

## Markings that Moved the Mail in Indochina

This exhibit presents a study of markings employed by the postal system in French Indochina from its earliest days until it evolved into the separate postal systems of the successor independent states. Every postal system has developed markings for recording information on items submitted for delivery. Postal officials in French Indochina modeled many markings on counterparts from the French postal system but the authorities also created their own unique markings.

The top level distinction is between markings that provided information from markings that were associated with a payment for services. The exhibit is organized according to the following outline:

<u>Informational</u>	<u>Services</u>
Postage	Registration
Postage Paid	Handstamps
Postage Computation	Labels
Underpaid Postage	Return Receipt
Overpaid Postage	Cash on Delivery (COD)
Delivery	Insurance
Return to Sender	Metered Mail
Unknown Addressee	Expedited Service
Unknown to the Mailmen	Express
Incomplete Address	Airmail
No Forwarding Address	Handstamps
Common Name	Labels
Refused	
Deceased	
Unclaimed	
Dead Letter Office	
Handling of the Mail	
Window Number	
Mobile Box	
Too Late	
Found in the Box	
Mail Categories	
Sample Merchandise	
Mourning Stationery	

## Multiple Postal Markings

As a favor, an obliging postal clerk at the Dong Dang post office applied an array of handstamps to this postcard in 1903. Even though the markings had no significance as far as the postcard itself (except the postmark), their variety is spectacular nonetheless.



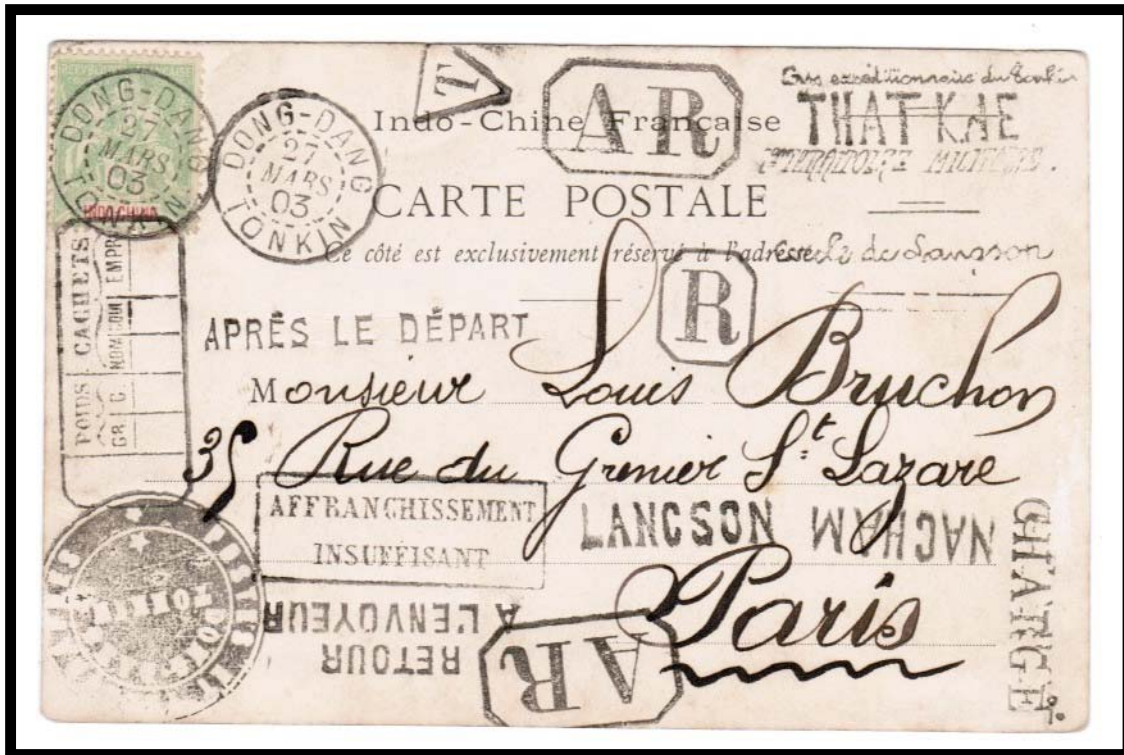
AFFRANCHISSEMENT  
INSUFFISANT



POIDS		CACHETS	
GR.	C.	NOM	COULI EMPRT



CHARGÉ



RETOUR  
A L'ENVOYEUR



NACHAM

APRÈS LE DÉPART



LANCSON

Postage Paid  
1884

A free mail franchise was established for troops serving in the Annam-Tonkin campaign starting in August 1883. The franchise lasted until 31 October 1904 when the northern protectorates were firmly under total French control.

At the beginning of the campaign, all military mail went through Saigon. No distinctive postmarking device existed for certifying the free franchise. The octagonal CORR. D. ARMEES SAIGON postmark was already in use for the reduced rate military letters from southern Indochina.

To prevent unfranked letters from being charged postage due, the military post office in Saigon resurrected the framed "P.P." device. It was applied in red ink and meant "postage paid" (port payée). This marking was in use for only a short period from September 1883 through March 1885. It disappeared when the Expeditionary Force's own postmarks became available.

P.P.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CORR. D. ARMEES SAIGON 30 MARS 84  
P.P. in rectangle (red)

REVERSE

ROUEN SEINE INFÉRIEURE 12 MAI 84

Postage Paid  
1885

After the sender started to endorse the top of this envelope with "Corps Expeditionnaire du Tonkin," he added a 15-centime stamp. No doubt, this caused confusion because troops serving in Tonkin combat zones received free mail privileges. On the other hand, troops serving in pacified areas could send letters to France for the reduced rate of 15 centimes. A postal clerk clarified the situation by handstamping the cover with a circled "PP" meaning that postage had in deed been fully paid ("port paye").



POSTAL MARKINGS

CORR. D. ARMEES HAI-PHONG 1 MARS 85  
postage paid handstamp

REVERSE

PARIS (60) 26 AVRIL 85  
PARIS LA-GARE-D'IVRY 26 AVRIL 85

Not To Be Taxed  
1932

The 36-cent airmail postage for this letter had been paid with a 21-cent stamp and a 15-cent stamp. The 21-cent stamp was mutilated before the cancellation had been applied. Undoubtedly, this was the fault of the post office because a clerk wrote in blue crayon "A ne pas taxer" meaning that the letter should not be cited for postage due.



