



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

FIRST REGULAR ISSUE

1948



Cycad



Lily



Cycad



Sailing Ship



Lily



Sailing Ship



Farmer

On this first regular issue of the Ryukyu Islands, the 5 sen and 20 sen values depict the native (Schotau) palm which provides leaves for decoration and a stalk for food in times of famine. The 10 sen and 20 sen values depict the Yui, a lily which blooms throughout the Ryukyus during the Easter season. The 30 sen and 50 sen depict Chinese junks which the Ryukyus used to carry on trade with the south seas. The 1 yen shows an Okinawan farmer ready to face a new era after the sufferings of World War II.

REGULAR ISSUE

1950



Roof Tiles



Native Girl



Shuri Castle



Dragon



Women



Sea Shells

On this second regular issue, the 50 sen depicts a Shi-shi or a ceramic lion which is set on roof tops to ward off evil spirits. The 1 yen features a typical beauty from the capital city of Shuri. The 2 yen shows the former main palace of the Okinawan kings which was completely destroyed during World War II. A Ryu or the massive head of a dragon carved in stone and set in front to guard the palace appears on the 3 yen. Okinawan ladies in ancient dress are shown on the 4 yen. The final denomination, the 5 yen depicts sea shells commonly found along the beaches of Okinawa.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

AIR MAILS OF 1950



Dove & Islands



Dove & Islands



Dove & Islands

This identical design for all three denominations depicts the Dove of Peace hovering over the Ryukyu Islands. The beginning of air mail service in the Ryukyus was a significant trend toward return to normal peaceful times.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

1950



Map & Sea Horse

This stamp depicts a surrealistic sea horse entwined around a map of the Ryukyu Islands. It was designed by Katsugo Sakumoto of Yaeyama. This design was selected from a postage stamp design competition sponsored by the Ryukyus Post Office.

FORESTRY

1951



Tree Branch

This is the first of a series of stamps to commemorate the afforestation movement throughout the Ryukyu Islands. The design also honors Soian, an Okinawan official who took a great interest in forestry and soil management. It depicts contour planting and pine tree culture which he had introduced.

UNIVERSITY

1951



University

The dedication of the newly completed University of the Ryukyus is marked by this stamp. The central design shows a front view of the main building with an outline of Shuri Palace which formerly stood on this site and was destroyed during the war. A Ryu or dragon is depicted at the left. The legend reads "In commemoration of the Dedication of Ryukyu University."

GOVERNMENT

1952



Map, Dove, Beam Sprout

Commemorates the inauguration of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands. The dove is an omen of peace, while the rising sun and the young plant symbolize a new era for the Ryukyu Islands which are depicted at the base of the design.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

AIR MAILS OF 1951-54



Flying Goddess



Flying Goddess

The design for these five denominations depicts a Goddess in Flight which is taken from a scene in Buddhist lore known as "Heavenly Maidens Scattering Flowers." The scene is symbolic of air mail letters as glad tidings from the skies.

REGULAR ISSUE OF 1952



Madanbashi Bridge



Audience Chamber, Shuri Castle



Shureimon Gate



Gate, Sogenji Temple



Benzaidoten



Sonohyamutake



Tamandun



Hocho-chai Bridge

On this third regular issue, the 1 yen pictures Madan Bridge now replaced with a modern concrete structure. The 2 yen depicts the Hall of Worship of Shuri Palace which was once a National Treasure. The 3 yen shows the classic Shurei Gate which is now replaced with a facsimile structure. The 6 yen depicts Soen Temple formerly dedicated to the ancestors of Royalty, but now rebuilt as a cultural center. The 10 yen shows Besaiten Hall, an ancient structure whose remains still exist in Shuri. The 30 yen pictures Sonohyamutake Wall, a place of worship in ancient Okinawa. It is a wall with an entrance to a forest. Over the gateway is a stone carving of the "Flaming Pearl." The 50 yen features the Royal Park where Kings of Okinawa and their courts were traditionally entombed. The 100 yen depicts Ishi Bridge which still stands over Hoshochi or "Life Saving Pond." Most of the historical sites depicted in this issue were destroyed during the fighting on Okinawa.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

COMMODORE PERRY

1953



Perry and Fleet



Shuri Castle Reception

This set commemorates the centennial of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's first visit to Naha on May 26, 1853. The 3 yen value depicts Commodore Perry at a reception given in his honor by the regent of the Kingdom of the Ryukyu Islands. The 6 yen pictures the U. S. naval fleet in the port of Naha with a portrait of the Commodore.

THIRD NEWSPAPER WEEK

1953

This stamp was issued to commemorate the third anniversary of Newspaper Week. It depicts a newspaper matrix in the form of a pencil superimposed on a portrait of Ota Chofu, an Okinawan journalist and political leader at the turn of the century.



Chofu Ota & Matrix



Shiga Toma & Pen

FOURTH NEWSPAPER WEEK

1954

The fourth anniversary of Newspaper Week is marked by this stamp which shows a pen nib superimposed on a portrait of Toma Shiga, a leading Okinawan journalist and founder of Okinawa Asahi Shimbun.

ARTS CRAFTS

1954-55



Wine Flask



Ryukyuan Lacquerware



Ryukyuan Cloth

Issued to introduce Ryukyuan arts and crafts. The design for the 4 yen pictures an Okinawan wine flask which is made of pottery and finished with splashed glaze. It is very small and made to wear around the waist. The 15 yen depicts a Ryukyuan lacquer dish used when offering sweetmeats to guests. The 20 yen is a sampling of



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

SWEET POTATO

1955

*Shrine & Sweet Potato Plant*

Issued to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the introduction of the sweet potato from China by Noguni Sokon, an Okinawan official. The central design features the Noguni Sokon Shrine which still stands on Okinawa and marks the spot where the official landed after crossing the China Sea with sweet potato seedlings. Sweet potato vines are shown on the left panel.

