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# SCRIPT STYLES USED ON TRADITIONAL CHINESE COINS
## Joe Cribb (London), February 1984

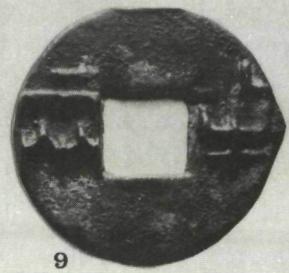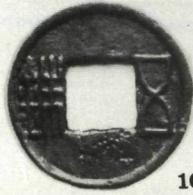7          8          9

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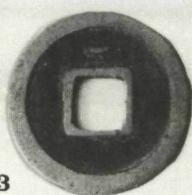
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The majority of Chinese coin inscriptions are written in the regular script seen in most Chinese printed books. There are however many coins written in other scripts which are not so familiar and rarely used in print. The regular script is known in Chinese as kai shu, literally Pattern Script. The others are called zhuan shu - Seal Script, li shu - Clerk's Script, xing shu - Cursive Script, and cao shu - Grass Script. Some of the coins bearing these alternative scripts do so for historical reasons - they were issued before Pattern Script came into regular use in official inscriptions - while others do so for aesthetic reasons, as their issuers wished to ornament the coins with elegant designs. In some cases an issue of coins was made with the same inscription written in a variety of different scripts in order to distinguish the separate batches of the issue. Changes of style and detail within a particular script were also used for the same purpose. These distinctions were made so that control could be maintained over the officials and workmen responsible for each batch. If any coins were found to be deficient in weight or alloy, the distinguishing features allowed them to be traced back to a particular batch.

The earliest coins are all inscribed in Seal Script. This script is named after its later use in seal inscriptions, but at the time of the earliest coins it was the script in regular use. Seal Script was developed as a systematised version of the earliest form of Chinese writing, gu wen - Archaic Script. Originally designed for inscriptions scratched on bone, the Archaic Script evolved as it began to be written on other media. The most commonly found examples of Archaic Script surviving to the present date are moulded inscriptions on bronze vessels. Most of these inscriptions retained the basic character outlines of the bone inscriptions but were formed with more evenly drawn lines and the sharp corners of the earlier characters were rounded. These changes were a reflection of the different techniques and tools used to engrave the moulds for the bronze vessels in contrast to those used to mark bone. Because new characters were still being created during this period there was a considerable amount of variation between the character forms used by different scribes in different regions. This allowed a very rapid expansion of the script, but also led to much confusion.

During the reign of the Zhou king Xuan (827-781 BC), an attempt was made to consolidate the achievements of the Archaic Script by removing the confusion. An official court recorder Zhou published an official version of each character form. His new character forms were derived from the repertoire of the Archaic Script characters used in bronze inscriptions. In general they represent a more abstracted version of the pictographs. His new script is known as the Great Seal Script (da zhuan shu - the "Great" is to distinguish it from a subsequent reform of this creation). The first coin inscriptions are written in this script.

With a few exceptions the early inscriptions are very untidily made. Although the standardisation of the Great Seal Script had eliminated many of the confusions of the Archaic Script, the political situation in China at the time of the earliest coin inscriptions had eroded the attempt to bring about a unified standard script. China was divided into many small feudal states and although there was some movement of scholars from state to state, these divisions lead to a renewed diversity in the use of the Great Seal Script. In general the coins of this period show a very pragmatic approach on the part of their makers to the inscriptions. The inscriptions were put on the coins

for a practical reason and little attention was paid to the aesthetics of the script. There were many variations in the execution of the same character and occasionally characters were even written in reverse.

In a few rare instances some attention was paid to the style of the inscription. Neat, well formed characters in a carefully arranged inscription appear on a few hoe and knife coins. These are perhaps early signs of a realisation that the Great Seal Script was no longer a practical standard. The remedy to the erosion of the standards set by Great Seal Script came about at an opportune point in China's political history which allowed it to have a lasting effect. The political situation which had brought about the decay of the standard Seal Script of the Zhou court was finally resolved by the unification of the feudal states into China's first Empire under the rule of Qin Shin Huang Di, Lord of Qin State, who made himself the first Emperor of China. His Prime Minister, Li Si, was instructed to unify the writing system of the new Empire. This reform tidied Seal Script by simplifying its character outlines and standardising character components. Because the characters tended to have less details, the new script is known as the Small Seal Script (xiao zhuan shu). The Qin Emperor also ordered the coinage to be reformed and the inscription on this new coins was written in the new official Seal Script.

