

JANUARY - 2015

VOLUME 32 - ISSUE 1

# THE SHORELINE

Official Publication Of The North Shore Numismatic Society

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## JAN. 20TH. PROGRAM

Gary Goebel

### Part-2

### "Maria Theresa Thalers"

This is an interesting and very informative Powerpoint on the topic. Don't miss it.

Doors Open at 7:00  
Everyone Welcome

**Next Coin Show**

**Jan. 31st (Sat. )**

See back page for more info.



## Pandora's Box Winner

Sam Leung with son Haden  
displaying all the great items from Pandora's box.  
(see inside for a list of items)

# **THE NORTH SHORE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY**

WE ARE A NON-PROFIT SOCIETY  
WORKING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT  
OF NUMISMATICA AT ALL LEVELS

MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO ALL  
INTERESTED PARTIES

**Meetings are held the  
Third Tuesday  
of each month at:**

**Bonsor Recreation Centre  
6550 Bonsor Ave.  
(Behind Metrotown)  
FREE Parking**

**Meetings start at 7:00 pm**

**Most Meetings Include:  
A Numismatic Presentation  
Show & Tell**

**PLUS... A Numismatic Auction  
& Free Refreshments**

**Non-Member Drop-Ins  
Welcome**

**For more information contact:**

msouza1866@gmail.com

simgenles@shaw.ca

(Club website)

northshorennumismaticsociety.org

**EDITOR: Gene Simms**

I hope you all enjoyed a great Christmas and New years celebrations with friends and family. And Santa's visit was Numismatically rewarding. We look forward to seeing some of these Christmas treasures in future Show & Tells.

We had 32 people (members and spouses) attend our Christmas Social and Pandora's Box meeting. It was a fun evening with lots of good food and refreshments.

**The Penny Guess Winner:** (New member) Norm Newton.

**Door Prizes:** Roy Gervan (2) - Dorian Carmel - Jay Mingo - Bill Watson - Norm Newton - Owen Wright

The **Pandora's Box** draw is always an exciting event, right down to the wire. This one was no exception. The first person eliminated and the winner of his 2015 paid dues was Stan Chin. The last two standing were Sam Leung and Milt Blackburn. Milt happened to be last years Pandora's Box winner. When the last draw was made Milt was knocked out of a double hitter (close but no cigar) and the last person left standing, Sam Leung was the big winner of everything in Pandora's Box. A thank-you to Sam for supplying us with the following list of his winnings.

**Pandora's Box goodies:**

- 1953 Great Britain 5 shillings QEII Coronation coin
- 1963 UNC Canadian hanging 3 die clash variety cent
- Cookie tin of assorted Canadian cent and nickel coins in 2x2's
- 1983 US Olympic silver proof dollar in mint packaged cardboard holder
- 1983 Yugoslavia cased sterling silver Olympic 100 dinar coin
- 1986 Canadian Double Dollar Proof coin set
- 1980 Israel .850 silver proof shekel coin depicting Hanukkah's Corfu lamp
- 2013 Canadian \$20 for \$20 silver coin w/ Wolf
- 2014 Canadian \$20 for \$20 silver coin w/ Snowman
- 3 x 2010 Canadian Olympic mascots souvenir encased fifty cent coin cards
- 5 x 2014 Canadian one ounce .9999 silver coins (Club)
- 1 x 2014 Canadian once ounce .9999 silver coin (from member)
- 2000 Canadian Sterling Silver w/ gold plating, "Knowledge" Toonie w/case
- 2000 Canadian Sterling Silver 25 cent "Health" coin w/case
- 1977 Master Mint Indian Heritage Series I Coin Set featuring 5 coins that honour the major tribal groups of BC; Nootka, Nishga, Haida, Salish, and Kwakiutl.
- 1992 Canadian specimen coin set
- Jamaica Specimen Coin Set from the Franklin Mint
- 1953 Canadian fifty cent coin
- 2 x 1958 Canadian silver dollar (each from different members)
- JM one ounce .999 silver ingot
- 1977 British Virgin Islands proof coin set w/ sterling silver dollar
- 2004 Scotland UNC 5 Pound Sterling banknote
- 9 assorted UNC foreign banknotes with wild animal theme

Show Time: It's now time to get down to business with our first show of 2015 (Sat. January 31<sup>st</sup>) and our first show in the new location at the Nikkei Centre. We are keeping our fingers crossed that we've done our homework in regards to getting the word out to our fellow collectors, via, handouts, newspaper ads and word of mouth. Only time will tell if the pied piper of collecting will lead them to our new location. For those of you who are still not sure of the show location and details here it is again.

**Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre**

**Located:** 4km east of Metrotown at 6888 Southoak Crescent (near Kingsway & Sperling) in Burnaby.

**Time:** The show runs from 9am to 3pm. **Admission:** \$2 (16 and under FREE)



The Nikkei Centre is responsible for the show set-up and takedown of the show, relieving us of these tasks. We will still need some volunteers at 7:30am to help direct the dealers. Where to unload, where to park and locating their tables etc. We will also need volunteers during the day for the general running of the show. Most of the executive will be there early to direct traffic and help insure everything runs smoothly.

## Highlights from the Minutes of the Dec. 2014 Executive Meeting

By Secretary / Treasurer: Mike Souza

**Next Executive Meeting Date:** Monday, February 2, 2015  
(Mark your calendars)

**NSNS Members Present:** Mike Souza, Gene Simms, Gordon Smith, Bob Gildert, Stan Chin, Sam Leung, and Al Tebworth.

**Regrets:** Lynn Balmer, Tom Deeth, and Owen Wright

**Chairman:** Mike Souza

## Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the North Shore Numismatic Society

**Minutes:** The December minutes were accepted as written.

### New Members:

The club had received membership applications from Lynn Cunningham, Norm Newton, Gary Goebel and Mark Clark. There were no objections to their application for membership and all were approved.

### Elections:

-The Feb. meeting is our AGM and club executive elections:

The following positions held by the following people are up for election / re-election: President - Lynn Balmer, 2nd Vice President - Gene Simms, Directors - Stan Chin, Sam Leung and Gordon Smith. We have two additional vacant Director positions to be filled. If you wish to contest any of these positions, or add your name as a director, please put your name forward at the Jan or Feb. meetings. New blood is always welcome.

Everyone whose position was coming up for election had agreed to run for another 2 year term.

-At the January club meeting, Lynn is not going to be there and had given Mike his auction material.

-To ease of accounting we are going to auction Lynn's items first before we auction the floor submissions.

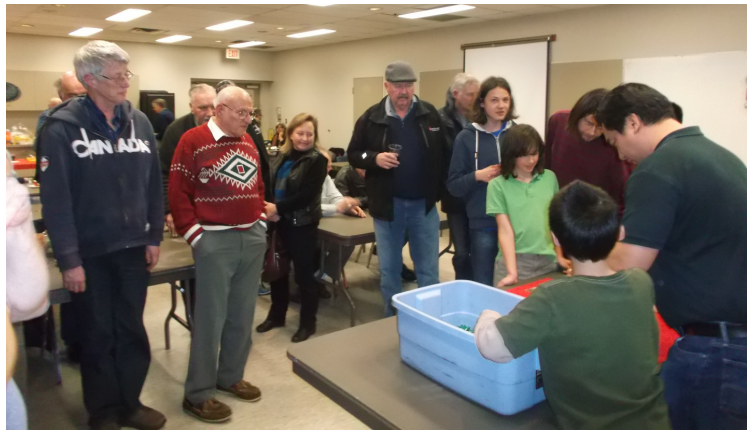
-Over the holidays Mike has created another coin quiz, a Powerpoint on WWII and another on the Bank of Vancouver. We look forward to those.

-Mike has been sharing Powerpoint programs with the Ontario Numismatic Association, and in turn they are sending us a CD containing about 70 powerpoints created by the London Numismatic Society. This should keep us going in programs for awhile.

### ICCS Grading:

Here is a great opportunity of members who have coins that you would like graded by ICCS. Guiseppi at Chantou is now getting a lot ready to send to ICCS. If any members want coins included in the next Chantou mailing, contact Bob or Guiseppi at Chantou. Call (604)321-7447 for more details. Don't wait to long, the order will be sent off in the next few weeks. According to Bob at Chantou, because they send a bulk lot of 100+ coins to ICCs, it will cost you a lot less per coin than the \$25 per coin if you were to send them individually yourself. We hope to see you all at the Tuesday meeting.

Here are a few photos from the Christmas meeting.