ARBOR WEEK

1956

*Trees*

Issued to promote the afforestation movement throughout the Ryukyu Islands. Its modernistic design consists of rows of trees planted on the hillsides.

NEW YEAR

1956

*Garland of Pine, Bamboo & Plum*

Issued primarily for use on New Year greeting cards. The design shows an Okinawan floral piece made of plum blossoms and pine branches entwined around a ring of bamboo and hung up to wish everyone health, wealth and happiness for the New Year.

DANCERS

1956

*Spring Dance**Summer Dance**Historical Drama*

Issued to introduce Ryukyuan classical dancing and drama. The dancer pictured on the 5 yen stamp is doing a spring dance with willow branches. The dancer on the 8 yen is doing a folk dance which is often presented by open air theaters in the summer. The 14 yen shows a dancer in a classical warrior's costume who is dramatizing a heroic scene taken from the history of Okinawan wars.

DIAL PHONE

1956

*Dial Phone*

This stamp commemorates the inauguration of dial telephone service in Okinawa which replaced the old manual service. A desk dial telephone and the dial of the instrument represents the design. The legend on the left panel reads "In Commemoration of the Inauguration of Automatic Telephone Service."



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

AIR MAILS OF 1957



Goddess Playing Flute



Goddess Playing Flute

The design for this set depicts a Buddhist goddess in flight and playing a flute which is a continuation of the theme in the earlier set. The notes from the flute are symbolic of letters carried by airplanes.

NEWSPAPER WEEK

1957



Pencil Rocket & Map

This stamp marks the 7th anniversary of Newspaper Week. A pencil-sputnik taking off from Okinawa is the theme for this stamp.

NEW YEAR

1957



Phoenix

This is the second stamp to be released for New Year greeting cards. The design shows a dragon and phoenix design in brilliant colors which are omens of good luck for the New Year. It is a design often seen on cotton prints.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

POSTAL SERVICE

1958



Ryukyu Stamps

Issued to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the issuance of the first Ryukyuan stamp in 1948. The design reproduces the Soretsu stamp of the first set, a dancer stamp from the 1956 set and an air mail stamp from the latest 1957 set. The legend on the top and right border reads, "In Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Issuance of Postage Stamps."

GATE OF COURTESY

1958



Gate of Courtesy

This stamp was released to commemorate the restoration and dedication of Shurei-mon or the Gate of Courtesy which was built in honor of a Chinese diplomat in the 19th century and destroyed during the fighting on Okinawa. The design on the stamp illustrates the restored gate. It is the first commemorative to be issued in United States currency.

NEW CURRENCY

1958



Symbol of Yen & Dollar Sign



Symbol of Yen & Dollar Sign

Due to emergency conditions, only one design was used for the fourth regular issue. The United States authorities decided within a very short time to convert the legal currency of the Ryukyu Islands from United States Military B-Yen to regular United States currency. The designing, printing and distribution of this issue was completed in a few weeks. The design depicts a dollar sign superimposed on a yen sign. These are the first B-Yen stamps to be issued in United States currency.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

NEW YEAR

1958



New Year Dance

Issued to service New Year post cards. The design shows two men performing a New Year dance in a lion's skin. Under the lion's paws are strings of gaudy balls which are tossed around during the street performances.

FORESTRY

1959



Stylized Trees

Prepared to promote the arbor movement in the Ryukyus. This design features hilltops turning green and a row of stylized trees.

AIR MAIL OVERPRINTS

1959



Goddess Playing Flute



Goddess Playing Flute

This surcharged provisional set was necessitated by the changeover from yen to American currency and new air mail rates worked out as a result of the Universal Postal Union Congress meeting in Ottawa in 1959.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

BIOLOGICAL

1959

*Moth*

Issued for the national conference of the Japan Biological Education Society at the University of the Ryukyus in Shuri. The design shows a rare moth, the *Attacus Atlas*, which is found chiefly on Yanaguni Island, south of Okinawa.

NEW YEAR 1959

1959

*New Year Decoration*

This design for New Year post cards reproduces a gaudy New Year decoration which is made of a papier-mache shield surmounted with swords, spears, etc. and is the pride and joy of every Okinawan boy.

FLORA-FAUNA

1959

*Hibiscus**Angel Fish**Shell**Butterfly**Jellyfish*

Issued to introduce the flora and fauna of the Ryukyu Islands. The 1/2c depicts a red hibiscus known as *Hibiscus Ross Sinensis* which grows in profusion throughout the islands. The 3c illustrates an angel fish known as *Zanclus Cornutus*. The 8c pictures sea shells known as *Phallium Bandatum*. The 13c design is composed of a butterfly known as *Kallimo Inachus Eucerca*. A jellyfish appears on the 17c denomination. It is known as *Doctylometra Pacifica*.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

FLORA-FAUNA

1960



Shells



Butterfly



Jellyfish

This set was redesigned for technical reasons when it was reprinted. The characters "Ryuku Yubin" were made smaller to blend with the design. The butterflies on the 13c were reversed.

1960 OVERPRINTS



Dollar Sign over Yen

To meet the urgent need for airmail stamps, old stamps in yen values were surcharged in U. S. currency for the five airmail zones. Several different printings of the basic stamps were used for this purpose.

UNIVERSITY

1960



University Badge

Issued to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Ryukyu University. The bronze badge is inscribed "Daigoku" or "University" and is worn by all students enrolled in the University.