The Seal Script devised for the Qin Emperor provided the model for all subsequent Seal Script inscriptions on Chinese coins down to the last regular Seal Script issue made during the early Qing period by the rebel Wu Sangui ( AD 1678). The characters of the Small Seal Script were regularly formed, each occupying a hypothetical square space in an inscription and drawn with lines of even thickness in straight or uniform curves. Although the outline and detail of each character were laid down by Li Si's standardisation, individual writers were able to retain considerable stylistic freedom. Small adjustments to the position, attitude and shape of the details allowed artists to create their own stylistic versions of Seal Script. From the Han period such small changes helped to distinguish different issues of coins. Later similar effects were also employed to create coins which were masterpieces of the calligrapher's art.

Seal Script was essentially for inscriptions in stone and metal and not suited to pen writing. The creation of the Chinese Empire by the Qin dynasty and its subsequent consolidation by the Han created an increasing demand for hand-written documents. To cater for this a new script was devised for writing with a pen. Its invention is attributed to Chang Miao (246-207 BC), an official of the Qin emperor. It was not given official recognition during the Qin period, but became the accepted script for official documents during the Han period. Because of its official use it came to be known as Clerk's Script (li shu). The character outlines of this new script were derived from the Small Seal Script, but many character components were simplified or relocated in order to facilitate a more fluid writing technique. Handwriting was executed with a small brush using a black (soot based) ink. The lines of the characters were drawn as a series of brush strokes, making lines, dots, hooks etc, arranged to create the outline. The brush strokes were applied in a particular order normally working from the top left hand corner to the bottom right hand corner. By following this conventional order and retaining the basic outline different writers could achieve a uniformity which made their writing universally legible. As with Seal Script the conventions of the Clerk's

Script did not inhibit the personal stylistic inventiveness of individual artists.  Although the
Clerk's Script was fully developed during the Han period, it did not come into general use in coin
inscriptions until the Tang period (from AD 621).  There are however a few instances in the
intervening period when Clerk's Script inscriptions were used, such as on a variety of the tai ping
bai qian issue of the Western Jin (AD 214).  From the Tang period until the early Song it was
consistently used for most coin inscriptions, but from the end of the 10th century its use declined
so that by the end of the Northern Song period it had virtually disappeared from coin inscriptions.
There is only one instance of the use of Clerk's Script on a Chinese coin after the Song period;
this is on an issue of the Ming prince Fu Wang in AD 1644.

In coin inscriptions Clerk's Script tended to be written in a style which belied its origin as an
adaptation of Seal Script for everyday hand-written use.  The nature of the technique used to make
coins, i.e. casting in moulds which were ultimately made from engraved masters, encouraged a less
fluid handling of the script than found in its penned versions.  Although coin inscriptions in
Clerk's Script adhere to the character outlines and details of that script, the regularity and
symmetry of this treatment creates an impression similar to Small Seal Script.  The expressive
flourishes of the brush which characterise a good Clerk's Script calligrapher's hand are not to be
found in the tightly drawn coin inscriptions.  The regularity of Clerk's Script in the context of
coin inscriptions did not however prevent the utilisation of stylistic variation both to enhance the
appearance of the coins and to distinguish issues.

The decline of Clerk's Script during the Song period was a consequence of the increasing choice of
alternative scripts which, like Clerk's Script, had been developed for writing with a brush pen.
These alternatives were all derived during the Han period from Clerk's Script by further
simplification of its outlines in order to render them more suitable for rapid writing by pen.  One
of these scripts became so widely used that it replaced Clerk's Script as the standard script for
official documents.  It is known as Pattern Script (kai shu) or Regular Script (zheng shu) as a
consequence of its official use.  It was later also to provide the model for printed Chinese and is
the form in which the written Chinese language is normally taught.  The construction and execution
of characters in this script are closely modelled on that of Clerk's Script, but each mark of the
pen is more clearly distinguishable.  The characters seem however to be more tightly and sharply
contained within an imaginary square than those of Clerk's Script.

Although Pattern Script originated in the Han period and was widely used by official scribes during
the Tang period, it did not appear in coin inscriptions until after the fall of the Tang dynasty.
The first significant issue in this script was the tang guo tong bao coin of the Southern Tang
dynasty (c. AD 966).  The Song dynasty followed this lead shortly after.  By the end of the Song
period virtually all coin inscriptions were written in Pattern Script and continued to be so until
the end of China's traditional coinage.  As with Seal and Clerk's Script, stylistic variations
appear in Pattern Script coin inscriptions both as a consequence of the different artists designing
them and as an intentional system of identifying different batches or issues with the same
inscription.

