial cover , postmarked at the German Post Office at Tientsin, China,  
 with route endorsement "*via Russland*" sent to Hamburg, Germany.

42-day (weather-related delay) transit time  
 (Tientsin-Peking-Kalgan-Urga-Myssowaja-  
 Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Hamburg)

Arrival Postmark:  
 (Reverse)

"Hamburg,  
 28 March 1906"

**10 Cents:**  
**Single-Weight (15 grams) UPU International Letter-Rate**



# RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

1904-1905

# Resumption of Mail Service

Russian Post Office in China

1906-1907

On 12 February 1907, **THE ROUTE ON THE LIAOTUNG PENINSULA (Dalny/Port Arthur/Harbin) AND IN SOUTHERN MANCHURIA REOPENED**, now again enabling full use of the overland southern Manchurian and connecting trans-Siberian rail network.

1906

## CHINA TO GERMANY CARAVAN-ROUTE MAIL

26 OCTOBER 1906  
(Gregorian Calendar)

Postal stationery card  
postmarked Tschifu  
(Chefoo),  
Russian Post Office, to  
Suhl, Germany.

29-day Transit time  
(using Caravan Route  
since overland route still  
closed)

Arrival Postmark:  
"Suhl,  
24 November 1906"

4 Kopeck..  
International  
postcard-rate



1907

## CHINA TO GERMANY OVERLAND ROUTE MAIL

12 MAY 1907  
(Gregorian Calendar)

View-card postmarked  
Tientsin, China, without route  
endorsement "Via Siberia"  
to Stuttgart, Germany.

22-day transit time  
(Tientsin-Peking-Mukden-  
Harbin-Irkutsk-Moscow-  
Berlin-Stuttgart)

Transit Postmark:  
(Reverse)  
"Peking,  
13 May 1907"

Arrival Postmark:  
"Stuttgart, 3 June 1907"

4 Kopeck:  
International postcard-rate  
+ 2 Kopeck over-franking



**IV. EXPANSION OF MAIL SERVICES  
1907-1913**

**Tri-Weekly Express Train Service  
1907**

**By June 1907, EXPRESS TRAIN SERVICE (three times weekly),  
EXPEDITED HANDLING OF MAIL ALONG WITH PROMOTION OF ROUTE MAIL SERVICE  
between Europe/European Russia-Eastern Russia/Far East.**

**CHINA TO SWEDEN MAIL  
(German Post Office)**

**30 MARCH 1907**  
View card, postmarked at Shanghai, China, to Stockholm, Sweden, with route endorsement "via Siberia".

26-day Transit time  
(Shanghai..by sea..Dalny..by train..-Harbin-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Kiel..by sea..Stockholm)

4 Cents..  
UPU International Postcard Rate.



**CHINA TO GERMANY MAIL  
(Kiautschau .. German Colony)**

**11 JUNE 1907**  
View card, postmarked at Tsingtau, Kiautschou, China, sent to Uslar, Germany, with route endorsement "via Tschifu - Siberia".

23-day Transit time  
(Tsingtau-Tschifu-by sea to Dalny-Mukden-Harbin-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Uslar)

(Reverse)  
2 Cents..  
Postcard Concession Rate for German Colony to Germany.