Flaming Olympic Torch

SPORTS

1960



Runners



DANCERS

1960



Manjuri Dance



Inohabushi Dance



Hatomabushi Dance



Hanafu Dance

This group of stamps is a continuation of the Dancer Series and was issued for specific rates on different types of postal service.

NATIONAL CENSUS

1960



Sun and Crane

Issued to commemorate the second census of the Ryukyu Islands which was conducted in connection with the United Nations Demographic Program. The rising sun represents new life and the flying crane, longevity.

The design depicts an Okinawan bull which is engaged in a butting match of brute strength. The winner is the bull which stands its ground when the loser falls to its knee. Issued primarily for use on New Year greeting cards.



Okinawan Bull Fight

BULL FIGHT

1960



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES



Dollar & Cents Signs

SECOND PRINTING

1961

These are known as the second printing of the 25c and 50c U. S. currency provisional issue. They were printed from the same plates and in the same color, but on better paper and have been gummed.



Dollar & Cents Signs

CONSOLIDATION

1961



Old Temple

Featuring Hakugin-do or White Silver Temple, an old historic landmark in Itoman City, this stamp was issued to commemorate the consolidation of Takamine, Kanegushiku, and Miwa Villages with the town of Itoman.

FOUNDING OF NAHA

1961



Ships-Old and New

Issued to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the founding of Naha, the largest city in the Ryukyu Islands. Now the capital, it is an important seaport. Beginning with this stamp, the English legend, "Ryukyus" appears on each issue.

BOOK WEEK

1961



Open Book

Issued on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Book Week in the Ryukyu Islands. Book week publicizes the library facilities of Ryukyuan-American Cultural Centers in Okinawa, Miyako and Yoyama.

1961 AIR MAILS



Flying Goddess



Flying Goddess



Wind God



Wind God



Flying Goddess



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

DANCERS

1961



Dancer



Dancer

Another Dancers Series, the 50c stamp depicts the movement of the Noburi-Kuduchi Dance and the \$1.00 the Kote-Bushi Dance.

ARBOR WEEK

1961



Pine Tree

This marks the fourth time the Ryukyus issued a stamp commemorating Arbor Week. Designed by Tamanaha, the stamp depicts an Okinawan pine tree. The stamp is inscribed, "Movement to Make the Ryukyus Green."

NEW YEAR

1961



Sun and Eagle

Issued annually, the 1961 New Year stamp features a Sun and an Eagle. It was placed on sale December 10, 1961.

RE-DESIGNED

1961



Fish



Dancer



Hibiscus

The Chinese characters are smaller on

The English legend, "Ryukyus" appears

The Chinese characters are smaller on this redesigned stamp.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

DANCERS

1962

*Nababushi**Hatomabushi**Hanafu**Haodori*

Continuing the addition of the English country name to the "Dancer" issues, the 2 1/2, 5, 10 and 25c denominations were released during the year 1962. The 25c denomination was placed on sale February 1st, and the others on June 20th.

*Steps & GRI Building*

10th ANNIVERSARY

1962

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands, this set of two stamps was released on April 1st. The designs feature the Government Building.

*GRI Building*

FLORA

1962

*Hibiscus Tiliaceae**Euthria Variata Var Orientalis**Schima Superba**Impatiens Balsamina*

June 1st was the setting for a definitive series depicting flora of the Islands. The 1/2c denomination features the Hibiscus; the 3c, Euthria; 8c, Schima Superba; 13c, Impatiens Balsamina; and 17c, Alpina Speciosa.

*Alpina Speciosa*



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES



Malaria Carrying Mosquito

MALARIA

1962

In cooperation with the World Health Organization's Anti-Malaria campaign, this set of two stamps was released on April 7th.



Shurei Gate & WHO Emblem

ATHLETIC MEET

1962



Fencer

This stamp marks the Eighth All-Japan Tournament held at Naha. The design pictures a man wearing the face mask and protective tunic worn by those who compete in this vigorous style of Japanese fencing.

NEW YEAR

1962

CHILDREN'S DAY

1962



Toys & Kite

On May 5th, a 3c stamp was released marking Children's Day 1962. This was formerly celebrated as Boy's Day when kites made like carps are flown.



Dyed-Cloth

The typical dyed-cloth illustrating flowers, trees and animals is called BINGATA. This material, with design of a playing rabbit by the water, was chosen as the 1962 New Year stamp.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1962



Earthenware

On July 5th, the Philatelic Week 3c stamp was released. It depicts a fine specimen of Ryukyuan Akoya ware; a rare ceramic bowl decorated with plum blossoms which was made nearly two years ago.



ADULT DAY

1963

*Man and Woman*

Issued January 15, 1963, this stamp commemorates 1963 Adult Day, a legal holiday that serves to welcome to social and political responsibility boys and girls who have reached 20. That age is the legal voting age in the Ryukyus.

1963

*Erithyllum strictum*

Of the Flora Series, this stamp features the *Erithyllum strictum* or Night Blooming Cereus which is known locally as the "Beautiful Lady Under the Moon." This flower belongs to the cactus family and originated in Mexico.

REFORESTATION

1963

*Trees*

In 1959 the government of the Ryukyu Islands embarked on a reforestation movement by planting trees on mountains and in towns with the cooperation of the natives. This stamp, issued March 25, 1963, marks the program's success.

BIRD WEEK

1963

*Hawks & Islands*

May 10 of every year is Bird Day in the Ryukyus; this adhesive marks 1963 Bird Week, which begins on that day. The purpose of the observance is to publicize the need for protecting the wild birds of the islands.

ROUND ROAD

1963

*Okinawa & Round Road*

Released April 30, 1963, this commemorative marks the opening of Round Road on Okinawa Island, the construction of which took four years. This highway circles Okinawa and makes travel simpler and faster. Shin Isagawa designed the stamp.