The two other new scripts introduced into coin inscriptions during the Song period were Cursive Script (xing shu) and Grass Script (cao shu). Like Pattern Script, these had both been devised during the Han period as versions of Clerk's Script more suited to pen writing. While Pattern Script retained the formal clarity of Clerk's Script for documentary use, Cursive and Grass Script were developed for rapid informal writing. They retained the basic character outlines of Clerk's Script in order to remain legible, but the details were run together to increase the speed of writing. Pattern Script characters like those of Clerk's Script were each written as a series of small individual brush strokes, but in Cursive Script the brush merely left the paper between characters and in Grass Script it rarely left the paper at all.

Cursive Script is said to have been invented by the calligrapher Liu Desheng in the later Han period, developing his character forms from Clerk's Script. His inventions were so popular for day to day use that they were soon adopted for the rapid writing of Pattern Script forms as well. These later adaptations are more commonly used now. Because of its treatment of the detail within each character, Cursive Script is well suited to the development of individual styles. By the time it was first inscribed on coins in the early Northern Song period Cursive Script had been in use for at least seven centuries. These Song coins with Cursive Script inscriptions are among some of the more visually attractive coins in the Chinese series. However, after the Song period, Cursive Script virtually disappears from the coinage. The last use of this script was by the rebel Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong) on his yong li tong bao coins issued c. AD 1661.

Grass Script made only a brief appearance in coin inscriptions. It is thought to have been originally invented by the Han Emperor Zhang (AD 76-89) for use in rough drafts of documents. This script is so rapid and fluid that only the barest outlines remain of the original Clerk's Script characters it is modelled upon. Because of the resulting lack of clarity to the untrained eye, it was not particularly suited to official inscriptions such as those on coins. The use of Grass Script was therefore adopted for only two issues of the early Northern Song period, both of the reign of the Emperor Tai Zong (AD 976-998). The freedom Grass Script gave to individual writers has made it a favourite of calligraphers, but it was this feature of both Grass and Cursive Script that limited their use on coins.

The intentional use of variations in script and style to distinguish different issues began in the Tang period. The kai yuan tong bao coins of the early Tang were issued over a long period at numerous mints and minor changes in the detail of the inscriptions were used together with small control marks to identify the date and mint of these issues. The precise significance of these identifiers is now lost, but it is clear from their consistent use that the mint authorities were making systematic use of them for administrative purposes. Modern scholars are able to detect similar changes in earlier coins and use them to separate different issues of coins, such as the wu zhu coins of the early Han from those of the later Han, but these changes appear to represent stylistic development and the personal hands of the mould makers rather than conscious administrative action.

The Southern Tang dynasty developed a novel means of administrative control through inscriptional variations. The tang guo tong bao coins of AD 966 were issued with either Pattern or Seal Script inscriptions to distinguish the two parts of the issue.

The Song dynasty also adopted this procedure in AD 990 with the issue of chun hua yuan bao coins in Clerk's, Cursive and Grass Script. Song issues after this frequently made use of such distinctions for administrative purposes. Most issues of this type were in two different scripts: Seal and Clerk's script, Seal and Pattern, Seal and Cursive, and Clerk's and Pattern; some had three different - Seal, Pattern and Cursive or Seal, Clerk's and Pattern - and even four: Seal, Clerk's, Pattern and Cursive.

Alongside this procedure further administrative distinguishing marks were applied to the coins by minor alterations to details of the characters in the inscription, in the same way as on Tang period coins. Except for the occasional use of the different scripts on Jin dynasty and Ming rebel coins, the use of minor detail changes remained the main technique of marking coins for administrative purposes other than alterations of the inscription. As more information was put into coin inscriptions this method of identifying particular issues had very restricted use until the Late Ming period when it was brought back into full use as a means of regulating the increased volume and bureaucracy of coin production. From this period until the end of the Qing dynasty it is known from administrative records that minor calligraphic variations were used to indicate to mint officials which part of an issue a particular coin belonged to. The coin inscriptions gave the issue era and the mint name, but when an issue era could last up to 60 years and a mint could operate from four different locations each producing millions of coins in a year, it was necessary to use these calligraphic variations in order to keep such massive issues within the legal requirements. Minor changes of detail were also used in the Manchu inscriptions on Qing dynasty coins for the same purpose.


KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS


NB.  Positions of characters on coins:

               T = top; B = bottom; R = right; L = left; C = centre of field.

      Scripts:  GSS = Great Seal Script; SSS = Small Seal Script; CLS = Clerk's Script;

               PS = Pattern Script; CUS = Cursive Script; GS = Grass Script.


1.  Bronze hoe coin of Zhou kings (in Northern Henan Province) issued in 5th century BC, inscribed tu [R] (= earth) in Great Seal Script (GSS). The significance of the inscription is uncertain, but probably represents the personal name of an official responsible for its production being used as a mint control mark.

