

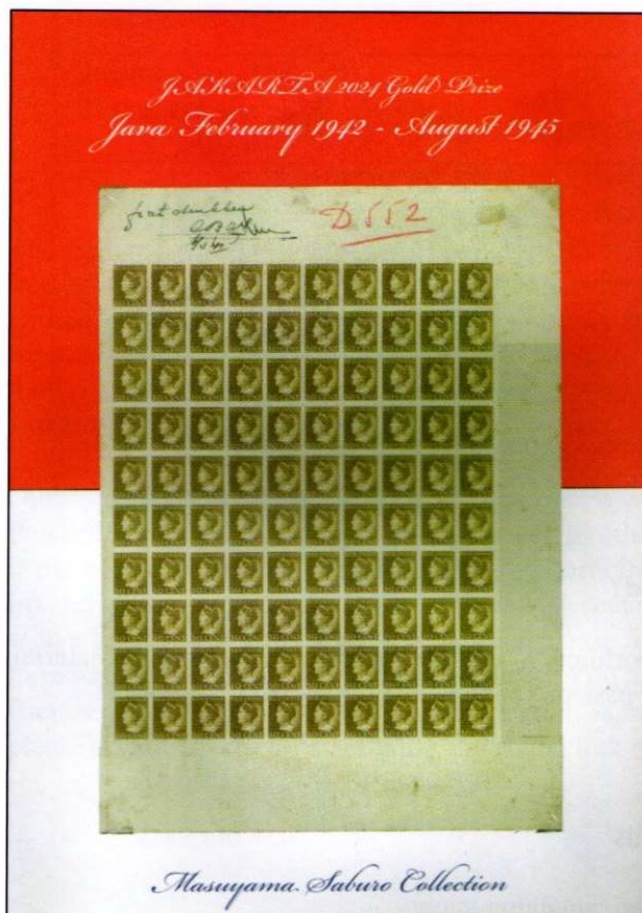
**Jakarta 2024 Gold Prize  
Java February 1942-August 1945  
Masuyama Saburo Collection**

by Masuyama Saburō  
Published by Stampedia, Inc.  
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156 pages  
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*Reviewed by Stephanus Busono*

Masuyama Saburō is a well-recognized name among collectors of Japanese Occupation stamps, particularly specialists in Java. Born in Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture in 1942, he has dedicated over four decades to the study and collection of Java's philatelic history. He currently serves as coordinator of the Japanese Philatelic Society (JPS) Southern Occupied Territories Stamp Study Group and is an active supporting member of the Philatelic Promotion Association. His frequent travels to Java have earned him a respected reputation among local philatelists.

Masuyama's latest publication features his 8-frame collection, *Java: February 1942–August 1945*, which was recently awarded a Gold Medal at the Asian International Stamp Exhibition held in Jakarta July 4-7, 2024. The book has received enthusiastic acclaim from collectors in Japan and internationally.



**Figure 1**

The volume opens with a bilingual foreword by Suwito Harsono, a prominent figure in Indonesian philately, who has shared a long-standing friendship with Masuyama for nearly 40 years. Additionally, two introductory notes are contributed by esteemed Japanese collectors, including the distinguished Morikawa Tamaki.

The book is structured into three parts, corresponding to the exhibit frames. It follows the traditional philatelic exhibit format, presenting the development, production, and usage of postage stamps while emphasizing their historical and technical aspects.

The first two frames feature stamps issued before the occupation that remained in circulation as of February 1942, including Kreisler's *Water Buffalo* and *Queen Wilhelmina*, van Konijnenburg's *New Queen*, *Numeral 5c*, *Dancers*, and two charity series from 1941: *The Netherlands Shall Rise* and *Moehamadijah*. Masuyama meticulously showcases the final issued stamps alongside preproduction impressions—known as proofs—to examine design, color, and engraving. Among these is a sheet of 100 imperforate 30-cent van Konijnenburg first print, bearing the signature of Kolff's director at the time, Mr. Elsmann, and dated March 6, 1941 (Book cover, Figure 1).



A particularly rare item included is the **10-cent van Konijnenburg postal stationery**, printed by Kolff and dispatched from Denpasar on February 16, 1942, to Garoth, India. This piece represents the last known overseas mail sent from the Dutch East Indies before the Japanese invasion (**Figure 2**). Additionally, on pages 100 and 106, the book features artist drawings for the (unissued) 20-cent and 60-cent (**Figure 3**) Java definitive series.