SHIOYA BRIDGE

1963

*Shioya Inland Sea & Bridge*

This stamp marks the opening of the Shioya Bridge, biggest in the Ryukyus. It connects Ogimi-Shioya village and Miyagi Island across the Shioya Bay in northern Okinawa. Seikon Omine designed the stamp; 350,000 copies were issued.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1963

*Lacquer-ware*

The design of this stamp depicts Ryukyuan lacquer-ware, known as "Tsuikin-wan," and dates from about 200 years ago. The stamp was issued to mark 1963 Philatelic Week, which promotes public interest in philately.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES



Plane & Shurei-Gate

AIRMAIL SERIES

1963

The 5 1/2c and 7c airmails were issued for use on postal cards. The 5 1/2c depicts a DC8 jetliner, while the 7c features a jet plane in flight with a piece of native textile as a backdrop.



Plane & Textile

INT. JUNIOR CHAMBER

1963



Asia & JCI Emblem

The 1963 International Meeting of the Junior Chamber International was held at Naha, Okinawa, September 16-19. It was attended by 500 JCI members, who represented 16 countries of the world. Koyo Oshino designed the stamp.

CULTURAL PROPERTY

1963



Site of Nakagusuku Castle

This stamp was issued to publicize Cultural Property Protection Week, intended to enhance public understanding of and interest in historical properties. The stamp depicts one of the government-designated sites.

HUMAN RIGHTS

1963



Hamamotoko

This stamp, issued October 15, 1963, depicts a herb called Hamamotoko, and was released for ordinary postage use. Printing was done by photogravure in sheets of 50 stamps; 200,000 copies were issued.



Flame & Flame

This stamp marks the 15th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted by the third general assembly of the United Nations at Paris on December 10, 1948. The flame symbolizes human rights.

NEW YEAR

1963



Bingata Dye-Pattern

The stamp depicts a dragon dye-pattern of a local textile called "Bingata." The dragon design was chosen, according to ancient legend, to symbolize the coming holiday. Printing was by photogravure in sheets of 50.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

20¢ DANCER

1964



Shudun Dance

Issued for regular postage purposes, this stamp depicts one of the classic dances of the Ryukyus, known as "Shudun."

CENSUS

1964



Pineapple & Sugar Cane Field

This stamp pictures a field of pineapple and sugar cane . . . the principal farming products in the Ryukyus and it was issued to commemorate the second agricultural census which was begun on March 20th.

MOTHER'S DAY

1964



Red Carnation

The second Sunday in May is a legal holiday in the Ryukyus, the same as it is in many other countries . . . known as Mother's Day. This stamp was issued to express admiration and appreciation of mothers everywhere.

GIRL SCOUTING

1964



Girl Scout and Flag

This stamp marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Ryukyu Islands Girl Scouts. The movement was founded on September 1, 1954.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1964



Hand-woven Sash

The annual Philatelic Week was celebrated on July 1, 1964. The Philatelic Week stamp pictures a hand-woven sash of historical value. It was woven about 350 years ago and is known as "Minsei Obi."

CULTURAL PROTECTION

1964



Old Ryukyuan Residence

A week-long program for the protection of national cultural treasures was begun on November 1st. This stamp marks the opening of the program and pictures the Miyara Dunchi, a typical example of an old Ryukyuan noble residence.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

MICROWAVE SYSTEM

1964



Shurei Relay Station



Antenna & Route Map

The Ryukyu-Japan Microwave System carries telephone and telegraph messages in both directions between the Ryukyus and Japan, and live TV programs from Japan to the Ryukyus. The stamps were printed by photogravure.

OLYMPIC TORCH

1964



Torch and Shurei-Gate

The sacred fire . . . the Olympic Torch Relay . . . stopped in the Ryukyus en-route to Tokyo for the Olympic Games. It was relayed by runners around the island of Okinawa during the two day stopover prior to its last flight from Okinawa to Kagoshima in Japan.

KARATE

1964



Karate

This stamp features "Naihanchi", a form of Karate. Karate, a traditional self-defense art, has a long history in the Ryukyus and is considered a national sport.

NEW YEAR

1964



Snake-dye Textile Pattern

This is another of the annual New Year Stamps. The design depicts a snake dye pattern of Ryukyuan textile called BINGATA. The snake design was chosen, according to ancient legend, to symbolize the coming year.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

KARATE

1965



Training with Makiwara

Second in the Karate Stamp Series, this stamp pictures a Karate training form known as Makiwara. The Makiwara is a wooden pole that is erected on the ground with a protective straw mat around the top. It is used for development and strengthening of hands and feet.



Simulated Combat

In order to gain some knowledge of the fascinating aspects of Karate, and to learn the meaning of the actions and positions of defense and offense, "KUMITE" is practiced by simulating the combat situation. The design pictures one of the positions.

BOY SCOUTS

1965



Scouts & Shurei Gate

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Ryukyu Islands Boy Scouts, this stamp was released on February 7, 1965. More than 2,000 Ryukyuan boys form a district within the Far East Council, Boy Scouts of America. They are trained individually as well as in groups and are active in local Ryukyuan and American Communities.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1965



Musical Instrument

A national cultural property of special historic value . . . a 3-string musical instrument known as a "SHAMISEN" . . . is featured on the stamp commemorating Philatelic Week of 1965.

NAHA CITY

1965



Naha City Building

Naha, capital city of the Ryukyus, has a population of over 260,000 and is the center of politics, economy and culture. This stamp commemorates the opening of the new Naha City Building—one of many under construction.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

POWER PLANT

1965

*Kin Power Plant*

Featuring a panoramic view of the Kin Power Plant, this stamp commemorates the completion of the project by the Ryukyu Electric Power Corporation at a cost of \$14,720,000. It was built to meet greater demands for power by industries as well as individuals.