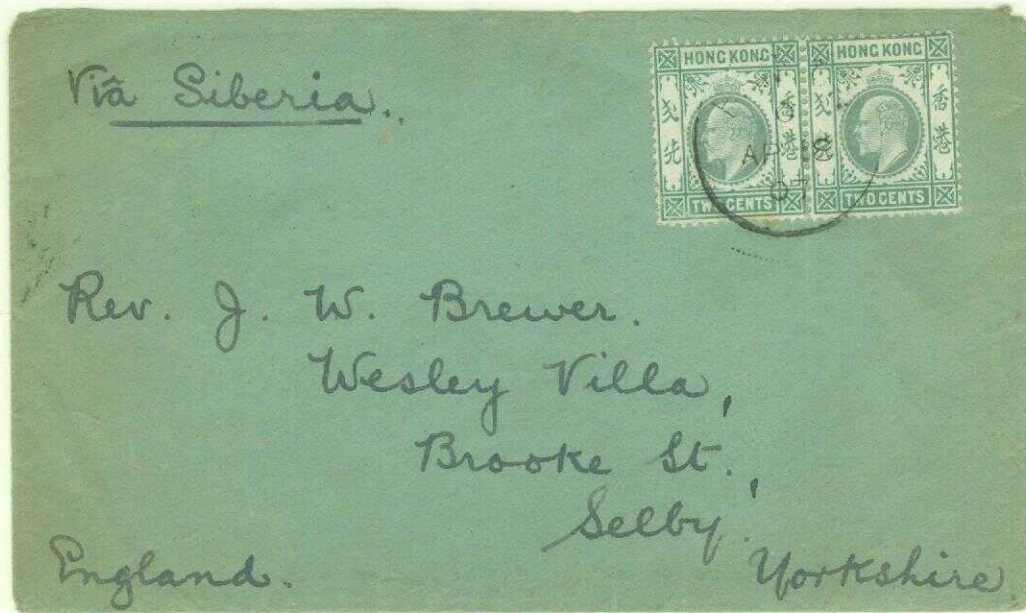
**CHINA TO ENGLAND MAIL  
(British Post Office)**

**18 APRIL 1907**  
Missionary mail postmarked at Hankow, China, with endorsement "Via Siberia" to Selby, Yorkshire, England.

29-day transit time:  
(Hankow..by sea to Dalny- Harbin-Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-Hamburg- by sea to England)

Transit & Arrival Postmarks:  
(Reverse)  
"Peking, 22 April 1907"  
"Selby, 17 May 1907"

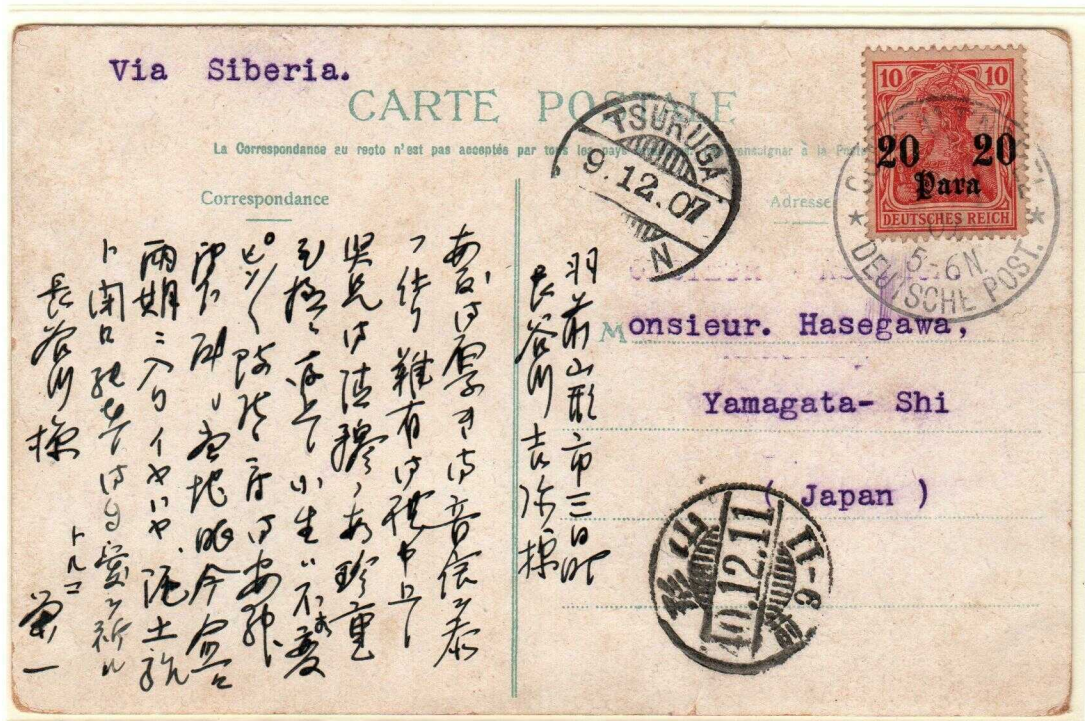
4 Cents..  
(Hong Kong Postage)  
UPU International Letter-Rate