POSTAL MARKINGS

PNOMPENH CAMBODGE 19-11 32  
slogan handstamp  
framed Saigon-Marseille routing instruction  
handwritten "A ne pas taxer"

REVERSE

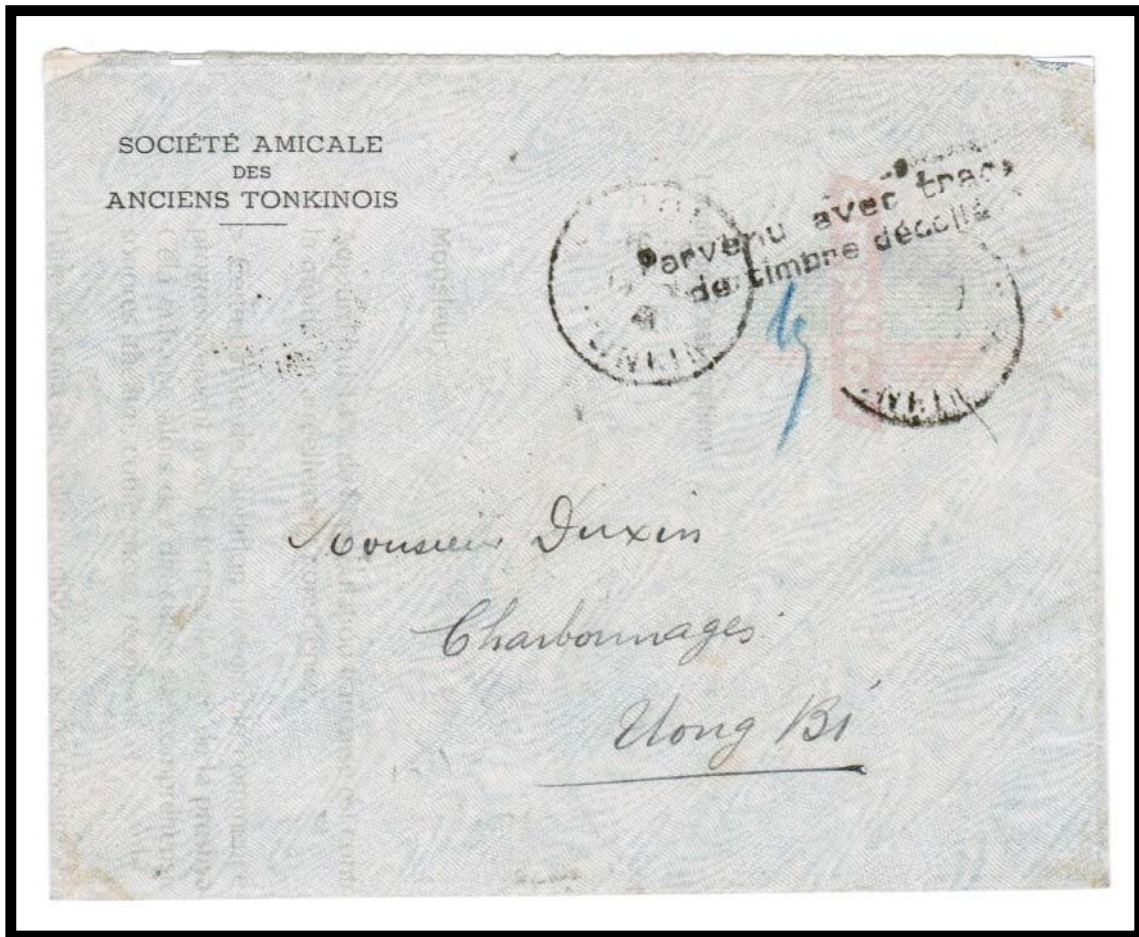
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 19-1 32



Trace of Stamp  
1941

Sent internally from Hanoi to Uong Bi, this mailing suffered a loss of the postage stamp in transit. A postal clerk, noting that a partial postmark provided a border of the missing stamp, applied a handstamp acknowledging this observation so that the letter was not charged postage due as an unpaid letter.

Parvenu avec trace  
de timbre décollé



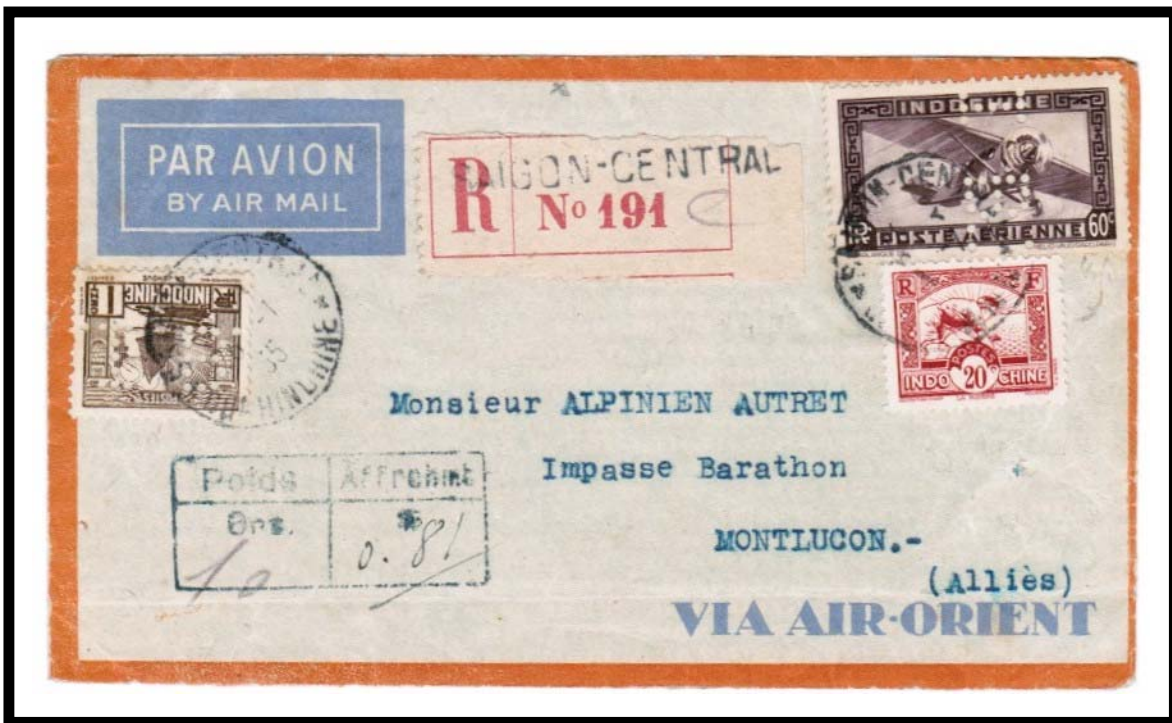
POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI TONKIN 13-11 41  
REVERSE  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 14-11 41  
UONGBI TONKIN 51-11 41

## Rate Basis Handstamp 1935

The mailroom of the Saigon Branch Office of the Bank of Indochina used a handstamped cachet to present the basis for the postage affixed to a mailing. Likely this was done to expedite the processing of bank correspondence through the mails.

A panel on the left was for recording for the weight (in grams) and a space on the right was for the corresponding franking. In this case, the letter rate was 6 cents, the airmail surcharge was 60 cents and the registration fee was 15 cents making the total postage 81 cents.

Poids	Affrchtmt
Grs.	\$



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-1 35  
 registration label  
 rate basis handstamp (blue)

### REVERSE

MONTLUCON ALLIES 5-2 35

Rate Basis Handstamp  
1937

The rate computation cachet showed that the postage for a 10-gram, registered letter to a foreign destination was 90 cents. Postage was calculated as follows:

foreign letter rate	15 cents
registration fee	15 cents
<u>airmail supplement</u>	<u>60 cents</u>
total	90 cents

Poids	Affrcht
Grs.	\$



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 8-10 37  
registration label and airmail  
rate basis handstamp (blue)

REVERSE

NEW YORK, N.Y. REG'Y DIV. 10-25 1937



## Rate Basis Handstamp 1941

The Saigon Branch of the Bank of Indochina used the rate basis cachet well into World War II. Here, a clerk opted to use red ink to apply the handstamp.

In this case, the envelope bears the imprinted return address of the bank and the stamps are perforated with the initials "B.I." for Bank of Indochina.