## Coin dealer pays nearly \$2.6 million for rare American penny

By Michael Fleeman | Reuters

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - A Beverly Hills rare coin dealer purchased a 1792 American penny for nearly \$2.6 million, the most ever paid for a one-cent piece at auction.



**The "Birch Cent", a 1792 United States penny, is shown in this publicity photo released to Reuters January 12, 2015. REUTERS/Heritage Auctions/Handout.**

Named after its engraver, Robert Birch, the so-called "Birch Cent" was among the first pennies struck for the United States, part of a series of prototype coins. Only 10 are believed to exist and collector Kevin Lipton said the coin he purchased is in the best condition of those 10.

"I felt elated, just wonderful," Lipton, 55, of Lipton Rare Coins Inc said Monday of his winning bid made last Thursday at the Heritage Auctions sale in Orlando, Florida. "I thought the coin would bring more money. This was a really good buy."

One side of the Birch Cent features the profile of Lady Liberty with flowing hair and the motto "Liberty Parent of Science and Industry." The other side says "United States of America" and gives the denomination "One Cent" within a wreath.

"It's a gorgeous coin, breathtaking," Lipton said. "And the history is important. This is our earliest depiction of what we thought of ourselves as a nation."

Jim Halperin, co-chairman of Heritage Auctions, said the \$2,585,000 Lipton paid for the coin tops a record set the day before at the same auction: \$2.35 million for a 1793 "chain cent," named after the chains around the denomination.

Before that, the record was \$1.38 million, also for a "chain cent," in 2012, Halperin said.

Halperin said the auction brought in a total of \$80 million over five days, with rare coins a hot commodity these days.

"The economy is pretty good right now and there isn't a lot of other things to put your money in. People recognize that diversity is a very good financial strategy. And coins are just cool," he said.

Lipton, who plans to hold onto his new purchase for himself for now, said he was so excited to get the coin that the next day he spent another \$2,232,500 for the "Wright quarter," America's first quarter.

"For 26 cents," he said, "I spent \$4.8 million."

A 1792 Silver Center Cent is shown on April 18, 2012 in Schaumburg, Illinois. The coin is scheduled to be auctioned by Heritage Auctions on April 19. Online bidding for the coin has already pushed the price over \$1 million. The coin, considered the third best example of fourteen known to exist, was last sold at auction in 1974 when it reached a price of \$105,000.■

## 220-year-old time capsule buried by Sam Adams and Paul Revere opened.

Fox news By Kelly Dickerson  
Published January 13, 2015

In 1795, then-Massachusetts Gov. Samuel Adams, famed patriot Paul Revere and Col. William Scollay buried a time capsule under the Massachusetts State House cornerstone in Boston, and now, after more than 200 years, its contents have been revealed.

On Jan. 6, officials from the commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston carefully excavated and opened the capsule.

The time capsule holds silver and copper coins dating from 1652 to 1855 (the capsule was opened in the decades following its burial in 1795) and a silver plaque that experts believe Paul Revere himself engraved. The capsule also contained a copper medal depicting George Washington, several newspapers, an impression of the seal of the commonwealth and the title page from the Massachusetts Colony Records.

The time capsule was last opened in 1855, when its contents were documented and cleaned, and additional items were reburied with it. The commonwealth has a set of historical records that mention the time capsule, but its existence wasn't confirmed until summer 2014, when an engineering firm stumbled upon the capsule during a construction project at the statehouse. Engineers discovered the capsule while using ground radar to survey the area.



**A crew worked to remove the time capsule from a cornerstone at the State House in Boston in December.**

In 1855, the capsule was mortared into the bottom of a granite cornerstone. In September 2014, museum workers and engineers began planning how to safely remove the artifacts.

On Dec. 11, a team of excavators, led by MFA conservator Pam Hatchfield, spent 7 hours chipping away at the cornerstone with chisels, hammers and specialized drills to carefully dig out the time capsule. But before the team could break through to the capsule, they discovered five 19th century silver coins that were ceremoniously set in plaster around the capsule when it was reburied. The excavators then reached the 10-lb. brass container and carefully removed it.

The capsule was taken to the MFA, where experts began the delicate task of opening it. An initial X-ray scan revealed the outlines of the plaque, several of the coins and several sheets of newspaper.

Conservators and engineers then removed excess plaster that was clinging to the brass case, and cleaned up the corrosion around the edges and the screws that had been keeping the capsule locked shut.

