Commerce

The Minister of Colonies had had to live with complaints about imperforate stamps since 1863. Finally in 1880, conditions were right to pursue a new issue of stamps for the colonies. The design submitted by Alphée Dubois featuring an allegorical image of commerce was selected as the final design. Mr. Dubois’s fee of 4,000 francs was paid by the colonies, each apportioned a share based on the size of its economy. The stamps were among the first to printed in the government’s newly acquired Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres.

The stamps were first distributed in 1881 and served the postal needs of the colonies for a decade until each colony got its the Navigation and Commerce issues in 1892. Besides the basic stamps, various overprints were applied to meet shortages or new purposes.

To familiarize the public with the stamps available to them, post offices in major cities displayed samples in their lobbies. While waiting to transact business with a postal clerk, patrons could examine postal products before making a purchase. As a security measure, the display samples were overprinted “Specimen.”

Belgian trade card depicts postman of Annam and example of 15 centimes blue Commerce stamp.
Commerce
Postmarks

1 centime

HA-NOI
TONKIN

HANOI-CONCES
TONKIN

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TOURANNE
ANNAM
Commerce
Postmarks

2 centimes

TONQUIN
HAIPHONG

HA-NOI
TONKIN

LONGXUYEN
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE
Commerce
Postmarks

2 centimes

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TOURANNE
ANNAM

4 centimes

CHOBO
TONKIN

HAIPHONG
TONKIN

HANOI-CONCESÓN
TONKIN
Commerce Postmarks

4 centimes

SAIGON COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

THUAN-AN ANNAM

5 centimes

HA-NOI TONKIN

HAI-PHONG TONKIN

LAO-KAI TONKIN

MYTHO COCHINCHINE
Commerce
Postmarks

5 centimes

HAI-PHONG
TONKIN

NAM-DINH
TONKIN

PNOMPENH
CAMBODGE

QUINEHONE
ANNAM

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE
Commerce Postmarks

5 centimes

SAIGON A HAIPHONG PAQ. FR.
SAIGON CAL COCHINCHINE
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE
SAIGON-PORT COCHINCHINE