Poids	Affrchtmt
Grs.	\$



### POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-7 41

rate basis handstamp (red)

censor's tape (Singapore)

PASSED BY CENSOR 231 A (Singapore)

circled F and 3

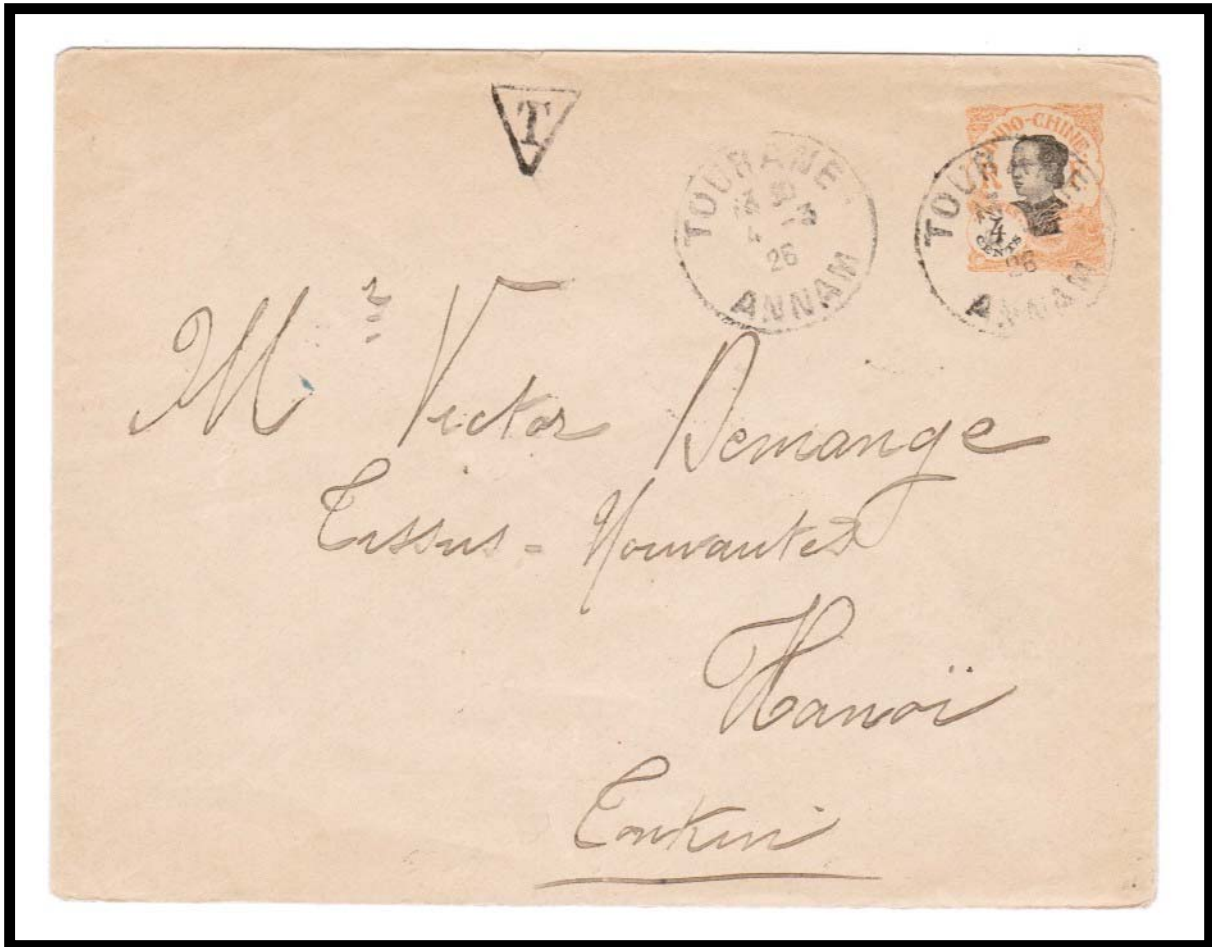
REVERSE

PASSED BY CENSOR 231 A (Singapore)

Underpaid — Postage Due  
1926

The "T" in a triangle was commonly used by the postal administrations in France and her colonies to signify "taxe" or postage due. A number of varieties exist.

Because the internal letter rate had risen to 5 cents in September 1925, this mailing was underpaid. The "T in triangle" marking was applied in this case with no indication of the amount due.



POSTAL MARKINGS  
TOURANE ANNAM 4-3 26  
T in triangle  
REVERSE  
HANOI TONKIN 6-3 26

Underpaid – Postage Due  
1902

The "T in triangle" was normally applied with black ink. This much forwarded postcard received several postage due markings. One was struck in red, presumably applied at Phu-Ninh-Giam where the town's postmark was also struck in red ink.



POSTAL MARKINGS

EQUEURDREVILLE MANCHE 24 AVRIL 02

HANOI TONKIN 28 MAI 02

HAIPHONG TONKIN 31 MAI 02

PHU-NINH-GIAM TONKIN 1 JUIN 02

"T" in triangle (black and red)

Underpaid — Postage Due  
1912

Sent from Cantho to the United States, this postcard had only 4 centimes worth of postage affixed to the view side. Even though the sender had written "Imprimé" (printed matter) at the top of the address side in an attempt to qualify for a reduced rate, the postcard was backstamped with the due marking. The U.S. Post Office computed the amount due as one cent.

DUE 1 CENT

United States



Indochina



POSTAL MARKINGS

T in triangle

"DUE 1 CENT" handstamp

REVERSE

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 27-12 12



Underpaid — Postage Due  
1941

This variety of the postage due marking is larger – the letter "T" is 9 millimeters tall. The amount due was 38 Indochinese cents, which, at the time, equated to 8 American cents.



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 25-1 41  
OUVERT PAR L'AUTORITE MILITAIRE football  
A3 in circle  
censor's resealing band  
T in triangle with handwritten amount due

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. bis TONKIN 25-1 41  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-1 41  
HAIPHONG TONKIN 28-141  
OUVERT PAR L'AUTORITE MILITAIRE football



Underpaid — Postage Due  
1932

Originally mailed from the rural post office at the village of Kim-Son in Ninh Binh Province, this cover was marked postage due at the Ninh Binh post office. Both the "T in triangle" and the framed "AFFRANCHISSEMENT INSUFFISANT" markings were applied. Upon arrival in France, a postal clerk determined the amount due was 30 centimes, which he wrote at the top. Additionally, the French postal clerk affixed a postage due stamp.



POSTAL MARKINGS

POSTE RURALE PROVINCE DE NINH-BINH KIM-SON  
NINH BINH TONKIN 13-9 32

T in triangle

framed AFFRANCHISSEMENT INSUFFISANT

REVERSE

HAI-PHONG TONKIN 14-9 32  
PARIS XI RUE MERCOEUR 16.X 1932

Underpaid — Postage Due  
1934

Over time, the triangle was largely abandoned and a plain "T" was used to denote postage due. Sent to Germany, this airmail letter was underpaid with only 53 cents worth of franking. Handstamped with a 12 millimeter tall "T", the amount due was handwritten as 1 gold franc ("1F or").

T



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 1-9 34  
plain T with handwritten amount due  
"80" in blue crayon



Underpaid — Postage Due  
1939

Sent from Cap Saint Jacques to France, this envelope was franked with 37 cents in stamps. A "T" was applied to the envelope but there is no indication of the amount due.

T



POSTAL MARKINGS

CAP ST JACQUES COCHINCHINE 24-2 39  
plain T due marking

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 24-2 39  
MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BCHES DU RHONE 3-III 1939  
LISLE DORDOGNE 4-3 39



Underpaid — Postage Due  
1950

The framed "AFFRANCHISEMENT INSUFFISANT" marking remained in use until after World War II. Sent from the Indochina Television and Radio Company, this cover was marked with 14 millimeter tall "T". The amount due was indicated as 0.15384 gold francs.