TURTLE

1965

*Turtle*

The Semoruhokagome (a turtle), *Cydemyx (cuora) flavomarginata*, is a land animal which lives on plants around forests, and is found on Iriomotejima and Iriomotejima in the Ryukyus and on Formosa.

COOPERATION

1965

*ICY Emblem*

The Ryukyus joined with many nations of the world in celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations by issuing this stamp. The design features the emblem of International Cooperation Year.

ONOHAMA

1965

*Main Stand & Track*

This stamp commemorates the completion of the Onoyama athletic facility. The stadium and field were constructed by the government to promote public interest in athletics. The stadium accommodates 20,000 people.

NEW YEAR

1965

*Horse on Textile*

The year 1966 is the year of the Horse in the oriental Zodiac calendar and to mark the New Year a Ryukyuan textile is used in this design featuring a horse. The design is that of Seikan Omine, a local artist.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

TURTLES

1966



Hawk's Bell Turtle

The Taimai is the smallest of the sea turtles. Found in tropical and sub-tropical seas, its shell is used extensively in handicraft work. This was the second stamp in the Turtle Stamp Series.



Ryukyu-Yamagame (Turtle)

As the third in the Turtle Stamp Series, this stamp pictures the Ryukyu-Yamagame which is found only in Okinawa. It feeds on earthworms, sprouts, seeds, etc. and can be found in a stream or in wet forests.

DEER

1966



Deer

This stamp depicts a Keromajika which was designated a Natural Monument by the Government in 1955. A Japanese Deer, the Keromajika were brought from Satsuma (Kagoshima, Japan) by Prince Kin Chotei to the Ryukyus about three hundred years ago.

MEMORIAL DAY

1966



Lily & Battle Ruins

To honor those who were killed in the Battle of Okinawa and to pray for everlasting peace, The Ryukyu Government has designated June 23rd as Memorial Day each year. This stamp commemorates the fifth Memorial Day.

JUGON

1966



Sea Mammal

The Jugon shown on this stamp is commonly called a Mermoid since it looks like a human when it is nursing its baby. A mammal of the sea, it ranges from the Indian Ocean to the home waters of the Ryukyus. Its number is rapidly decreasing.

NOGUCHIGERA

1966



Noguchigera Bird

A little smaller than a pigeon, this bird belongs to the woodpecker family. The Noguchigera is very rare and found only in the northern woods of Okinawa. Wildlife Conservationists fear the species faces extinction.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

SWALLOW

1966

The Fourth Annual Bird Week was celebrated in May and this stamp was released to publicize it. The design features a Ryukyu-tsubome (swallow).



Swallow

PHILATELIC WEEK

1966

This stamp commemorates the 1966 Philatelic Week and features a piece of lacquerware. Lacquerware originated in the early 18th Century and it is said that it was used as a container for rice and rice cakes offered to the Gods after the yearly harvest.



Lacquerware

MUSEUM

1966



Dragon Statue & Museum Building

Issued to commemorate the completion of the new GRI Museum Building. The original museum was constructed before World War II, but was destroyed by bombings during the war. The design pictures the new building and Dragon Statue.

UNESCO

1966



Emblem & Tile-roofed House

Issued to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

CULTURAL PROPERTY

1966



Tomb of Nakasone-Tuimya Genga

This stamp commemorates the Fourth Cultural Property Protection Week which took place in November 1966. The stamp depicts the tomb which contains the remains of Nakasone-Tuimya Genga, who reigned over Miyako 450 years ago.

NEW YEAR

1966



Ram & Wreath on Bingata

A 1 1/2c New Year Greeting stamp for 1967 was released in December 1966. The design features a horned ram surrounded by a wreath of stylized flowers, dyed on Ryukyuan textile known as Bingata. The year 1967 is known as the year of the Sheep in the Oriental zodiac calendar.

UNIVERSITY

1966



University of the Ryukyus

The University of the Ryukyus was established on May 22, 1950 at the site of the old Shuri Castle. The University was administered under supervision of the U.S. Civil Administration of the Ryukyus and transferred to the Government of the Ryukyu Islands on July 1, 1966.

TROPICAL FISH

1966



Clown Fish

First of a Tropical Fish stamp series, this 3c stamp pictures a Clown Fish (Hamakumanami) which coexists with sea-anemones on the reef around Okinawa.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

TROPICAL FISH

1967



Boxfish

This is a species of the boxfish family. They vary considerably in color and speckles.



Fuyakko

The Fuyakko fish runs about 13cm in length with a long tubular mouth. It lives in the Indian Ocean and tropical Pacific as far north as central Japan.



Mongara Kawabagi

Fourth in the Tropical Fish Series, this fish, known as the Mongara Kawabagi, is about 40cm in length and is found in central Japan, southern Korea, the Indian Ocean and the tropical Pacific. It has sharp teeth and is fond of meat.



Seguro Chocho Uo

The Seguro Chocho Uo is lemon color with a large spot at the rear of the body. Some are found with a red spot. It makes a beautiful appearance with its slender dorsal fin.

SEASHELL ISSUE

1967



Chosenfude

This seashell — Chosenfude — is the largest among the "Fudegai" species. The greater part of the shell is smooth, but thick and heavy with scanty engraving. It lives in the ocean bed off the Pacific coast of Japan and southward to the tropics.