2.  Bronze hoe coin of city of Liang in the feudal state of Wei (in Northern Henan Province) issued c. 350 BC, inscribed with its mint name liang [upper R], its token value zheng shang jin [lower R and C] (= exact value 1 jin (hoe) ), and denomination by weight dang lie [L] (= worth 1 lie) all in GSS. This six character inscription is written in three vertical columns from right to left. Its

interpretation is problematic, but it is clearly intended to indicate a double system of valuation related to the jin, the contemporary name for the hoe coin and to the lie a standard unit used in weighing metal for monetary use.

3. Bronze hoe coin of Anyi city in the feudal state of Wei (also known as Liang, in South West Shanxi Province) issued c. 300 BC, inscribed with its mint name anyi [R] and its denomination erjin (= two hoes) [L] in GSS. The designer of this coin has made an effort to balance his inscription and to create regular shapes for each of the characters.

4. Bronze hoe coin of city of Anyang in the feudal state of Wei (in Northern Henan Province) issued c. 250 BC, inscribed with its mint name anyang [RL] in GSS.

5. Bronze hoe coin of city of Sishi in the feudal state of Zhao (in Central Shanxi Province) issued c. 250 BC, inscribed on the front with its mint name sishi [RL] and its denomination ban [lower L] (= half hoe) and on the back with a mint control mark si [C] (= four) in GSS.

6. Bronze knife coin of Qi city capital of feudal state of Qi (in Shandong Province) issued c. 300 BC, inscribed on the front with its mint name qi [T] and its function fahua [C and B] (= legal money) and on the back with its denomination sanshi [T and C] (= thirty huo) and a mint control mark shang [B] (= above), all written in GSS. The denomination is expressed in huo originally the value of a knife coin but by this date a considerably smaller amount of monetary metal (c. 1.5 gr). No. 8 below is denominated by the same standard.

7. Bronze round coin of city of Yuan in the feudal state of Wei (Liang in South West Shanxi Province), issued c. 250 BC, inscribed with its mint name yuan [R] in GSS.

8. Bronze round coin of city of Yi in the feudal state of Qi (in Shandong Province) issued c. 250 BC, inscribed with its mint name yi [R] and its denomination liu huo [L] (= six huo) all in GSS.

9. Bronze cash coin of Qin Shi Huang, Emperor of the Qin dynasty (221-210 BC) issued from 221 BC, inscribed with its denomination by weight ban liang [RL] (= half ounce) in SSS. Qin Shi Huang, China's first Emperor was a great reformer; the introduction of both the cash coins and the Small Seal Script were part of his general reform of his state bureaucracy. (The term cash is used in English for the Chinese standard square holed bronze coins. The Chinese name for such coins is qian or wen. The name cash is used here as it is more familiar. It originated in the pidgin English used by British merchants trading in the parts of South China around Hong Kong. They borrowed it from the Portuguese traders there who had given the name caixa to all copper coins they came across in the East, because the first oriental copper coins they saw were the karsha of South India.)

10-11. Bronze cash coins of the Han dynasty (206 BC - AD 220) issued by Emperor Wu Di (no. 10) c. 118 BC and by Emperor Ling Di (no. 11) c. AD 186, both inscribed with their denomination by weight wuzhu [RL] (= five grains) in SSS. It is possible to distinguish the issues of Emperors Wu Di and Ling Di on the basis of the differences in style of their inscriptions. In particular note the

earlier piece has squared ends on the right hand part of the character zhu [L], while the later piece has rounded ends on the same element. Archaeological and numismatic studies have enabled modern scholars to recognize the significance of such distinctions. It is not certain whether these changes were deliberately made by their issuers to identify their own coins or whether they simply represent a chronological development in style. The later coin does however have on its reverse a control device which it is known was intentionally applied during the reign of Ling Di to identify the issue. This device consists of four lines radiating from the corners of the holes to the outer rim. The literary records of this period describe this feature of the coins as the sichu (= 4 out going lines).

12. 100 cash token coin attributed to Shu Han Dynasty issued c. AD 220-265, inscribed with its function tai ... qian [TL] (= large coin) and its token value ping bai [BR] (= worth 100) in SSS. The whole inscription is read in the order tai ping bai qian (literally, large worth 100 coin). One rare variety of this issue is the first coin to have a Clerk's Script inscription; another is one of the few Chinese coins to have a pictorial reverse design showing what is normally interpreted as a water pattern.