AFFRANCHISEMENT  
INSUFFISANT

T



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON RP SUD VIET-NAM 1-8 1950  
plain T with handwritten amount due  
framed AFFRANCHISEMENT INSUFFISANT

Underpaid — Postage Due  
1916

A letter from Hanoi to Saigon was misdirected to an English speaking country and mistakenly cited for postage due. Presumably, the error was noted and the letter was delivered without any collection of a postage due charge. The letter was in transit for 8 days.

POSTAGE DUE
TAXED CENTS



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI TONKIN 3-4 16  
framed POSTAGE DUE TAXED CENTS  
REVERSE  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-4 13

Underpaid — Postage Due  
4 cents Minimum Due, 1934

Andre Leralle was an active philatelist who prepared handstamps for his own use or for the use of the Cantho post office. This triangular marking indicated that the postage due amount was a minimum of 4 cents. The Indochinese Post Office never published a rule along these lines for regular letters.



POSTAL MARKINGS

CAN-THO COCHINCHINE 18-6 34  
4 CENTS TAXE MINIMUM in triangle



Underpaid — Postage Due  
5 cents Minimum Due, 1932

Here an underpaid letter originating from a rural post office at Coba was struck with a large handstamp indicating that a minimum of 5 cents had to be collected no matter the amount of underpayment. The marking was another of Andre Leralle's creations.



POSTAL MARKINGS

P. DE NGHE-AN x H. BUI-CHAU COBA  
PHU-QUI ANNAM 20-8 32

T in triangle and 5 CENTS TAXE MINIMUM in triangle

REVERSE

P. DE NGHE-AN x H. BUI-CHAU COBA  
VINH ANNAM 21-8 32  
SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 26-8 32



Underpaid for Airmail Service  
1931

When airmail services were first introduced, there was widespread confusion about the amount for the supplementary fee. Here a large handstamp let the recipient know that inadequate postage had been paid for airmail service. As a result, the letter ended up going by surface mail taking a month to arrive in Paris.

AFFRANCHISSEMENT INSUFFICIENT  
POUR TRANSPORT AERIEN



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-3 31  
airmail and expedited service labels  
“inadequate postage for airmail service” handstamps

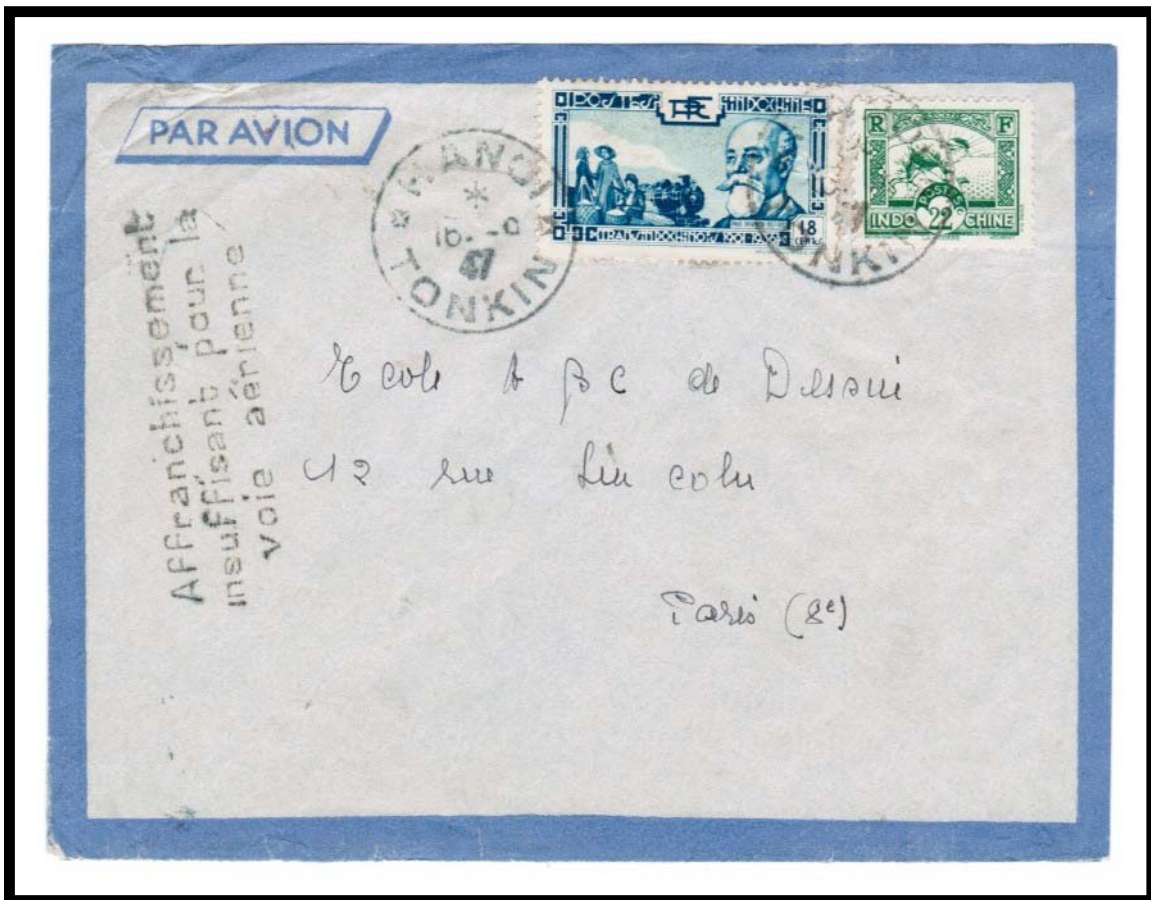
REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 6-3 31  
8 PARIS-R.P. DISTRIBUTION 6 • IV 1931

Underpaid for Airmail Service  
1947

After World War II, inflation prompted the Indochinese post office to frequently adjust postage rates upward to compensate for a devalued piaster. Airmail rates changed especially often. Patrons sometimes were caught unaware of the newly implemented rates. However, if the sender had indicated airmail but had not affixed correct amount of postage, the post office was not obligated to handle the item as airmail. Handstamps appeared with the explanation "Postage insufficient for airmail service."

Affranchissement  
insuffisant pour la  
voie aérienne



POSTAL MARKINGS  
HANOI TONKIN 16-9 47  
Postage insufficient for airmail service  
REVERSE  
HANOI TONKIN 17-9 47

## Underpaid for Airmail Service 1950

A later handstamp from 1950 expressed the same message with smaller lettering in two lines of text. Usually, post offices were free to obtain marking devices on their own. As a result, variations can be found from post office to post office.

Affranchissement insuffisant  
Pour la voie aérienne



### POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN NORD VIET-NAM 21-11 1950  
Postage insufficient for airmail service



Franked by Sender  
1932

Postal clerks usually affixed postage when items were handed over at the window in the post office. The postal administration was sensitive to complaints about overcharging. Consequently, when a customer submitted an item franked with an excessive amount of postage, a clerk would mark it "Franked by Sender" to indicate that the post office was not to be blamed for the amount of postage used.

With an additional 60 cents worth of postage on the reverse, this envelope received the famed "AFFRANCHI PAR L'EXPÉDITEUR" marking employed at the Hanoi Post Office.