The time capsule's contents were revealed on Jan. 6 in a ceremonial opening that was attended by Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin and MFA Director Malcolm Rogers. The capsule and its contents will be on display briefly at the MFA before being reburied at the Massachusetts State House.■



## THE SHORELINE

The contents of a 220-year-old time capsule, buried in 1795 by Samuel Adams and Paul Revere, were revealed on Jan. 6. The Massachusetts Commonwealth and Museum of Fine Arts dug the capsule out of a cornerstone of the Massachusetts State House in Boston. Specially trained museum workers opened the capsule and carefully removed the contents, including coins, newspapers, a silver plaque engraved by Paul Revere and a copper medal depicting George Washington.



Malcolm Rogers, the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) director, gave a speech before executive director of the Massachusetts Archive Michael Comeau and MFA conservator Pam Hatchfield show the contents of the capsule that they carefully removed. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



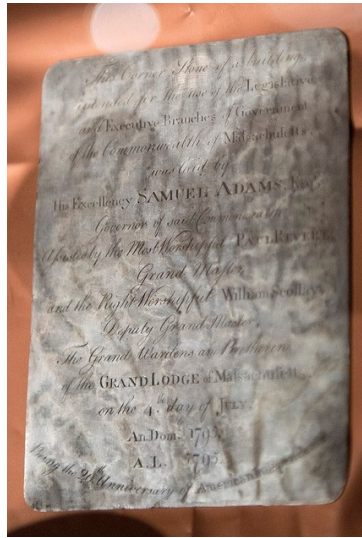
The time capsule held silver and copper coins dating from 1652 to 1855. Five silver coins were also found buried around the capsule. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Coins, including a copper medal depicting George Washington, lower left, were in the container.



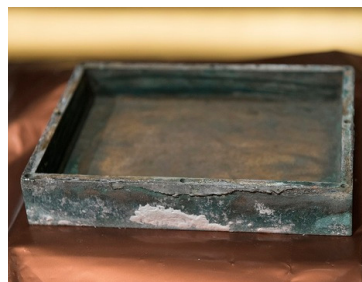
Hatchfield holds out the plaque that experts believe Paul Revere himself engraved. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick takes a closer look at the plaque. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Experts believe that Paul Revere engraved the silver plaque found inside the time capsule. The capsule also held a copper medal depicting George Washington, newspapers, an impressions of the seal of the Commonwealth and the title page of the Massachusetts Colony Records. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



This copper box was originally buried in 1795. It was first dug up in 1855 when its contents were recorded, cleaned and then reburied. It was rediscovered in summer 2014 and dug up again on Dec. 11, 2014. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Experts had to carefully remove excess plaster from the brass container and chipped off corrosion around the edges and screws keeping the capsule sealed shut. (Credit: Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



## THE (ALMOST) PERFECT CRIME

Joel Anderson *Interesting Coins Of The World:*  
(www.joelanderson )



This Bahraini 20 Dinar banknote was part of what was an almost perfect crime that threatened the stability of the economy of Bahrain. The note was the largest denomination issued by Bahrain. In late 1997 a group of con-men approached a South American banknote manufacturer with a forged order from the Bahrain Monetary Agency for several million of the current Bahrain 20 Dinar banknote, which had been introduced in 1993. The manufacturer, believing the men and their order to be legitimate, carefully created printing plates from an original note and secured 8 tons of banknote paper with the original watermark and security threads from the French manufacturer that had provided the paper for the original printing of the notes. The notes were printed in May 1998. During the first week of June huge quantities of the 20 Dinar banknotes were presented to branches of the Bahrain Monetary Agency and there were a number of currency transactions involving Bahraini Dinars in Lebanon and Europe. Careful examination of the notes being presented showed subtle difference from the notes that had been in circulation. Calls were made to Thomas de La Rue, the original printers of the note to see if they had altered the plates. It was soon determined that they had not printed the notes, therefore the new notes must be forgeries. On June 8 the Bahrain Monetary Agency announced the discovery of the forged notes. Individuals that had accepted the forged notes had a week to exchange them. Bahrain soon ordered the withdrawal of all existing 20 Dinar banknotes in circulation and a new 20 Dinar note, bearing the same design but different colors, was introduced. The forged notes, having been printed by a security banknote printing firm using the latest equipment and using the same paper as the legitimate notes made them the almost perfect forgery. The biggest difference was that the South American firm had a different numbering machine, thus the forged notes have a larger gap between the two Arabic letters to the left of the serial number on the right hand corner of the front of the note than the original notes. Considering that

the original notes had a face value of about \$60 and catalog for \$80, the price for this scarcer, unauthorized issue is quite reasonable. These notes are offered on his website at \$13.50 US ea. ■



'Hell money' and an effigy of the King of Hell are set alight in Penang.