13-14. Bronze cash coins of Emperor Gao Zu of the Tang Dynasty issued from AD 621, inscribed with their date kai yuan [TB] (= the beginning (of the Dynasty) ) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin, literally circulating treasure) in CLS in the hand of the calligrapher Ouyang Xun. These two pieces show minor variations in the execution of Ouyang's design made for administrative reasons so that separate batches of the issue could be distinguished from each other. The dot and crescent marks on the reverse are thought to serve a similar purpose. Coins with this inscription were first issued in AD 621. Both literary evidence and the abundance of these coins suggest that repeated issues of them were made at later dates throughout the Tang period (AD 618-906), with a particularly large issue made in the mid-9th century distinguished by its use of mint names on the reverse.

15. Bronze 50 cash token of the Emperor Su Zong of the Tang Dynasty issued in AD 759, inscribed with its date by era name qian yuan [TB] (= AD 758-760) and its function zhong bao [RL] (= large coin, literally heavy treasure) in CLS. The reverse of this coin is marked by a circle in the field following the line of the outer rim.

16-17. Bronze cash coins of the Southern Tang Dynasty issued c. AD 966, inscribed with their date by dynastic name tang guo [TB] (= the kingdom of Tang) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in SSS (no. 16) and Pattern Script (PS) (no. 17). The date on these coins can also be seen as an expression of their issuing authority. The use of two different scripts on the coins of this issue was an administrative device to distinguish the two parts of it.

18. Bronze cash coin of Emperor Tai Zu of the Northern Song Dynasty, issued in AD 968, inscribed with its date by dynastic name song [T] (= the Song dynasty) and its function yuan tong bao [BRL] (= first coin) in CLS. This inscription was closely based on the kai yuan tong bao issue of the first Emperor of the Tang dynasty. It was designed by the court calligrapher, Ouyang Xiu, a descendant of Ouyang Xun who designed the Tang coin.

19-21.    Bronze cash coins of Emperor Tai Zong of the Northern Song Dynasty, issued in AD 990, inscribed with their date by era name chun hua [TR] (= AD 990-994) and function yuan bao [BL] (= coin) in CLS (no. 19) Cursive Script (CUS) (no. 20) and Grass Script (GS) (no. 21).  The three scripts used here were probably intended to distinguish the different parts of this issue.  Cursive and Grass Scripts were used here for the first time on coins.

22-27.    Bronze cash coin of Emperor Shen Zong of the Northern Song dynasty, issued in AD 1068, inscribed with their date by era name xining [TR] (= AD 1068-1077) and their function yuan bao [RL] (= coin) in CLS (no. 22), PS (nos. 23-24) and SSS (nos. 25-27).  The xining period saw a large increase in cash production, as the government attempted to fully monetise the currency.  In order to control the officials responsible for this enormous issue of coins, distinguishing features had to be introduced in the coin design which apparently corresponds with the different mints and periods of issue.  These features can still be observed, but no records survive to show how the system operated.  The xining yuan bao coins were distinguished in two ways.  The coins were divisible into two main groups by the scripts used in their designs, one in Seal Script, and the other in Clerk's or Pattern Script.  They were further differentiated into smaller batches by stylistics changes of detail.  There appears to be a correspondence between the stylistic changes in the two main groups so that no. 22 and no. 25, although in markedly different scripts, share a related style.

28-29.    Bronze two cash coins of Emperor Hui Zong of the Northern Song Dynasty, issued in AD 1101, inscribed with their date by dynastic name sheng song [TR] (= Holy Song dynasty) and their function yuan bao [LB] (= coin), in SSS (no. 28) and CUS (no. 29).  The era name was not used on these coins as it was a four character phrase Jian zhong qing guo which was too long for a coin and could not be abbreviated as the era name Jianzhong had already been used on a coin in the Tang period (AD 780-783).  Similar inscriptions were used at other times: huang song (Imperial Song) in AD 1093 and 1253 and da song (the Great Song) in AD 1225.

30.    Bronze cash token coin of Emperor Hui Zong of the Northern Song Dynasty, issued AD 1102 inscribed with its date by era name chong ning [TR] (= AD 1102-1106) and its function tong bao [BL] (= coin) in PS in the Emperor's own hand in the highly personalised Slender Gold Style which he invented himself.

31.    Bronze 10 cash token coin of Emperor Hui Zong of the Northern Song Dynasty, issued AD 1104, inscribed with its date by era name chong ning [TB] (= AD 1102-1106) and its function zhong bao [RL] (= large coin).  Like no. 28 this coin is also in the Emperor's own hand, but now in his version of CLS.

32.    Bronze 10 cash token coins of Emperor Zhang Zong of the Jin (Northern Tartars) dynasty, issued AD 1204 inscribed with its date by era name tai he [TB] (= AD 1201-1208) and function zhong bao [RL] (= large coin) in a very elegant version of SSS.