Honegai

Known as the Honegai, this seashell belongs to the Akatsuki family. It is very small and delicate in nature. It has three ridges on its shell with numerous long and short spurs protruding.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1967



Decorated Urn

The 1967 Philatelic Week stamp pictures a decorated urn; the Tsuboya-ware found in the tombs of samurai. In ancient times, this type of urn was used to contain washed bones of the dead. The lid of the urn recorded the name and date of death.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

TOURIST YEAR

1967



Red Tile Roofs & Emblem

The twenty-first General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution to designate the year 1967 as "International Tourist Year." The purpose of this program was to enhance mutual understanding among all people of the world.

CULTURAL PROPERTY

1967



Hojo Bridge

Cultural Property Week this year honors the Hojo Bridge of the Enkaku Temple. The Hojo Bridge crosses the Hojo Pond to reach the Temple. The Temple was constructed by King Shoshin in 1492 as a memorial to his father, King Shoan.

NEW YEAR

1967



Bingata with Monkey

In the Ryukyus, New Year 1968 was called the year of the Monkey. The stamp design shows a monkey pattern on Bingata cloth. Bingata cloth is a local material known for its beauty as the best of dyed goods.

ANTI-TB ASSOCIATION

1967



Clinic Bus

Modeled after the National Tuberculosis Association in the United States, the Ryukyu Anti-TB Association was established September 19, 1963. This stamp commemorates the fifteenth anniversary of its founding.

TELEVISION

1967



TV Tower and Map

Issued to commemorate the opening of a television network in Mayako and Yaeyama. Designed by artist Seikichi Tamashita, the printing consisted of 1,300,000 copies.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

SEASHELL SERIES

1968



Seashell (Suizigai)

The seashell shown on this stamp belongs to the Suishogai family. Six horny shapes protrude from the flange of the shell. These six resemble the Japanese character for "water," hence the name "Suizigai."



Seashell (Yakongai)

This seashell is the largest among shells of the Ryuten family, some growing to a length of 25 centimeters. The surface of the shell is green with several dark brown stripes which become entirely green when aged.



Seashell (Benisodogai)

This Benisodogai seashell belongs to the Suishogai family of shells. This shell is distinguishable from others by its smoothness and the beautiful red inside color. It is found in nine meters of water from Japan to the tropical zone.

LIBRARY WEEK

1968



Book, Library & Patron

This stamp marks LIBRARY WEEK 1968 which was instituted as an annual event in 1959 to increase public understanding and appreciation of literature and the important role of the library in the enrichment of our daily lives.

VACCINATION

1968



Dr. Kijin Nakachi

The 120th anniversary of the first smallpox vaccination was marked by this stamp issued March 15, 1968. Dr. Kijin Nakachi, in 1848, discovered a smallpox vaccine taken from a cow which was successfully used on infants.

STAMP ANNIVERSARY

1968



Mailmen and Postage Stamp

The first Ryukyuan postage stamps were issued in 1948 and the twentieth anniversary fell in 1968. This stamp, which features a variety of mailmen's clothes, was released on July 1, 1968 ... twenty years to the day that the first stamp was released.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1968



Medicine Container

The 1968 Philatelic Week stamp depicts a small and very rare container called, "Inro" in Japanese. "Inro" means a seal case which came to be used as a medicine container.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

AGED PEOPLE'S DAY

1968



Aged People's Dance

The Ryukyuan dance depicted on the stamp is for aged people, performed to the tune of "Kogiyadefu" with the words: "To what can I compare my happiness of today; it may be comparable to a flower still in bud when blessed with dew." Festivities on Okinawa always begin with this tune.

SOFT TENNIS MATCH

1968



Tennis Player

Issued to commemorate the 35th All-Japan East vs. West Men's Softball Tennis Tournament. Softball tennis is played with a relatively soft rubber ball, resulting in a much slower tempo than in the "Wimbledon" type of tennis. This was the first time that the Japanese nationwide tennis tournament has been held in the Ryukyus.

NEW YEAR

1968



Bingata with Fowl

Under the Zodiac calendar, 1969 will be known as the year of the fowl. The New Year stamp for 1969... issued in December, 1968... shows a fowl surrounded by iris plants. It is a design taken from the Ryukyuan "Bingata" cloth.

ENKAKU TEMPLE

1968



Enkaku Temple

Issued to commemorate the rehabilitation of the main gate to the Enkaku Temple. Construction of the Temple was started in 1492, during the era of King Shoshin. The King Shoshin era was the most prosperous during the Ryukyuan monarchy, due to overseas trade with China and Southeast Asia.

CRAB SERIES

1968



Crab

The shell of this crab, first of a new series, averages about 11 millimeters long by 10.5 millimeters in width, with smooth surface, and is shaped almost round. Like other Kometukigani crabs, this one is characterized by eyes capable of being extended or retracted.

CULTURAL PROPERTY

1968



Sarawati Pavilion

The 1968 Cultural Property Protection Week stamp pictures the Sarawati Pavilion which was recently reconstructed. According to legend, the Pavilion was originally built during the era of King Shoshin as a place to store the Book of Buddhism, which had been presented by Korea.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

CRAB SERIES

1969

*Ryukyu Shiomameki*

This crab belongs to the sand crab family and lives at the mouths of rivers. It is distinguished from other similar crabs by the concave forward legs at the rear of its crust. It is found in Okinawa and other places.

*Yakajima-Gani*

This large crab has a fan-shaped crust and lives under rocks in swampy areas. It defends itself by spreading both pinchers wide open when its hiding place is exposed. It is found in the Philippines and Solomons too.

*Gidana-okagani*

A crab that lives in sandy places, much above the high tide level, this creature nests in a deep hole. It is noted for its agility and power. This stamp is the fourth in a continuing series of issues showing crabs.

*Tsunome-Gani*

This medium-sized crab is milk-white with a brown pattern on the central part of its back. It is active chiefly at night, and its swift movement, with its three pairs of legs, is suggestive of that of a swift horse.