AFFRANCHI PAR L'EXPÉDITEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-7 32  
airmail and registry labels  
"Saigon-Marseille" routing instruction  
Franked by Sender

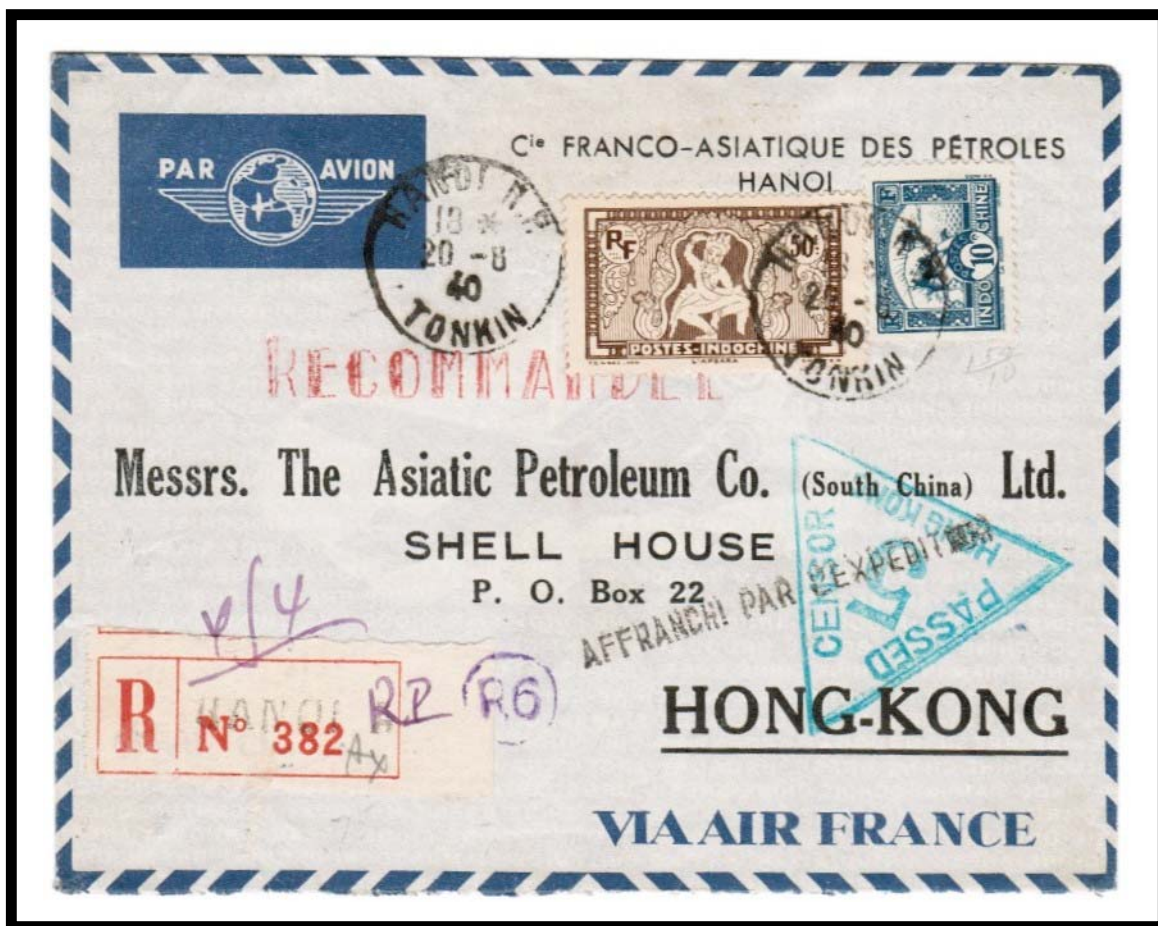
REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 9-7 32  
PARIS DISTRIBUTION 25-7 32

Franked by Sender  
1940

This overpaid envelope from the French-Asiatic Petroleum Company shows an unframed variety of Hanoi's "Franked by Sender" markings.

AFFRANCHI PAR L'EXPEDITEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 20-8 40

registry label

"R6" in circle

PASSED CENSOR HONG KONG 5

Franked by Sender

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. BIS TONKIN 21-8 40

Franked by Sender  
1932

The post office at Cantho departed from the usual practice of spelling its marking with all capital letters. Except for the first letter, the remainder of the lettering in this marking is entirely lower case letters.

Àfranchi par l'Expéditeur



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 3-12 32

airmail label

Franked by Sender

REVERSE

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 3-12 32

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 4-12 32

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION B<sup>C</sup>HES DU RHONE 12·XII 1932

PARIS VIII DISTRIBUTION 13·XII 1932



Franked by Sender  
1933

Here a version of the "Franked by Sender" handstamp was applied with red ink directly on the selvedge of a stamp affixed on the envelope.

Affranchi par l'Expéditeur



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 3-6 33

airmail label

Franked by Sender

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 3-6 33

PARIS XI RUE MERCOEUR 12 • VI 1933

Franked by Sender  
1941

Overfranked with stamps on both sides, this cover was handstamped with a double-framed "Franked by Sender" when it was posted from Haiphong.

AFFRANCHI  
PAR  
EXPEDITEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN 25-6 41  
registration label and "Franked by sender" handstamp  
censor's resealing tape and censor's signature handstamps

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 25-6 41  
ALBI TARN 14-8 41

Franked by Sender  
1946

After World War II, nationalistic feelings surfaced in earnest among the populace, especially in northern Indochina. Evidence of this shift in allegiance was the fact that postal markings were now written in Vietnamese instead of French. This example shows the Vietnamese expression for "Franked by Sender".

Người gửi dán tem lấy



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-2 46  
registration label  
Franked by Sender handstamp



Return to Sender, Incomplete Address  
Lam, Tonkin

Unable to deliver a calling card in December 1907, the Lam post office stamped the letter as lacking a complete address and consequently was to be returned to the sender in Hanoi.

RETOUR  
À L'ENVOYEUR

ADRESSE  
INCOMPLÈTE



POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 10 DEC. 07

"Incomplete Address" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

"Incomplete Address" handstamp

Return to Sender  
Cantho, Cochinchina

Letters could be undeliverable for any number of reasons. Usually, regular letters were simply discarded. When the post office returned a registered mailing, the cover was handstamped "return to sender" ("RETOUR À L'ENVOYEUR").

Here a registered business letter with a complex address was sent to Cantho but could not be delivered. As a result, it was handstamped "RETOUR À L'ENVOYEUR".

RETOUR  
À L'ENVOYEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

BACLIEU COCHINCHINE 16-7 46  
registration label  
"Return to Sender" handstamp

REVERSE

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 28-8 46

Return to Sender, Unknown Addressee  
Lai-Chau, Tonkin

Here a French letter was accepted free of charge because it was addressed to a soldier in Indochina. However, because the post office was unable to locate him, the envelope was handstamped "unknown" and "return to sender."

RETOUR  
A L'ENVOYEUR

INCONNU



POSTAL MARKINGS

LIMOGES H<sup>IE</sup> VIENNE 29-I 1940

LAI-CHAU TONKIN 28-3 40

"Unknown" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 7-3 40

LAI-CHAU TONKIN 28-3 40

LIMOGES H<sup>IE</sup> VIENNE 23-V 1940



Unknown Addressee  
Tourane, Annam

One of the most common causes was that letters were returned to senders was because the addressee was unknown to the receiving post office.

This 1915 cover demonstrates an early form of the "unknown" ("INCONNU") handstamp.