33.    Bronze cash coin of Emperor Cheng Zu of the Ming dynasty issued in AD 1408, inscribed with its date by era name yong le [TB] (= AD 1403-1424) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in PS.

34.  Brass cash coin of Prince Fu, a Ming pretender, a grandson of the Ming Emperor Shen Zong (1573-1620), who held Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces against the Manchus during AD 1644-5, issued AD 1645 at the Fengyang mint in Anhui Province, inscribed on the front with its date by era name hong guang [TB] (= AD 1644-5) and its function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with its Ming name feng [T] (an abbreviation of Fengyang), all in CLS.  This is the last use of the Clerk's Script on an issued cash coin.

35.  Brass 10 cash token coin of Wu Sangui, a Ming rebel who initially supported the invading Manchus, but later rose against them.  Wu Sangui was rewarded by the Manchus for his assistance with the governorship of South West China, but in 1674 he declared himself Emperor and issued his own coins.  This coin was issued in AD 1674 and is inscribed on the front with its date by era name zhao wu [TB] (= AD 1674-1678) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with its denomination in silver by weight yi fen [RL] (= .01 ounce) all in SSS.  On this and the previous coin the use of an archaic script seems to be purely for decorative purposes.  It is the latest use of seal script on a cash coin.  The use of a denomination in silver by weight reflects the efforts of the late Ming and early Qing administration to fix the ratio between cash coins and silver bullion at 1000 cash = 1 ounce of silver, so that this coin, denominated as .01 ounce of silver, is therefore a 10 cash piece.

36-37.  Brass cash coins of pretender Prince Yang Ming, a grandson of the Emperor Shen Zong (1573-1620), issued in AD 1661 by an adherent of this pretender called Zheng Chenggong (known to contempory Europeans as Koxinga) who ruled Taiwan and held for some time part of mainland Fujian Province.  These coins were made for Koxinga at Nagasaki in Japan.  They were inscribed with their date by era name yong li [TB] (= AD 1646-1662) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in SSS (no. 36) and CUS (no. 37).  No. 37 is the last example of the use of Cursive Script on a cash coin.

38.  Cash coin of the Manchu Khan Nurhaci, Emperor Tai Zu of the Qing dynasty, issued at Liaoyang in Liaoning Province in AD 1622-1625, inscribed with its date by era name abkai fulingga han [LRT] (= AD 1616-1635, literally the Tianming Khan) and function jiha [B] (= coin) written in Manchu script, an adaptation of Mongol script made by Nurhaci in AD 1579 for use in the writing of the Manchu language.  Manchurian was kept in use as an official language throughout the Qing dynasty.  It was used in a form slightly different to that used in this coin, as in AD 1632 the script underwent amendments in order to make its pronunciation clearer and so that it could be used in the transcription of the Chinese language.

39-42.  Cash coins of Emperor Shi Zu of the Qing dynasty made at the Board of Revenue mint in Beijing (Peking), issued in 1644 (no. 39), 1646 (no. 40), 1653 (no. 41), 1657 (no. 42), inscribed on the front with their date by era name Shun zhi [TB] (= AD 1644) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with nothing (no. 39), or with their mint name hu [R (nos. 40 & 41)] (abbreviation of Hubu = Board of Revenue mint), denomination in silver yi li [L] (=.0001 ounce) (no. 42) or mint name in Manchu boo ciowan [LR] (= Treasure's source, the literary name of the Board of Revenue Mint) (no. 42).  The Chinese inscriptions are all in PS.

43-45.    Cash coins of the Emperor Sheng Zu of the Qing dynasty made by the Board of Revenue mint in Beijing (nos. 43-44) and by the Jiangnan Province Mint at Nanjing (no. 45), in 1662 (nos. 43 & 45) and 1713 (no. 44), inscribed on the front with their date by era name kang xi [TB] (= AD 1662-1722) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with their mint name in Manchu boo ciowan [LR] (= Board of Revenue mint) (nos. 43-4) or in Chinese ning [R] and Manchu ning [L] (abbreviation of Jiangning, old name of Nanjing) (no. 45).    The difference in calligraphic detail between nos. 43 and 44 is a result of the method used by the mint administration to distinguish the issues of each year.    During the Qing dynasty regular variations were made to the details of the coin design, so that each coin's year of issue could be determined.    The mint must have kept a record of these changes, but it has not survived.    It is nevertheless possible to make an approximate interpretation of these changes and attribute coins to their approximate period of issue.    The Kangxi era lasted 60 years, but it is possible on the basis of a study of the varieties to attribute nos. 43 and 45 to the beginning year or years of the era.    No. 44 is a later issue and because of the unusual form of the character xi used (compare it with the form used on nos. 43 and 45 and note that there is not a separate line in the upper left hand part of the character), it has been suggested that this is a commemorative issue marking the Emperor's 60th birthday in AD 1713.    All the Chinese inscriptions are in PS.