AMATEUR BOXING

1969

*Boxer*

The 20th All-Japan Amateur Boxing Championships were held in the gymnasium of the University of the Ryukyus in January, 1969. About 120 boxers in 12 classes participated. They were selected through elimination matches.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1969

*Ink Slab Screen*

The screen on this stamp is lacquered and designed for a desk, to be placed behind an ink slab used for writing, so as to protect the desk from residue from the ink slab. There is a mother-of-pearl inlay in the screen.

UHF COMMUNICATIONS

1969

*Antenna & Map*

This stamp marks the opening of a UHF circuit system between the main island of Okinawa and Miyako-Yaeyama islands, which are separated by more than 2,000 miles of the ocean. The stamp was issued on June 2, 1969.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

HAWAII

1969



Kyuzo Toyama & Maps

On December 5, 1899, a group of 30 persons started for Hawaii as the first emigrants to leave Okinawa under the Kyuzo Toyama Emigration Plan. This stamp marks the 70th anniversary of that first emigration wave.

EDUCATION

1969



Shushi-mon & Emblems

The 22nd All-Japan Formative Education Study Conference was held in Naha during August, 1969. The theme of the Conference was "How to employ formative education in the regional conditions of Okinawa."

CULTURAL

1969



Nakamura-Ke

This building, dated between 1713-1751, is a typical old house of a rich farmer who lived in the middle region of Okinawa. Some ten generations of a family have lived in the house. The stamp was issued on November 1, 1969.

FOLK CUSTOM ISSUES

1969



Tug of War

Many agricultural villages in the Ryukyus hold a harvest festival each year; a tug of war is an event of the festival. It is held to give thanks for a fruitful year. This is the first of 5 stamps for such events.



Hori Boat

The Hori-boat races are held in many parts of Okinawa by fishermen, who pray for bountiful fish harvests in the coming year. They take place on May 4 of the Lunar Calendar. Today's races attract many spectators.



Izaibo

The Izaibo religious ceremony is held on Kudaka Island in the Year of the Horse, which comes around in 12-year cycles in the oriental zodiac. The ceremony used to take place at midnight, but now is held at twilight.

OVERPRINTS

1969

This 1/2c overprinted stamp was issued on October 15, 1969, to cover a shortage of 1/2c stamps caused by unexpected demand. The 3c original was issued in 1962.



Overprint



Bingata-Dog

NEW YEAR

1969

The year 1970, under the zodiac calendar, is known as the Year of the Dog. Hence the New Year stamp for 1970 shows a dye-pattern of Bingata with a dog. Bingata is a local product made at Shuri, Okinawa.



FOLK CUSTOM SERIES

1970



Dancers

Motif for this stamp is the "Ushideiku". This was an ancient device used to crush or grind grain into flour or meal. It was shaped somewhat like an hour glass; concave at one end and flat at the other. The ceremonial dance revolved around the Ushideiku.



Dancers

This stamp depicts the ancient ceremonial dance "Unjyami" meaning "sea god". The ceremony was designed to offer gratitude and prayers to the gods of seas and mountains, to pray for peace and for successful fishing and hunting.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1970



Yahsi-gua (small coconut)

The sake container depicted on this stamp was commonly called a Yahsi-gua (Yahsi means coconut and "gua" means small). The container was usually suspended from the waist and was carried on such occasions as tomb visiting and festivals.

CENSUS

1970



Map and People

In commemoration of the 1970 Census, a 3c postage stamp was issued on October 1st. A major statistical survey, it requires about 5,000 enumerators to complete the job.

OBSERVATORY

1970



Observatory and Tropical Fish

Issued to commemorate the completion of the underwater observatory at Busena-Misaki, Nago (an hour and a half bus-ride from Naha). It was built to show the eye-catching tropical fish and coral of the area.

GREAT MEN

1970



Noboru Johana

This is the first of the Ryukyuan Great Men Series. It features Mr. Noboru Johana, who fought for equal rights in representation of the people of the Ryukyus on the Japanese Diet. He died one year before his work brought results.



Saion Gushichan Bunjaku

Saion Gushichan Bunjaku ranks as one of the great statesmen in Ryukyuan history. Born September 25, 1682, he was appointed to the post of regent and was responsible for the political and economic growth of Okinawa. He wrote many books on politics and other subjects.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

CLASSIC OPERAS

1970



"Shushin-kameiri" Drama



"Chu-Natsuda" Drama



"Mekarushi" Drama



"Nidotschiuchi" Drama



"Kokonomaki" Drama

NEW YEAR

1970



Wild Boar on Printed Cloth

By the Zodiac calendar, the year 1971 is known as the year of the wild boar. This stamp, issued on December 10, 1970, ushers in the New Year. The design is done from SINGATA, a printed cloth pattern. This one shows cherry blossoms, bamboo, wild boar, mountain and stream.

CULTURAL

1970



Great Cycad of Ue

The "Great Cycad of Ue" was designed a national monument in 1959. It is featured on the Cultural Property Protection Week stamp for 1970. It is a 250 year old tree that stands six

ADMINISTRATION

1970



Japanese Flag, Diet Building and Map

This stamp commemorates the passing of a bill to permit the people of the Ryukyu Islands to take part in the national administration. It passed the Japanese Diet on April 24, 1970.

CLASSIC OPERAS

1970



1970 組踊郵便切手



鉄心羅入

大郵政印刷局製

"Shushin-Kanein" Drama

First in a series of KUMI-ODORI stamps, this one was issued April 28th. The Kumi-Odori dramatic concept was created by Chokin Tomagasaki about 250 years ago. "Shushin-Kanein" is known as the first of his five dramas and is depicted in the design of the stamp.