## Satan's own bankers: Chinese Hell Money

By Paul Slade

Hell Bank notes, also called "Spirit Money" are used in funeral ceremonies in many far-eastern countries to provide money and goods in the afterlife for the dead person. The term "hell" just designates the place where the dead go, and does not carry the negative connotations that it does in the Christian world. A wide variety of notes have been produced, and make an interesting and inexpensive area to collect.

My name's Paul Slade, and I've been a journalist in London since 1982. During that time, I've written for The Daily Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian, The Times, The Observer, The Sunday Telegraph, The Independent on Sunday, The Sunday Times, Mojo, Fortean Times, The Idler, Time Out and a host of other publications.

A few years ago, I found myself with an afternoon to kill in San Francisco, so I set off through Chinatown to find myself some Hell



money.

I was looking for the fake banknotes which Chinese people burn at funerals or beside a grave to ensure their lost loved one has plenty of spending power in the afterlife.

I started my quest in the tourist shops lining Grant Avenue, but quickly hit a snag. All the young Chinese-American people I found there spoke flawless English, but had no idea what I was talking about when I asked if they sold Hell money. The alternate terms “ghost money” and “spirit money” produced an equally baffled response.

Even where Hell money did seem to ring some kind of vague bell, the young people I questioned had no interest in the subject, and clearly couldn’t understand why anyone would be curious about it.

I tried approaching one or two of the older people I found in the same shops, but their English didn’t stretch much beyond barking the price of various goods at potential customers, so I had no luck there either. But then, at the fifth or sixth shop, I found a charming young teenager who went to fetch her grandfather for me, and stood there translating back and forth as I explained what I was looking for.

His face cracked into a big smile at how daft gweilo tourists could be, and between the two of them they directed me to a store about seven or eight blocks away. This took me well away from Grant Avenue’s main drag to a backstreet where only the area’s native Chinese population went to shop.

The store was the size of a large living room, and staffed by an elderly Chinese man. When I think of it now, I remember a dark interior with dust mites dancing in the odd bit of sunlight that managed to find its way in. The place was crammed with display gondolas, each groaning beneath the weight of goods piled higgledy-piggledy on its shelves.

In the back corner, I found a section packed with bundles of Hell banknotes in eight different designs. Each bundle was held together with a cellophane band, and contained about 30 or 40 identical notes. This was in 2004, when the cheapest bundle was priced at 35c and the most expensive at 50c.

Next to the notes, I found a display of the paper replica goods Chinese people also burn at funerals, again with the idea of “transmitting” them to loved ones in the afterlife. At this particular shop, mourners could find paper telephones, games consoles, cigarettes and jewellery.

I took a few photographs, then made my selections and took them up to the counter. The old bloke there clearly thought I was mad as well, but we got through the transaction with a selection of smiles and benevolent nods, and that’s how I came by most of the banknotes and all the paper replicas you’ll see illustrating this piece.

A few months later, I repeated the process in London’s Chinatown, again finding it was only the smaller, slightly tattier, shops that could help me.

I didn’t find any paper replicas in London, but I did add a few new Hell notes to my collection, scans of which you’ll find on page three of this article. One day, I hope to find an example denominated in British sterling or (better yet) in Euros, but I haven’t managed it yet.

“Hell money is usually made in Hong Kong, China or Vietnam for the local market,” banknote dealer Joel Anderson told me. “Hong Kong uses dollars, and for a long time the US dollar was the preferred currency in the Far East, so most Hell notes are still denominated in dollars. For a long time, the Chinese yuan was not convertible, so I guess they figured it wouldn’t do them any good

## Meet the Jade Emperor and the King of Hell



\$10. Actual size: 15.5cm x 6.5cm. Mimics design and size of a real US \$10 bill, but replaces Alexander Hamilton with the Jade Emperor. Shows signatures of Yen Lou (the King of Hell) and Yu Wong (the Jade Emperor).