INCONNU



POSTAL MARKINGS

TOURANE ANNAM 10-1 15

"Unknown" handstamp

REVERSE

TOURANE ANNAM 12-1 15

Unknown Addressee  
Thai-Binh, Tonkin

Unable to deliver a letter sent to Tonkin in 1936, the post office applied a bilingual "UNKNOWN" handstamp that had the French word "UNKNOWN" written above corresponding Chinese characters.

INCONNU  
不 識



POSTAL MARKINGS

GARE DE BOUENE LA CROISIERE VALCLUSE 6-2 35

"Unknown" handstamp

"Return to Sender" handstamp

REVERSE

MARSEILLE-GARE-AVION BUCHES DU RHONE 6 • II 11935

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-2 35

THAI-BINH TONKIN 17-2 35

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 19-2 35

BOUCHET DROME 28-3 35

Unknown Addressee, Return to Sender  
Omon, Cochinchina

Sent to Omon, this registered mailing could not be delivered because the addressee was not known to the post office. The "Return to Sender]" handstamp employed lettering that was 2 ¾ millimeters tall.

INCONNU

RETOUR  
À L'ENVOYEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 10-4 40  
registration label

framed "Unknown" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-4 40  
OMON COCHINCHINE 13-4 40  
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 25-4 40



Unknown Addressee  
Saigon, Cochinchina

Because the Saigon post office was unable to locate the addressee for this internal mailing, the envelope was handstamped "unknown". Handwritten forwarding markings provided directions in an attempt to find the addressee.

INCONNU



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 20-7 1949  
"Unknown" handstamp

Unknown Addressee, Return to Sender  
Saigon, Cochinchina

After World War II, most markings saw no significant changes until the independent countries of Indochina began issuing their own postage stamps. The "Unknown Addressee" and "Return to Sender" markings on this 1950 envelope are virtually the same as when they were introduced.

INCONNU

RETOUR  
À L'ENVOYEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

P.L.M. AVION A 1-5 1950  
flight cachet

"Unknown" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON R.P. COCHINCHINE 20-7 1949

## Unknown at Roll Call of Hanoi's Mailmen

As a last resort in an attempt to deliver this letter, it was shown at the roll call of the mailmen in Hanoi in 1929. Since no one could identify the addressee, the envelope was handstamped with a marking noting that it was "Unknown at roll call of Hanoi's mailmen." A second handstamp, with the signature of the head mailman, certified the finding. As a consequence, the letter was also handstamped "UNKNOWN."

Inconnu à l'appel des facteurs  
du bureau de Hanoi



### POSTAL MARKINGS

THAI-BINH TONKIN 1-12 29  
HANOI R.P. TONKIN 2-12 29  
"Unknown at roll call of Hanoi's mailmen"  
framed "Unknown" handstamp

### REVERSE

BEN-HIEP TONKIN 30-11 29  
framed "UNKNOWN" handstamp



## Unknown at Roll Call of Hanoi's Mailmen

This cover was posted by surface mail from the United States in December 1940. On the reverse are two very unusual handstamps that provide visibility into the efforts of the Indochinese Post Office to deliver the mail. Along the edge is a handstamp meaning "Not known at the roll call of mailmen at the Hanoi post office" ("Inconnu à l'appel des Facteurs du bureau de Hanoi"). The second marking supports this assertion. At the top of a large rectangle is "The Mailmen" ("Les Facteurs") over two columns of numbers from 1 to 14. The numbers correspond to postal delivery routes in Hanoi. Next to most of the numbers are the handwritten initials of mailmen certifying that "the addressee is not on my route." Handstamps on the front of the cover indicate that the addressee was never found as it was marked "return to sender."

Seldom are examples seen where the post service has gone to such lengths to find an addressee. Nonetheless, polling all the individual mailmen in a post office must have occurred often enough to justify the creation of two handstamps for recording the results.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

HAIPHONG TONKIN 25-1 41  
 HANOI R.P. <sup>BIS</sup> TONKIN 26-1 41  
 HANOI R.P. TONKIN 26-1 41

"Unknown at roll call of Hanoi's mailmen" and postman check-off list

### REVERSE

CHARLOTTE N.C. DEC 12 1940  
 "Unknown" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

## Processing Handstamp Na-Cham, Tonkin

The post office had difficulty delivering a letter addressed to Na-Cham. The red handstamps on the reverse enabled the local postmaster to redirect the letter. Since no information was filled in, perhaps the addressee was eventually found in Na-Cham.

Vu à l'arrivée à Nacham  
le..... 19..... et au  
départ le..... 19.....  
Le Trichau.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

NA-CHAM. TONKIN 10-12 29 (blue)  
redirection handstamps (red)

REVERSE

VINH-YEN TONKIN 9-12 29

Incomplete Address  
Luc-Nam, Tonkin

Postal employees could not decipher the cryptic address on an internal letter. Consequently, the mailing was sent to the dead letter office and handstamped "ADDRESS INCOMPLETE."

ADRESSE  
INCOMPLÈTE



POSTAL MARKINGS

LUC-NAM TONKIN 20-11 29  
"Incomplete Address" handstamp

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 21-11 29



Incomplete Address  
Saigon, Cochinchina

The Saigon post office could not locate the address for this folded document from the court at Cantho. Marked with an “incomplete address” handstamp, the registered form also received a “return to sender” instruction.

ADRESSE INCOMPLÈTE



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 17-4 39  
registration label

“Incomplete Address” and “Return to Sender” handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 18-4 39  
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 20-4 39

No Forwarding Address  
Haiphong, Tonkin

Based on the postmarks on the reverse of this cover, the postal office at Haiphong could not locate the addressee. The letter was handstamped "Departed without leaving (forwarding) Address."

PARTI SANS  
LAISSER d'ADRESSE



POSTAL MARKINGS

SONTAY TONKIN 15-9 28

framed "Departed without leaving (forwarding) Address"  
unframed "Return to Sender" crossed out with blue crayon

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 16-9 28

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 18-9 28

SONTAY TONKIN 18-9 28

HAIPHONG TONKIN 19-9 28

No Forwarding Address  
Haiphong, Tonkin

In this case, the addressee left no forwarding address ("PARTI SANS LAISSER d'ADRESSE") with the post office. As a result, the letter was handstamped "Return to Sender."

