

## Rare Boxer Rebellion Coins Discovered

By: Ma Chuan De

"Yi Ho Tuan" (the Boxers) was established in the 25th year of Kuang Hai of the Ching Dynasty (1899). They raised the banner of "Fu Ching Mi Yang" (to prop up the Ching Dyn. and repel foreign invaders).

The next year, in 1900, the Eight Power Allied Forces sent troops to suppress the anti-foreign Yihotuan movement, but met the Boxers' counterattack. The Boxers' movement is the patriotic action of the widest scope ever made in the contemporary history of China. Thus, it has been highly studied among historians in China and other countries.

But no account of the mintage of Yihotuan coins has been found in the historical materials in which Yihotuan was studied. As a result of long research and collecting, my father Ma Ding Xiang, and I discovered the Yihotuan had once minted coins.

After war-ridden years, this sort of coin has become rare. Though this coin is unknown to others, it is far more valued than ever. Yihotuan coins are not a kind of current money but are unusual coins, which we call the Boxers' coins or sign coins.



*Figure 1*

The coin shown in *Figure 1* is holed, square form in the center with four characters, "Tian Ti Xing Dao," which means "to act charitably for God."

On the reverse, the written characters are "Bao Ching Mi Yang" (to guard the Ching Dynasty and wipe out foreign invasion) and "Geng Zi" ("Geng" is the seventh of the ten heavenly stems; "Zi" is the first of the twelve earthly branches).

"Geng" and "Zi" combined is a way of numbering the year. In the lunar calendar, the year is designated by the heavenly stems and earthly branches. They are inscribed in "Kaishu" (the regular script).

The coin is made of brass. The diameter is 3.8 centimeters, and weight is 18.1 grams. The coin once appeared in the '30's in Peking, and thereafter it was carried to Japan.

Up to now it has been the only one known extant. But it was an utter blunder that the Japanese did wrongly the textual research of the coin minted in the year of "Geng Zi," the 20th year of Dao Kuang, emperor of 1840.

"Tian Ti Xing Dao" and "Bao Ching Mi Yang" were slogans initiated by "Yihotuan." The Boxers' banners were often inscribed with such slogans, based upon the expression of "Tien Ti Xing Dao" and "Bao Ching Mi Yang." The year of "Geng Zi" appeared on the coin's obverse.

We are sure that this coin was minted during the time of Yihotuan fighting against the Eight Power Allied Forces in 1900. This Boxer coin has its own distinct characteristics and is also extremely valuable in studying its history.



*Figure 2*

The coin "Shui Lu Ping An" shown in *Figure 2* (to pray for safe and sound [travel] on the water and land) with four characters "Shui Lu Ping An," inscribed in Zhuanshu (seal script) is holed in the center. On the reverse, there are a broadsword and a spear on either side of the hole, there is the Big Dipper, and below it a mark can be seen.

Its composition is brass. This sort of coin can be classified into three grades: big, medium and small. Diameters for the three grades are 2.7 centimeters, 2.5 centimeters and 2.3 centimeters, and the thickness and weight of each size is different. In the early days the above mentioned three coins could be found in Peking and Shantung regions.

The spear and broadsword inscribed on the coin's surface were often used as weapons in battles waged either on land or water. Superstition was prevailing at the time of the Boxers. They propagated the idea that those who joined the organization of Boxers could not be pierced by spears and broadswords, and were therefore safe from attack.

The Boxers also believed in the theory of celestial phenomena. Therefore, the Big Dipper is inscribed on the coin.

The mark on the coin, pronounced "Kan," which symbolizes water, is often seen on many Boxers' relics, such as Boxers' flags, posters and cloths.

In the Peking - Tientsin region, there were Boxers of "Qian" mark, symbolizing male strength, and "Kan" mark which was more popular. This sort of coin mentioned above was minted by the Boxers of "Kan" organization.

In terms of the figures and inscription of the "Shui Lu Ping An" coin examined, this kind of coin was a talisman for the Boxers - spiritual strength to keep safe from evil.

The coin, which was minted in three sizes - big, medium and small - might be carried by the Boxers as a kind of badge according to their official ranks - high and low. The four "Shui Lu Ping An" characters in Chinese mean praying for safety on water and land, which implies an auspicious idea. So former numismatists wrongly thought of such a coin as just a talisman to keep away evil and ignored it all along.

In recent years, counterfeits of the "Shui Lu Ping An" coin have been found. None of these counterfeits has a horizontal stroke at the upper part of the "Ping" character in "Shui Lu Ping An." The counterfeits are also brown copper. It is not hard to distinguish them under thorough scrutiny.

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*Excerpted and translated by Sheng Chong Jun and Wang Chien Yu*

*Transcribed and edited by James T. Martin ( [www.Moneta-Coins.com](http://www.Moneta-Coins.com) ). Note: Figure 2 from is from my collection, the original article had a rubbing-like b/w illustration. Figure 1 illustration has been cleaned up to eliminate most background rubbing artifacts.*

*"World Coin News" (date unknown)*