## ‘The US Secret Service was not too pleased’



¥50. Actual size: 14.7cm x 7.0cm. Three Jade Emperors this time, again shown with his trademark beaded hat. Denominated in Chinese yuan rather than American dollars (¥50 is worth about \$8).



when they got to Hell.” (Hell money springs from a very old tradition in Chinese culture, arguably stretching back as far as 1600 BC. Archaeologists have found tombs of that era in China with imitation metal money placed among the human remains.

China has been using some form of paper money since the 9th Century, and paper money’s been dominant there for nearly 800 years. Joss paper copies of this money have been burned at funerals and graves for almost as long, and some people still prefer to use this form of spirit “cash” in paying their respects today.

The first Chinese currency resembling a modern banknote was printed around 1890, and it’s reasonable to assume that Hell’s currency appeared soon after. “The earliest Hell notes I’ve seen that look like banknotes were printed in the mid-1930s,” Anderson told me. “In the past decade or two, they have become increasingly elaborate and colourful.”

When hyperinflation gripped China in the 1940s, Hell banknotes followed suit, producing the denominations of \$1bn, \$5bn or even \$50bn we see today.

The name “Hell money” is thought to derive from a misunderstanding between the first Christian missionaries to reach China and the people they tried to convert there. Thinking “Hell” meant merely the afterlife in general, rather than the zone it sets aside for evildoers alone, Chinese people were happy to use this word on their dead relatives’ offerings.

The habit’s stuck ever since, with a dozen “Hell Money” designs appearing for every one which labels itself “Heaven Money” instead. For western collectors like me, this has the added appeal of giving the notes a sexy, badass name which “Paradise Money” or “Afterlife Money” simply can’t match.

The Chinese concept of the afterlife is that the dead person’s spirit lives on, doing much the same things it did in life. It follows that money will be needed to buy all those little treats that make death worth living, as well as the occasional gift like the consumer goods I found in San Francisco.

Sometimes, the hope is that sending your loved ones cash in this way will help to speed their progress through the afterlife’s various stages to a happy reincarnation. This can be achieved either by supplementing the offerings they made in life to atone for their sins, or simply by bribing the spirit world’s ruling administrators.

Chief among these are Yu Huang, also known as the Jade Emperor, and Yan Luo, the King of Hell. Their twin signatures appear on many of these banknotes, though the Romanised spelling often varies.

Yu Huang was a wise and kindly Chinese leader whose good deeds in life and cultivation of his Tao won him immortality. When he defeated a terrible demon who was set to take over every realm of existence, the gods rewarded him by giving him command of what Christians would call Heaven, Hell and the mortal world.

Yu Huang delegated part of these duties to Yan Luo, who presides over Diyu. Everyone has to go to Diyu when they die, where Yan Luo’s first job is to judge whether their next stop should be the Taoist version of Heaven or Hell. It’s this decision – or perhaps the length of a stay in Hell/Limbo - which people hope to influence when they offer Yan Luo these banknotes as a bribe.

Almost all the Hell notes I’ve seen use a Yu Huang portrait showing him in his trademark flat hat with the beads dangling from it. He’s generally placed where a US President would appear on American currency, or the Queen on a British banknote.

Most of the other images used, as I’ve detailed in the captions, are good luck symbols of one kind or another: a fish, a phoenix, a dragon and so on. Hell notes are mostly found in Cantonese areas



¥100 (pink). Actual size: 15.3cm x 7.5cm. “Eight” is a lucky number in Chinese culture, because its sounds similar to the word for “wealth” or “prosper”. That’s why there’s so many 8s in this note’s serial number.



\$10,000. Actual size: 14.8cm x 6.3cm. Another note designed to mimic real US currency, though less well executed. Many people say the pagoda shown on so many of these notes is the Bank of Hell’s corporate HQ.

throughout Asia, and draw on both Taoist belief and Chinese folk religion for their customs and imagery.

The Chinese characters on the notes say the same sort of things as the English text, mostly just giving the note’s value or naming its issuer as some variety of Hell Bank.

Some notes go a step further, and blur the line between innocent parody of a real banknote and something more like deliberate forgery. “The Chinese printers often copy images and names from legitimate bank notes to make the Hell notes more authentic,” Anderson told me. “One of my favorites copied a US \$100 bill, changing only the legend on the back. Understandably, the US Secret Service was not too pleased, and that issue seems to have been discontinued.”