From here onward, Masuyama showcases the stamps and usages during the Japanese Occupation of March 1942 to August 1945. He starts with usages of van Konijnenburg stamps, which he calls "The New Queen", both before and after the ban (April 14, 1942), followed by Buffalo series low values usages of 1, 2, 2½, 3, 4, 5, and 7½ cents. He proceeds with postage due stamps, both the Enschedé and Kolff print editions, followed by the Dancer series. Where available, he includes different rates and different usages such as printed matter rate, registered fee, and newspaper wrapper.

Four pages are dedicated to the Dancer 2-cent stamp issued during the Japanese occupation. He includes proof, plate error, two types of punch marks (only one type was reported by Dai Nippon) and a rare top

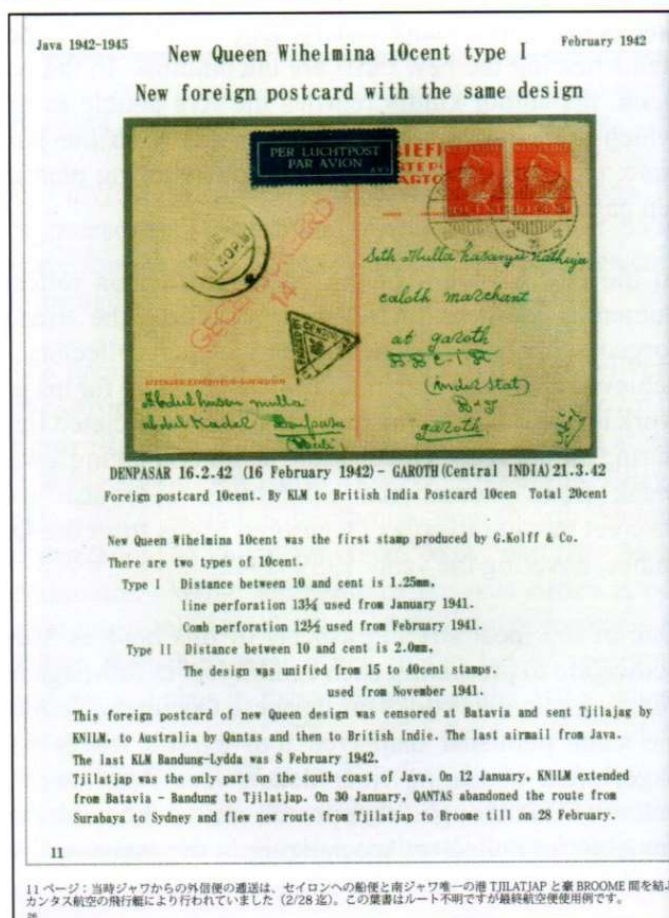


Figure 2

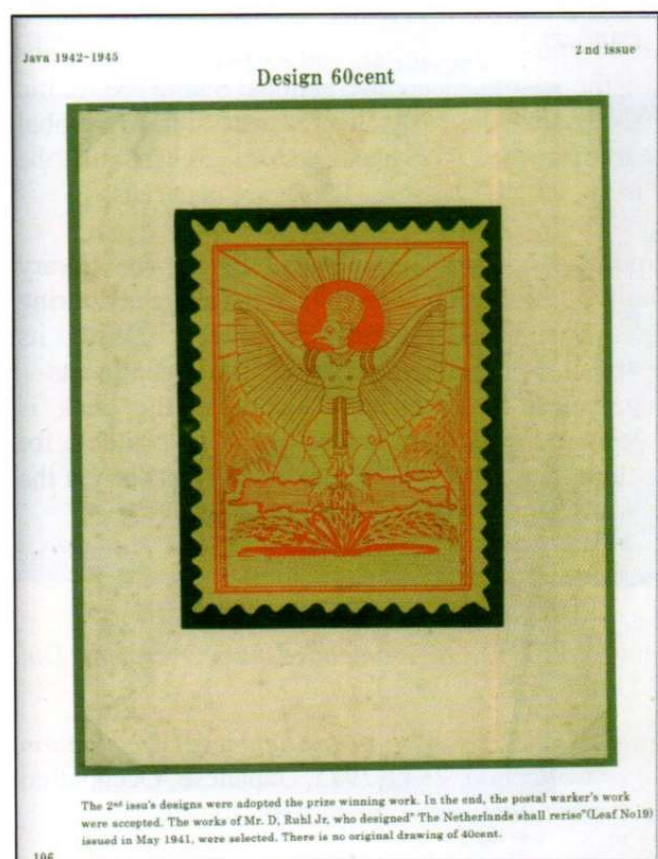


Figure 3

horizontal imperforate. A 5x6 trial print plate of 30 stamps with various red hues is featured (**Figure 4**).