46.    Cash coin of Emperor Shi Zong of the Qing dynasty made by the Zhejiang Province Mint at Hangzhou issued in c. AD 1733, inscribed in the front with its date by era name yong zheng [TB] (= AD 1723-36) and its function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with its mint name in Manchu boo je [LR] (= Zhejiang Province Mint).    The Chinese inscription is in PS.

47-49.    Cash coins of Emperor Gao Zong of the Qing dynasty made by the Board of Revenue Mint in Beijing, issued in c. AD 1736 (no. 47) and c. AD 1750 (no. 48) and c. AD 1770 (no. 49), inscribed on the front with their date by era name, qian long [TB] (= AD 1736-95) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) and on the back with their mint name in Manchu boo ciowan [LR] (= Board of Revenue Mint). The Chinese inscription is in PS.    On the basis of comparisons of the fabric and inscription style of these coins with those of earlier and later coins, it is possible to assign them approximately to periods at the beginning, middle and end of the long era.    The use of an unusual form of the character long on the later period coin is probably an indication that it is a special issue.    This has in the past been interpreted as a signal that such coins were issued during the Jiaqing era (1796-1820) in honour of Gao Zong after his abdication.    Gao Zong abdicated after 60 years of rule, but retained a position in the Imperial Court, but this is no reason for supposing that coins were issued with the Qianlong era inscription after the end of that era.    It is however possible to identify this special issue in the same way as the special issue of the Kangxi era (no. 44) and attribute it to the year of Gao Zong's 60th birthday, AD 1770.

50-53.    Cash coins of Emperor Ren Zong of the Qing dynasty made by the Board of Revenue mint in Beijing, issued c. AD 1796, inscribed on the front with their date by era name jia qing [TB] (= AD 1796-1820) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in PS and on the back with their mint name in Manchu boo ciowan [LR] (= Board of Revenue mint).    These four coins are distinguished by minor differences of detail which identify them as products of the four workshops of the Board of Revenue mint.

Imperial records have preserved details of this administrative device so that it is now possible to attribute nos. 50-53 to the East, South, West and North offices of the mint respectively. These distinctions continued in use until the last issue of Imperial cash from the Board of Revenue mint in 1911.

54. Cash coins of Emperor Xuan Zong of the Qing dynasty cast by the Board of Works mint in Beijing, issued c. AD 1821, inscribed on the front with its date by era name dao guang [TB] (= AD 1821-50) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in PS and on the back with its mint name in Manchu boo yowan [LR] (= the spring of treasure, the literary name of the Board of Works mint). Large cash like this were cast at the two Beijing mints for court use. They were about twice the weight of regular cash and were used by the court to pay officials or for largesse. Because of their size and special purpose, their designs were of better quality than the regular issues.

55-57. 1000 and 20 cash token coins of Emperor Wen Zong of the Qing dynasty, cast by the Board of Revenue mint in Beijing (no. 55) and the Fujian Province mint at Fuzhon (nos. 56-57), issued in 1854, inscribed on the front with their date by era name xian feng [TB] (= AD 1851-61) and function yuan bao [RL] (= coin) (no. 55) and zhong bao [RL] (= coin) (nos. 56-57) and on the back with their mint name in Manchu boo ciowan [LR] (= Board of Revenue mint) (no. 55) or boo fu [LR] (= Fujian Province mint) (nos. 56-57) and token value dang qian [TB] (= worth 1000) (no. 55) or er shi [TB] (= 20) (nos. 56-57) and denomination by weight ji zhong yi liang [on the rim RLTB (no. 56) or in the field in two vertical columns R and L (no. 57)] (= weight 1 ounce). The Chinese inscriptions are in PS.

58. Cash coin of Emperor Mu Zong of the Qing dynasty, cast by the Yunnan Province mint at Yunnan (now Kunming), issued c. AD 1862, inscribed on the front with its date by era name tong zhi [TB] (= AD 1862-74) and its function tong bao [RL] (= coin) in PS and on the back with its mint name in Manchu boo yun [LR] (= Yunnan Province mint) and a control mark da [T] (= big) in PS. The purpose of the control mark is not known, but it must have been used for administrative purposes at the mint.

