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Illustrated Catalog Of Chinese Coins, Vol. 1: Gold, Silver, Nickel And Aluminum



Synopsis

Eduard Kann (1880-1962) was the world's leading authority on Chinese coins and on the Chinese monetary system. He was a banker who lived in China for 47 years, during which he both collected coins and served as a top adviser to the ministry that controlled the Chinese monetary system. He writes that "I had to leave China in a hurry" during the takeover by Mao in 1949. The New York Times for May 23, 1971, page D37, reports: "The finest collection of Chinese coins [is] the collection of Eduard Kann, a banker who lived in China for 47 years. During his long numismatic career, Mr. Kann compiled the Catalog of Chinese Coins which was published in 1953." This book does not merely contain pictures of the coins and descriptions thereof. Included are biographies of the emperors, war lords, and sometimes even petty bureaucrats whose likenesses were depicted on these coins. Included are biographies of men whose identities have otherwise been lost to history. Thus, this book is must reading not only for coin collectors but for serious students of the history of China. The massive original was one volume of 700 pages in length. This reprint divides the book into three volumes. The photographs and illustrations that are at the end of the book in the original have been moved up to be next to or close to the coins that are being described. As China was not a unified country at that time, this book is divided into regions and into the type of metal, Gold, Silver, Nickel and Aluminum, that was used to make the coins. This first volume starts at the beginning and ends with Silver Szechuen Rupees of 1912.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A useful reprint of what is still the most comprehensive catalog of Chinese gold, silver and nickel coins. Unlike the original and the 1966 reprint, this edition has been divided into three paper back volumes. The divisions make sense and the photos have been moved to the appropriate place in each volume, instead of coming at the end. The illustrations, however, are even worse than in the original. The publisher of this reprint is wrong, however, in labeling the 1966 reprint as a pirate edition. If he had checked, he would have found that the copyright was purchased in 1966 from the Kann estate. This 3 volume Ishi reprint is, in fact, the pirate edition. Nevertheless, the 3 volume reprint is handy because it is easier to carry and easier to pack.

Just really difficult to read, the fonts and the printing changes through out the book. The photos are of poor quality, some you cant make out what you are looking at. The cross referencing is terrible. If one is going to go to the bother of reprinting a book like this, why not clean it up??

Product as described

I found this book to be very helpful in establishing authenticity of some Chinese coins I had. I gives good detail and contains most of the variations, along with sizes and weights of the coins.

This is an excellent book for the collector. It contains all of the known fakes and fantasy coins, meaning coins that were minted, but not circulated,. The detailed information in the 3 volumes is great for the beginner.

This is an excellent book for the collector. It contains wonderful pictures and detailed descriptions of all types of chinese coins

Though first published in 1954, this is still the definitive work on the series in a Western language, with remarkably comprehensive coverage of a very complex series. Most, but not all, of the varieties have been picked up by the easily available KM SCWC 19th and 20th Century volumes, but many are unillustrated there or are not well enough described to distinguish varieties. Kann's work is worth having for the text alone, which also discusses historical and minting aspects not covered in catalog-only works . Good illustrations are critical for distinguishing what can be valuable varieties, and weeding out the numerous post-1980s "funny" pieces produced in China. However, the photos

in the 1954 and 1966 editions (at around \$200) are notoriously poor; in this reprint edition they are further degraded to the point of uselessness. For current values and adequate photos of main types (though sketchy on varieties), the Lin Gwo Ming & Ma Tak Wo catalog of the same title is probably the most accessible for Westerners. A number of Chinese-language works of varying comprehensiveness on gold & silver have been published since the 1970s. Most useful for depth of coverage, large photos, or inclusion of English are *An Overview of China's Gold & Silver Coins of Past Ages* by Dong Wenchao (1993), *Rare Gold and Silver Coins of the late Qing Dynasty* by the Chang Foundation (1990), and an impressive new effort *Illustrated Catalog of Chinese Gold & Silver Coins 1791-1949* by Wang Chun Li (2012). Lucky is the reader who can find these works, however. These works all crib from Kann, and for the non-Chinese reader his words on the subject and detailed variety analyses remain the standard, even without usable illustrations. Kann's earlier work, *Currencies of China* (1927), a monetary history, is still easily available. Readers looking for a work that will help explain or authenticate unusual finds should be warned that no book alone will serve to weed out the many spurious and fantastic Chinese silver "coins" being manufactured in China today for the gullible buyer. These have found their way into every corner of the world and are often found on the internet auction site as well as flea markets, Chinatown shops, even the offerings of reputable coin dealers. An NGC or PCGS holder is your only realistic guarantee, and absence of an exact match to Kann's meticulous listings your first warning that something is likely not right.

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