PARTI SANS  
LAISSER d'ADRESSE

RETOUR  
À L'ENVOYEUR



POSTAL MARKINGS

UONGBI TONKIN 29-7 40

registration label

"Franked by Sender" handstamp

framed "Return to Sender" handstamp

framed "Departed without leaving (forwarding) Address" handstamp

REVERSE

HAIPHONG TONKIN 29-7 40

UONGBI TONKIN 3-8 40



No Forwarding Address, Return to Sender  
Saigon, Cochinchina

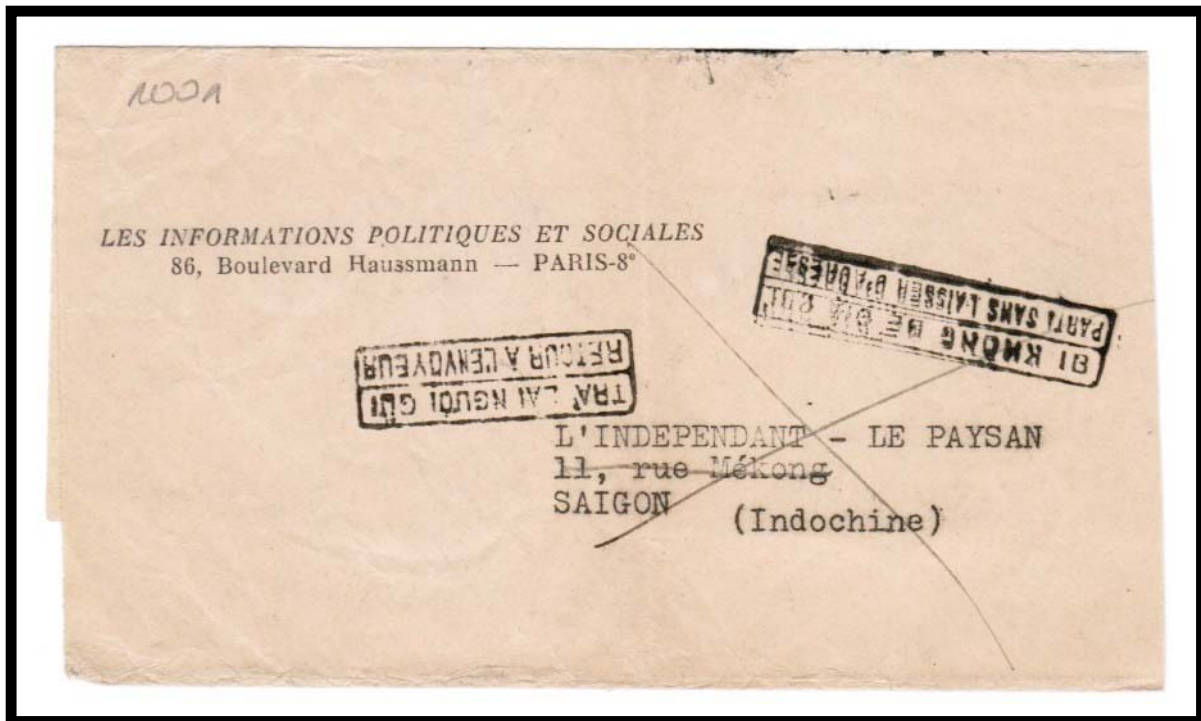
Although there is no indication of date on this wrapper sent from Paris to Indochina, the dual-language handstamps suggest the 1950s, a time of transition from French to Vietnamese for postal markings.

TRẢ LAI NGƯỜI GỬI  
RETOUR À L'ENVOYEUR

Return to Sender

ĐI KHÔNG ĐỀ ĐỊA CHỈ  
PARTI SANS LAISSER D'ADRESSE

Departed with No Forwarding Address



POSTAL MARKINGS

framed "Departed without leaving (forwarding) Address" handstamp  
framed "Return to Sender" handstamp

## Name Common to Several People Saigon, Cochinchina

In rare instances, the name of the addressee was so common that the post office could not figure out who should actually get the letter. When the post office gave up trying, it handstamped the envelope "name common to several people" and returned it to the sender.

NOM COMMON  
 A  
 PLUSIEURS PERSONNES



### POSTAL MARKINGS

ALGER R.P. ALGER 6-12 29  
 airmail and registration labels  
 COURRIER ACCIDENTE handstamp  
 "Return to Sender" handstamp  
 "Name Common to Several People" handstamp

Refused  
Cantho, Cochinchina

An uncommon reason for returning a letter was when the addressee refused to take delivery of it. This registered mailing from the court at Cantho was marked "Refused" and was handstamped "Return to Sender."

REFUSÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS  
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 24-5 39  
registration label  
"Refused" handstamp  
"Return to Sender" handstamp



Deceased  
Omon, Cochinchina

When the addressee had passed away, the post office applied a handstamp to  
by way of informing the sender when the letter was returned.

DÉCÉDÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 10-4 40  
registration label  
framed "Deceased" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 11-4 40  
OMON COCHINCHINE 13-4 40  
CANTHO COCHINCHINE 28-4 40

Deceased  
Saigon, Cochinchina

Typically, registered letters were backstamped by post offices in transit and upon arrival. Added to these is a handstamp to convey that the addressee had died. Here an envelope was backstamped with a "deceased" marking along with a handwritten note explaining that the addressee had died.

DÉCÉDÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 4-6 41

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 5-6 41

framed "Deceased" handstamp

REVERSE

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 3-6 41

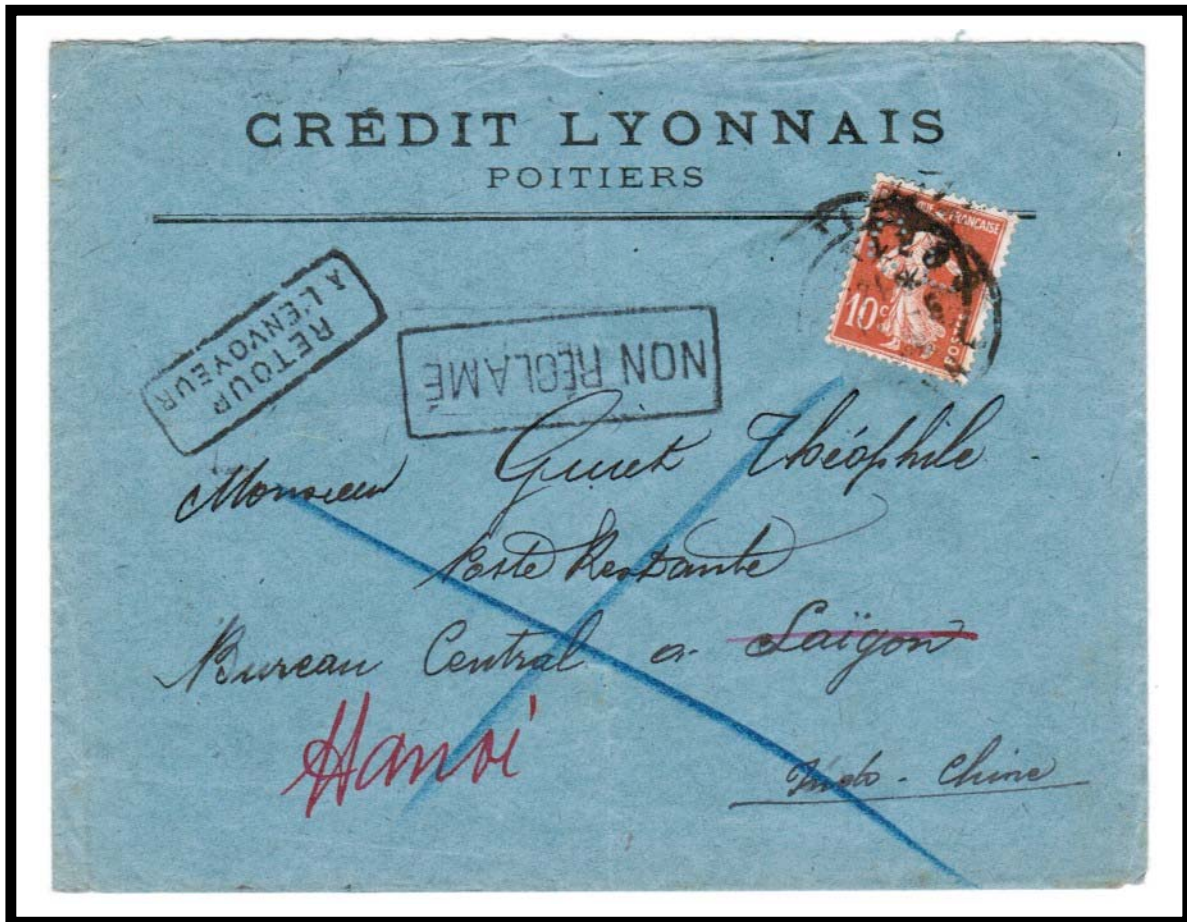
registration label

"Return to Sender" handstamp

Unclaimed  
Hanoi, Tonkin

After traveling from France and addressed for "General Delivery," no one picked up the letter at either Saigon or Hanoi. Consequently the letter was marked as "unclaimed" and returned to the sender. The round-trip transit time was approximately three months.