**EXPANSION OF MAIL SERVICES  
1907-1913**

**Tri-Weekly Express Train Service  
Eastbound-Mail from Europe ..  
Turkey to Japan  
1907**

**EVEN FAR-SOUTHERN EUROPEAN MAIL TO THE FAR EAST  
WAS NOW POSSIBLE**  
via Berlin-Moscow to the Far East 'via Siberia'  
upon expansion of express train service.



**TURKEY TO JAPAN MAIL**  
(via German Post Office in Turkey))

**19 NOVEMBER 1907**

View card, endorsed '*Via Siberia*', postmarked at Constantinople, Turkey, German Post Office in Turkey, sent to Yamagata-Shi, Japan. 23-day transit time.

**Transit & Arrival Postmarks:**  
"Tsuruga, Japan, 9 December 1907"  
"Yamagata-Shi, 11 December (1907)"

- Routes:**
- Constantinople-Berlin (3 days)
  - Berlin-Moscow-Irkutsk-Harbin-Vladivostok (17 days)
  - Vladivostok (by vessel/land) Tsuruga-Yamagata-Shi (3 days)

**20 Para (= 10 Pfennig)**  
**UPU International Postcard Rate.**

EXPANSION OF MAIL SERVICES

1907-1913

Registered Mail Service

1907

Along with standard mail service,  
REGISTERED MAIL WAS POSSIBLE USING THE STANDARD SEALED MAIL  
BAGS WITH THE EXPRESS TRANS-SIBERIAN TRAIN SERVICE.

KIAUTCHOU-CHINA  
TO GERMANY MAIL  
(German Post Office)

11 JUNE 1907

Cover, postmarked at  
Tsingtau, Kiautschou,  
China, sent to Deutsch-  
Eylau, Germany,  
with route endorsement  
"via Siberia".

23-day Transit time  
(Kiautschou..by sea..-  
Dalny..by train..-Harbin-  
Irkutsk-Moscow-Berlin-  
Deutsch-Eylau)

Arrival Postmark:  
(Reverse)  
"Deutsch-Eylau,  
4 August 1907"

18 Cents..  
8 Cents..up to 250 grams  
+  
10 Cents.. Registry Fee/  
concession letter-rate for  
German Colony mail sent  
to Germany



CHINA TO  
HOLLAND MAIL  
(German Post Office)

24 OCTOBER  
1907

Commercial mail,  
postmarked  
Tientsin, China, with  
route endorsement  
"Via Siberia" sent  
to Amsterdam,  
Holland.

22-day transit time  
(Tientsin-Peking-  
Mukden-Harbin-  
Irkutsk-Moscow-  
Berlin-Amsterdam)

Arrival Postmark:  
(Reverse)  
"Amsterdam,  
14 November  
1907"

20 Cents..  
10 Cents.. UPU  
Single-Weight  
International  
Letter-Rate +  
10 Cents..  
Registry Fee

DUTCH ENGINEERING WORKS  
NEDERLANDSCHE FABRIEK  
VAN WERKTUIGEN EN SPOORWEG-MATERIEEL  
SHANGHAI

registered.

Via Siberia



Nederlandsche Fabriek van  
Werktuigen en Spoorwegmat

Amsterdam.  
(Holland)

60 HOLLAND CHINA TIENTSIN CHINA  
Tientsin