QUINEHONE ANNAM

12 DÉC 92
11 SEPTEMBRE 87
25 NOV 91
15 DÉC 89

30 DÉC 90
Commerce Postmarks

10 centimes

CHAUDOC COCHINCHINE
HA-NOI TONKIN
HAI-PHONG TONKIN
LONGXUYEN COCHINCHINE

15 centimes

CORR. D. ARMEES HA-NOI
CORR. D. ARM. P NOM PENH
CORR. D. ARMEES SADEC
CORR. D. ARMEES SAIGON

COILS 500 SHEETS
Commerce Postmarks

15 centimes

SOCTRANG COCHINCHINE

COCHINCHINE TAN-AN

VINHLONG COCHINCHINE

SOCTRANG

COCHINCHINE

27 DEC 87

1 DEC 88

VINHLONG

29 MARS 92

HANOI-REC. TONKIN

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

HANOI-REC. TONKIN

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE
Commerce Postmarks

25 centimes yellow

BACLIEU
COCHINCHINE

COCHINCHINE
BENTRE

HA-NOI
TONKIN

BACLIEU
COCHINCHINE

COCHINCHINE
BENTRE

HA-NOI
TONKIN

CORR. D. ARMEES
HA-NOI

CORR. D. ARMEES
HAI-PHONG

CAMBODGE
PNUM-PENH

CORR. D. ARMEES
HA-NOI

CORR. D. ARMEES
HAI-PHONG

CAMBODGE
PNUM-PENH
Commerce
Postmarks

25 centimes yellow

SAIGON
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TONKIN
CORPS EXPEDIT

COCHINCHINE
VINH-LONG

SAIGON
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TONKIN
CORPS EXPEDIT

COCHINCHINE
VINH-LONG
Commerce
Postmarks

25 centimes black

HA-NOI
TONKIN

HAI-PHONG
TONKIN

ANNAM
HUE

HA-NOI
2e 22
JANV.
TONKIN

HAI-PHONG
2e 12
AVRIL
89
TONKIN

ANNAM
4
FEVR
93
HUE

LONGXUYEN
COCHINCHINE

PNOMPENH
CAMBODGE

QUANG-YEN
ANNAM

LONGKUYEN
15
JANV
98
COCHINCHINE

PNOMPENH
1 3
JUIN
92
CAMBODGE

QUANG-YEN
26
OCT
92
ANNAM
Commerce
Postmarks

25 centimes black

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

MYTHO
ANNAM

SAIGON CAI
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TRANGBANG
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

TRANGBANG
COCHINCHINE
Commerce
Postmarks

25 centimes black

TRAVINH COCHINCHINE
TOURANNE ANNAM
VINH ANNAM

30 centimes

CHODO TONKIN
CHOLON COCHINCHINE
HA-NOI TONKIN
HANOI-REC TE TONKIN

CHOBO TONKIN
CHOLON COCHINCHINE
HA-NOI TONKIN
HANOI-REC TE TONKIN
Commerce
Postmarks
35 centimes

CHOOBO
TONKIN

HA-NOI
TONKIN

HAI-PHONG
TONKIN

KEBAU
TONKIN

LAO-KAI
TONKIN

THUAN-AN
ANNAM
Commerce Postmarks

40 centimes

BINH-DINH
ANNAM

DAPCAU
TONKIN

HAI-PHONG
TONKIN

HUE
ANNAM

BINH-DINH
5 OCT
ANNAM

DAPCAU
10 MARS
TONKIN
93

HAI-PHONG
26 JUIN
TONKIN
88

HUE
2 IVV
ANNAM
94

HA-NOI
TONKIN

HANOI-CONCES
TONKIN

HANOI-REC
TONKIN

HA-NOI
4 31 MAI
TONKIN
90

HANOI-CONCES
24 SEPT
TONKIN
92

HANOI-REC
16 FEVR
TONKIN
Commerce
Postmarks

40 centimes

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-PORT
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON PORT
COCHINCHINE

LAO-KAI
TONKIN

THUAN-AN
ANNAM

TOURANNE
ANNAM

LAO-KAI
21
NOV
90

THUAN-AN
20
AOUT
92

TOURANNE
19
SEPT
92
Commerce Postmarks

75 centimes

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE

THUAN-AN ANNAM

1 franc

HA-NOI TONKIN

HAI-PHONG TONKIN

HAIPHONG A SAIGON PAQ. FR.
Commerce
Postmarks

1 franc

LAO-KAI
TONKIN

PNOMPENH
CAMBODGE

SAIGON A SINGAPORE
PAQ. FR.

LAO-KAI
TONKIN

PNOMPENH
CAMBODGE

SAIGON A SINGAPORE
PAQ. FR.

COCHINCHINE
SAIGON

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

COCHINCHINE
SAIGON

SAIGON CENTRAL
COCHINCHINE

SAIGON PORT
COCHINCHINE
Keen collector interest in the postmarks of the various colonial towns on the General Issues has inspired some to meet the demand by producing their own supply. Here are the efforts of one individual. After manufacturing his own cancellers, he applied them to used stamps, which in most cases show traces of the original, genuine postmarks. However, he evidently was not knowledgeable about the cancels of the period as such large circular date stamps were not in use in Indochina.

For the Phnom Penh postmark, the letter height is 3.25 mm and the circles are 25 and 37 mm in diameter.

For the Saigon postmark, letter height is 2.75 mm and the circle diameters are 26 and 35 mm. The numbers 18 and 27 are common to the interior of these Saigon strikes.
During 1895-97, four denominations were overprinted with values in cents of the Indochinese piaster to serve as tax stamps for documents handled by the Clerk of Court. “GREFFE” stood for Droits de Greffe (court clerk duties).