NON RÉCLAMÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

POITIERS VIENNE 17-5 09

"Unclaimed" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 16 JUIN 09

HANOI TONKIN 21 JUIN 09

POITIERS VIENNE 15-9 09



Unclaimed  
Cantho, Cochinchina

If an addressee did not take possession of a mailing within a reasonable time period, it was handstamped "unclaimed" ("NON RÉCLAMÉ"). Here the addressee failed to pick up a document mailed from the Court at Cantho. Consequently, the item was returned to the sender.

NON RÉCLAMÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

CANTHO COCHINCHINE 24-5 39

registration label

"Unclaimed" handstamp

"Return to Sender" handstamp

Unclaimed  
Vientiane, Laos

Sent from Brussels in 1935, this letter addressed to poste restante in Vientiane. Since the addressee never appeared to retrieve his letter, the Vientiane post office marked it "Unclaimed" and "Return to Sender."

NON RÉCLAMÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

BRUXELLES 18 5 III 35

framed "Unclaimed" and "Return to Sender" handstamps

REVERSE

PARIS R.P AVION 6 • III 1935

VIENTIANE LAOS 15-3 35

Unclaimed  
Saigon, Cochinchina

When a letter sent to General Delivery ("Poste Restante") went unclaimed, it was returned. Here is represented a very early, post-war airmail letter from France to Saigon. The instructions at the lower left tell the post office to return it to the sender if the letter is not claimed in 5 days.

NON RÉCLAMÉ



POSTAL MARKINGS

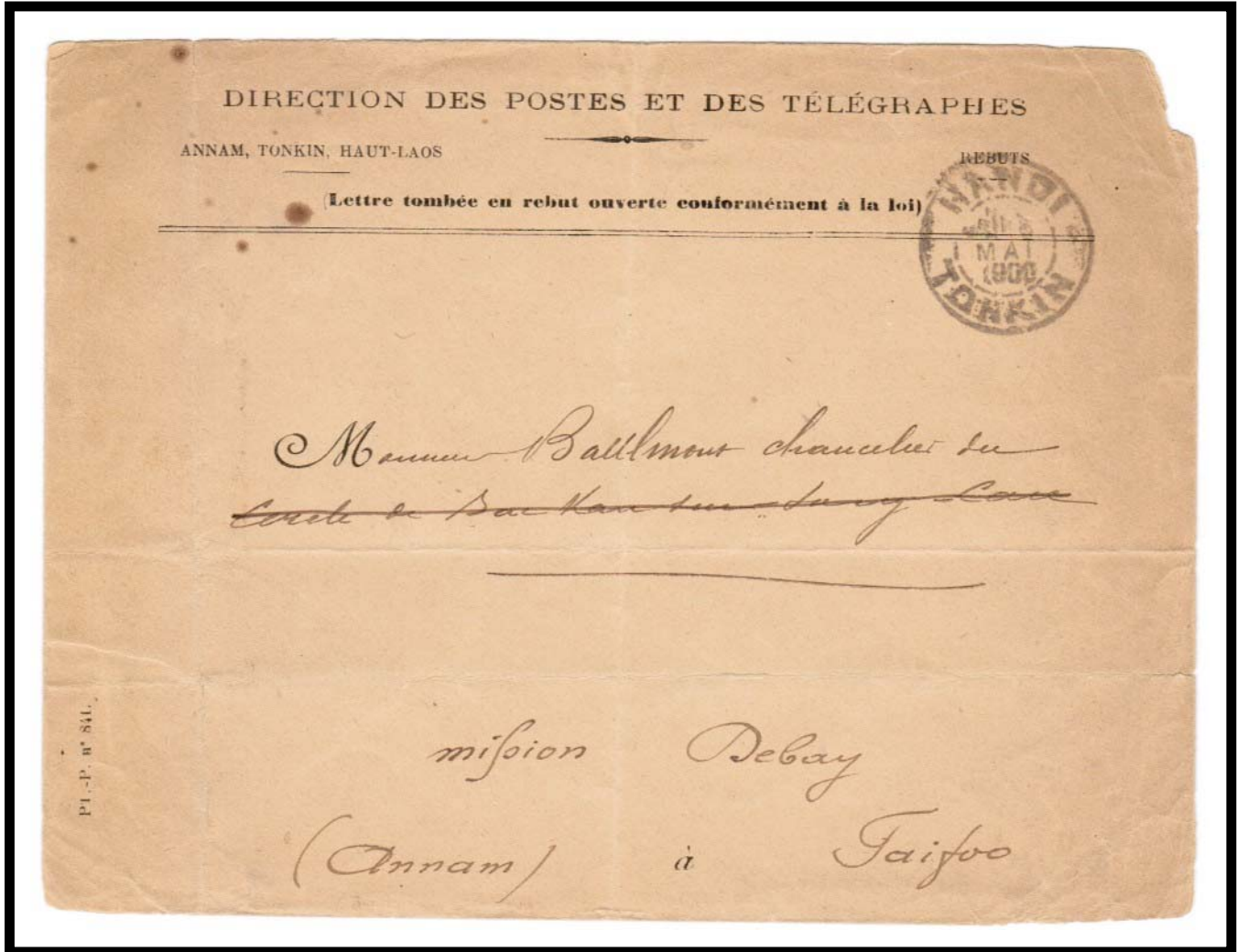
PORNICHET LOIRE INF<sup>RE</sup> 6-12 45  
"Unclaimed" and "Return to Sender" handstamps  
REVERSE

SAIGON-CENTRAL COCHINCHINE 18-12 45  
PORNICHET LOIRE INF<sup>RIURE</sup> 28-2 46



## Dead Letter

After being opened by the dead letter office, mail was sent onward in special envelopes. Based on the numerous transit markings on the reverse, there was still difficulty in getting this particular mailing to the proper destination.



### POSTAL MARKINGS

HANOI TONKIN 16 MAI 1900

### REVERSE

THAINGUYEN TONKIN 17 MAI 1900

CHO-MOI TONKIN 18 MAI 1900

THAINGUYEN TONKIN 19 MAI 1900

HANOI TONKIN 21 MAI 1900

HUE ANNAM 25 MAI 1900

QUANG-TRI ANNAM 26 MAI 1900

TOURANE ANNAM 28 MAI 1900

Dead Letter  
Hanoi, Tonkin

Addressed to:

Phuc An Province  
Kim Anh District  
Co Bai Section  
Phu Lai Village

the postal service was unable to identify the addressee. Failing to deliver the letter, a clerk wrote a note directing the mailing to "Rebuts" (Dead Letter Office).



POSTAL MARKINGS

HA-DONG TONKIN 14-11 29  
manuscript "Rebuts"

REVERSE

HANOI R.P. TONKIN 14-11 29  
PHUC-YEN TONKIN 15-11 29  
POSTE RURALE PROVINCE DE PHUC-YEN KIN-ANH  
PHUC-YEN TONKIN 16-11 29