

Collecting the “Other” AMG Areas – South Korea and the Ryukyu Islands

by Richard Pederson

In addition to the AMG European emissions for France, Italy (including the Free Territory of Trieste and Venezia Giulia), Austria, and Germany, many consider the South Korean and Ryukyu Islands stamps issued under U.S. military rule, after World War II, to be included in the AMG collecting area. This article provides a very brief introduction to those “other” AMG collecting areas.

After World II, South Korea was under U.S. military rule until August of 1948 when the Republic of Korea was established and began issuing its own stamps. Stamps were first issued for South Korea, while under U.S. military administration, in February of 1946. The first six stamps were created by overprinting stamps previously issued by Japan. Figure 1 shows the low value in the set of stamps issued on February 1, 1946.



Figure 1. Japanese-issued stamp overprinted for use in South Korea under U.S. military administration.

Additional stamps issued under U.S. military rule all incorporated new designs with South Korean themes. There are a total of 26 major Scott-listed stamps issued under the U.S. military administration.

For the collector wanting to specialize in the stamps issued under the U.S. administration, there are numerous varieties to keep them interested. Varieties include surcharge errors and imperforate and partially-perforated stamps.

Stamps for the Ryukyu Islands were issued under U.S. administration from 1948 until May 15, 1972, when the islands were returned to Japan. A stamp from the first issue under U.S. administration is pictured in Figure 2.

There are well over 200 Scott-listed stamps for the Ryukyu Islands plus back-of-the-book (BOB) issues, including air mail and special delivery. The final stamp issued under U.S. administration, picturing an antique sake pot, is shown in Figure 3.

For those interested in specializing in the Ryukyu Islands, there are also numerous varieties including surcharge errors, incorrect fonts, and perforation and paper varieties. In addition, there

were provisional stamps issued, during the period from July 1945 through 1948, by postmasters of Kume Island (see Figure 4) and four island districts of the Ryukyu Islands. The Kume Island stamps were created locally and those issued by the four island districts were created by placing handstamps on Japanese stamps. Some of the provisional issues are quite expensive, especially in used condition and should be certified.



Figure 2. Stamp from the first Ryukyu Islands issue under U.S. administration.



Figure 3. Final Ryukyu Islands issue under U.S. administration.

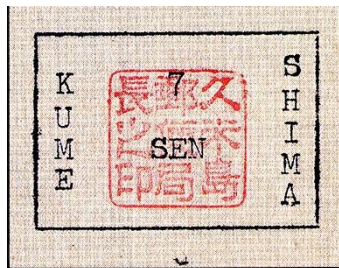


Figure 4. Provisional issue for Kume Island.

The images used above for Ryukyu Islands Scott 1, 228, 1X1, and Korea Scott 55 are from the Scott catalogues and used with permission of Amos Media Co., Sidney, OH 45365.

References:

Scott 2015 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers; edited by Charles Snee; published by Scott Publishing Co.; pages 1049-1073; October 2014.

Scott 2015 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue; edited by Charles Snee; published by Scott Publishing Co.; Volume IV page 240 (Korea); 2014.