Original studies by the author are included. One that caught my eye was what Rob van Nieuwkerk called "An Unintended Java Overprint" (see Reference 1, page 60). Masuyama presents four impressive pages filled with examples of these items where the country name was obliterated by ink or pencil. All were from a very short period of usage between 1-14 August 1942.

The remaining pages are dedicated to the commemorative stamps for the first anniversary of the occupation of Java 1943, the definitive issue for Java 1943-1945, and the 1944 propaganda stamps for the Postal Savings Bank. Staying true to traditional philately, this exhibit showcases color trial proofs, plate errors, and variations in perforation types. On page 65, we are presented with a remarkable vertical pair of the 3½ sen imperforate final color proof—the only known example (**Figure 5**). Various postal usages are also included, some of which are exceptionally rare, such as the Telegraphic Money Order to Japan, Parcel Post PP2, and Money Order Confirmation X3 forms. A new tariff took effect on July 1, 1945, but just over six



weeks later, Japan capitulated. Due to this brief period, postal items bearing the new tariff are uncommon. In the back of the book, the author kindly reprints the five double exhibit pages, which were previously printed separately in the book. This time, they appear side by side for our viewing pleasure across ten pages.

In the closing pages of the book, Masuyama reflects on his numerous journeys to Indonesia, recalling the friendships he forged with both Indonesian and Dutch collectors. Having achieved a Gold Medal in traditional philately for his pioneering work on the often overlooked and underappreciated field of Java during the Japanese Occupation, he hints at taking a well-earned break from international exhibitions. He also reveals his discreet passion to collect Censored Mails from the Dutch East Indies, covering the years 1939–1942.

One of the most striking aspects of this book is Masuyama's dedication to presenting each exhibit leaf in full-page format. In contrast, previous books on Japanese Occupation collections by the same publisher displayed four exhibit leaves per printed page, often obscuring finer details (see References 2 and 3, below). This thoughtful approach makes the book particularly valuable for collectors specializing in the Japanese Occupation period, especially those focusing on the Dutch East Indies.

Reading the book in English was a rewarding experience, despite portions being in Japanese. Masuyama has made an invaluable contribution to philately by publishing his extraordinary Java collection, carefully assembled over the past 40 years. His efforts culminated in a prestigious Gold Medal at the Jakarta Asian International Stamp Exhibition in August 2024. By making his collection accessible to a global audience, he has provided enthusiasts and researchers alike the opportunity to appreciate and study these rare materials.

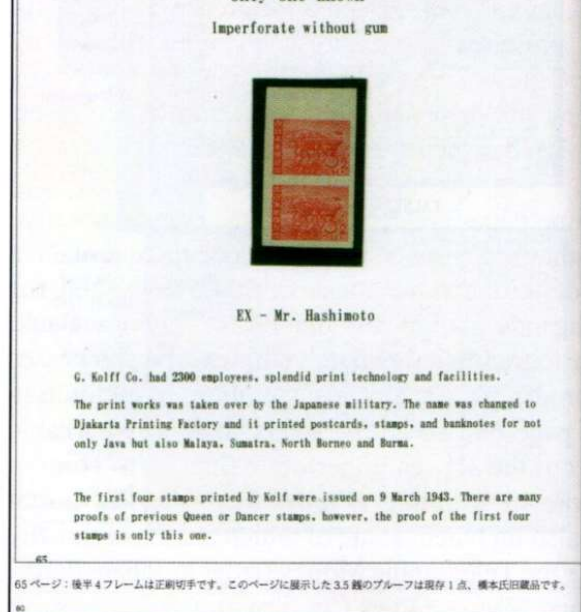


Figure 5



Figure 4

This timely publication deserves a place in the personal library of any specialist interested in Dutch East Indies philately during the Japanese Occupation, particularly Java. With its significance reaching collectors across four continents—Europe, Asia, North America, and Australia—the book is destined to become an essential reference. It is available for purchase through Stampedia ([order@stampedia.net](mailto:order@stampedia.net)) or via the author Masuyama Saburō ([sabu03@ny.thn.ne.jp](mailto:sabu03@ny.thn.ne.jp)).

## References

1. van Nieuwkerk, J. R., *An Unintended Java Overprint*; Dai Nippon, 2024.
2. Morikawa, Tamaki, supervisor, *Japanese Occupation M. Hashimoto Collection 1941-1945*, Japanese Occupation Study Group, Tokyo, Stampedia Inc., 2020.
3. Morikawa, Tamaki, ed., *Japanese Occupation Ball Furong Collection 1941-1945*, Tokyo, Stampedia Inc., 2018. ■