1970 組踊郵便切手



人盗人

大郵政印刷局製

"Chy-Nusada" Drama

This is number two in the series of Kumi-Odori stamps. It depicts the musical drama, "Chy-nusada". The story develops from a scene with a Deigo flower which is common to the Southland and which blossoms around April. A kidnapping is involved which sparks the play.



Ryukyu ISLANDS

POSTAL ISSUES

CLASSIC OPERAS

1970



1970 組踊郵便切手



銀四子

大郵政印刷局製

"Mekaruhi" Drama

The musical drama "Mekaruhi" is the subject for the third in a series of "Kumi-odon" stamps. This musical is dramatized on a Hogenomo (rebel of feathers) legend chosen from various ones around the Okinawa area.



1970 組踊郵便切手



二重龍計

大郵政印刷局製

"Nidoteichuchi" Drama

Fourth of the series, this stamp features the classic opera, "Vengeance by Two Little Sons" (Nidoteichuchi). It is said that this is one of the best of the Ryukyuan operas.



CLASSIC OPERAS

1970



"Kokonomaki" Drama

Kokonomaki is the name of the fifth classic opera in the Kumi-Odori Series. The subject matter is an old legend about a giant snake living in a pond between the hills.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES

FOLK-ART

1971



Low Hand Loom



Woman Running Filature



Raincoat and Hat



Rice Hiller



Wooden Case and Bailer

CHOHO GIWAN

1971

This third stamp in the Great Man Series honors Choho Giwan (1823-1876), who served as regent and political leader for many years in the Ryukyus and Japan. He also is remembered for his poems in the 31-syllable Japanese style.



Choho Giwan



TAKU (Hot Water Jug)

PHILATELIC WEEK

1971

"Interest in Postage Stamp" Week was celebrated on April 15th with the issue of this 3c stamp. The TAKU... a jug for hot water... was probably introduced into Okinawa from old China. It is an octagonal pillar of wood with a tin teapot within. Something like the thermos used commonly today.

DEFINITIVES

1971



Ornamental Garden Flower

Native to the Malay peninsula, the sandanka has an aggregate of umbrella-like tufts at the height of summer.



OHGOOCHO Flower

A shrub belonging to the pulse family is featured on this ordinary postage item released May 10, 1971. It is commonly cultivated as an ornamental garden flower with red or light-



Ryukyuan Dance

This 4c regular, issued on November 1, 1971, has the same dancer designer as the 2 1/2c regular issued on November 1, 1960, with a change in background color.



Ryukyu Islands

POSTAL ISSUES



Scene from Mahuni Hill

In the area shown on this stamp — now a government park — the fiercest battle on Okinawa was fought during World War II and 200,000 Americans and Japanese lost their lives.

GOVERNMENT PARK SERIES

1971



View of Haneji Inland Sea

Okinawa Seashore Government Park, so designated in 1965, is comprised of seascapes and mountains which are characterized by a rugged appearance. The coastline within the Park is rich in coral reefs, fish, and seashells.

CULTURAL PROPERTY

1971



A Deity King

The wooden image of Misshaku Rikishi on this 1971 Cultural Properties Protection Week stamp was carved in 1737 and stands at the gate to the Torinji Temple on Ishigaki-jima, Yaeyama, along with another deity, Kongoh Rikishi.

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

1971



Bingata Cloth with Rat

This stamp for New Year 1972 features Bingata material, a type native to the Ryukyus, that includes a rat in its design. 1972 is the year of the rat in the oriental calendar. Five million copies of this stamp were printed.

NURSES TRAINING

1971



Student Nurse and Light

Three Ryukyuan government nursing schools were opened in 1946 to meet the demand for nurses after World War II. This stamp — issued December 24, 1971 — marks the 25th anniversary of nursing education in the Ryukyu Islands.

NAHA

1971



Symbols of Naha City

This stamp marks the 50th anniversary of Naha City, capital of the Ryukyus, as a municipality. Completely destroyed during World War II, Naha City was rebuilt after the war and again became the Islands' political and economic center.



OCEAN SERIES

1972

*Sea and Island*

To people of the Ryukyus, the Pacific Ocean is never far away. This stamp, printed by photogravure, is the first in the "Ocean Series" and was released March 21, 1972. It was designed by Teruyoshi Kinjo and Yoshinori Arakaki; 2½ million copies were printed.

*Coral Reef*

This second stamp in the "Ocean Series" was issued March 30, 1972; Shin Isagawa designed it, and it was printed by photogravure in an edition of 2½ million. Approximately 150 varieties of coral are to be found in the waters surrounding the Ryukyu Islands.

*Sea Bird, Sea, Island*

Although flocks of some sea birds are still found in uninhabited islands of the Ryukyus, many species have disappeared because of man. This stamp, third of the "Ocean Series," was issued April 14, 1972; Chosho Ashitomi designed it; 2½ million were printed.

PHILATELIC WEEK

1972

MARITIME PARK

1972

*Yabuchi Island*

The Yokatsu Maritime Government Park consists of the small islands of Ikei, Miyagi, Henza, Tsuken, Yabuchi, Hamahiga and South and North Uki-baru and lies in cobalt-blue waters surrounded by coys which retard the heavy Pacific Ocean Waves.

*Yushibin*

A Yushibin is a pottery sake container in which people in Ryukyuan high society presented Awamori (Okinawan sake) on auspicious occasions. The Yushibin on this stamp—issued April 20, 1972—was made in the early 1800's; its type is Tsuboya-ware.

REVERSION

1972

*U. S. and Japan Flags*

This stamp marks the reversion of the Ryukyus to Japanese control. The Islands had been part of Japan until American forces occupied them in 1945, late in World War II; since 1945 the Islands had been semi-autonomous under U. S. administration.