59-60. Cash coins of Emperor De Zong of the Qing dynasty struck on European machinery by the Guangdong Province mint at Guangzhou (Canton) (no. 59), issued in 1889, and the Nanjing mint (no. 60), issued in the 1890's, inscribed on the front with their date by era name guang xu [TB] (= AD 1875-1908) and function tong bao [RL] (= coin), and on the back either with the mint name in Chinese guang [R] and Manchu guwang [L] (= Guangdong Province mint) and the denomination by weight ku ping [T] yi qian [B] (= 0.1 ounce on the treasury scale) (no. 59), or just the mint name in Manchu boo ning [LR] (= Nanjing mint) (no. 60). The Chinese inscriptions are in PS.

61. Cash coins of Emperor De Zong of the Qing dynasty struck by uncertain mint (possibly Fujian or Guangdong Province mint) issued in AD 1906, inscribed on the front with its date by dynastic name da qing [TB] (= AD 1644-1911) and function tong bi [RL] (= brass coin) and on the back with its denomination yi wen [TB] (= one cash) in PS. This coin was part of a national issue of dollars and cents initiated in 1906. The inscriptions are borrowed from the copper cents of this coinage which

are also inscribed <u>da qing tong bi</u> and are denominated as <u>shi wen</u> (= 10 cash).

62.   Cash coin of Emperor Puyi of the Qing dynasty cast by the Yunnan Province mint (location uncertain) issued in AD 1909; inscribed on the front with its date by era name <u>xuan tong</u> [TB] (= AD 1909-1911) and function <u>tong bao</u> [RL] (= coin) and on the back with its mint name in Manchu <u>boo yun</u> [LR] (= Yunnan Province mint) and a control mark <u>shan</u> [T] (= mountain).   The Chinese inscription is in PS.

63-65.   Bronze 10 and 1 cash coins of the Rebel Hong Xiuquan (Tian Wang), leader of the Taiping rebels, issued AD 1851-1864 inscribed on the front with their date by dynastic name <u>tai ping tian guo</u> [TBRL] (= Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, 1851-1864) (no. 63), <u>tai ping</u> [TB] (no. 64) or <u>tian guo</u> [TB] (no. 65) and function <u>sheng bao</u> (= holy coin) [RL] (no. 64) and on the reverse with either the second part of the dynastic name <u>tian guo</u> [RL] (no. 64) or their function <u>sheng bao</u> [TB] (= holy coin) (nos. 63 & 65).   The location of the mints of the Taiping rebels is not known, but it is thought that the use of various inscriptions on these coins is an indication of a different mint being responsible for each variety.

66.   2 cash coin of the Chinese Republic cast by the Fujian Province mint at Fuzhou issued in 1912 inscribed on the front with its mint name <u>fu jian</u> [TB] and its function <u>tong bao</u> [RL] (= coin) and on the back with its denomination <u>er wen</u> [TB] (= 2 cash) in PS.   On either side of the hole on the back are the flags of the Republic marked with horizontal bars (on the right) and a star (on the left).

In this survey Chinese characters have been transliterated into the form of romanisation most widely used and taught both inside and outside China.   This romanisation is known as Pinyin and is the system officially promoted by the Chinese People's Republic.   It is a very suitable for transcription as it not only closely matches the sounds of Modern Standard Chinese (Mandarin) but is also based on a spelling system closely related to the English pronunciation of the letters used. For the non-Chinese speaker it is a good rule of thumb to pronounce all letters as one would expect them to be pronounced in English with only the following exceptions:-

<u>Consonants</u>: pronounce  c as ts in its

                q as tch in kitchen (qu = tch + u)

                x as s in swan

                z as ds in Dad's

                zh as j in Joe

<u>Vowels</u>:    pronounce e after a consonant at the end of the word as a in woman

                i after x, j or q at the end of a word as the ee in sheep

                c, x or z        "      "      "      "      "          u  in fur

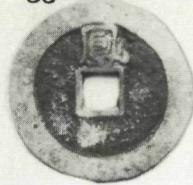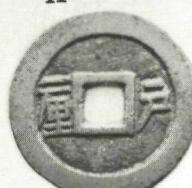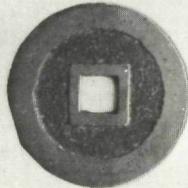                ch, r, sh or zh      "      "      "      "          ir in bird
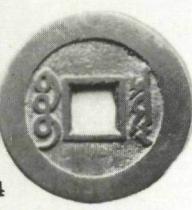
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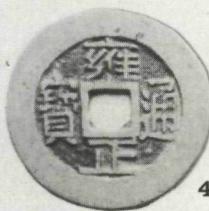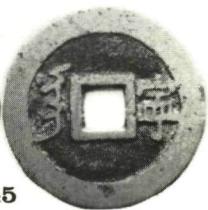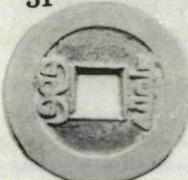
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