You can see the \$100 Hell note Anderson has in mind here, where it's wrongly described as movie prop money. These notes were produced in Vietnam in the late 1990s or early 2000s, and the only change they make to the genuine \$100 bill is replacing the words "The United States of America" with "Ngan Hang Dia Phu" on the reverse side. This translates as "Bank of Limbo".

Among my own collection, the note that comes closest to a forgery is the ¥500 note shown here, which takes almost all its imagery from genuine Hong Kong banknotes like this one.

China's currency designers have suffered their share of theft too. The image of the Hukou waterfall shown on the back of my ¥50 Hell note, for example, is lifted from China's genuine ¥50 note.

The long flat building shown on the back of my red ¥100 Hell note is China's Great Hall of the People, and the image itself is lifted from China's real ¥100 note. Even the use of four Jade Emperors on my blue ¥100 Hell note seems based on the genuine ¥100 note's design. Scroll down the China Today page here for pictures of the three real Chinese notes.

With this degree of detailed copying in their design, it's small wonder some people mistake Hell notes for genuine currency.

"A few years ago, I got a phone call from someone in India who had a high denomination Hell banknote and wanted to know how to contact the bank to redeem it," Anderson told me. "I tried to explain that it was not a real banknote, but was printed for use by dead people.

"He did not grasp the concept, and a few minutes later his wife called with the same question. Again, I tried to explain that Bank of Hell did not exist. I added that the money could only be used by dead Chinese, but she too did not grasp the explanation.

"They were convinced that they had a real banknote that could be redeemed by some bank in China or Hong Kong."

Searching for paper replicas of consumer goods in San Francisco, I found nothing more exotic than the beer, jewellery and electronic goods shown here. But these just scratch the surface of what a dead loved one can receive.

At the luxury end of the market, people also burn paper replicas of gold and platinum credit cards, travelers' cheques, laptop computers, passports, airline tickets, luxury villas with manicured gardens, Mercedes limousines (some complete with a liveried chauffeur), sub-zero refrigerators and even domestic servants.

Often, these elaborate paper models are commissioned specially to reflect not only the family's wealth but also the dead individual's own interests and style.

The British Museum's Living and Dying exhibition has a particularly nice example in this rather beautiful paper motorcycle from Malaysia. The same show has photographs of a Penang family burning a life-size paper Mercedes in order to deliver it to one of their own dead relatives.

China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia all have specialist Gods Material Shops, where a wide range of paper replicas and Hell notes can be bought by grieving relatives. Some are keen to ensure the deceased enjoys not only the normal consumer comforts, but a healthy sex life too.

In April 2006, China Daily reported that Dou Yupei, deputy secretary at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, had introduced fines for anyone found burning "vulgar" items at graveside. Among the examples he complained of were paper models of condoms, Viagra tablets and the bar girls hired to pamper men at expensive night-clubs.

Some families had even been found burning paper dolls rep-

resenting the "Supergirls" made famous by China's version of America's Got Talent.

"Not only is [this custom] mired in feudal superstition, but it just appears low and vulgar," Dou said. He asked people to make their tributes online instead.

Not that it did him much good. A year later, the Nanjing Morning News was condemning the sales of paper Viagra tablets all over again. "The people who make this stuff are definitely lacking in taste and civilization," it quoted one reader as saying. (12)

Mao tried to wipe out the custom of burning paper offerings in graveyards too, but even he never quite succeeded in doing so. Tomb Sweeping Day, the annual festival when Chinese families tend to their loved ones' graves, was banned under communism, but reinstated as a public holiday in 2008.

That's still the day when a lot of Hell notes get burned today. Some families stack them in loose piles on the grave before setting a match to them, while others fold them into intricate patterns to distinguish the Hell notes from real cash. A third group burn Hell notes alongside their paper replica gifts, believing the money will distract evil spirits who would otherwise intercept the burned gifts for themselves.

For those unable to travel to their own family graves on Tomb Sweeping Day, a convenient patch of waste ground is pressed into service instead. "In the evening, the street corners all over town will light up as people make small fires to burn the Hell money and things to send their ancestors," Joann Pittman, an American teacher living in Beijing, reports.

At funerals, it's also acceptable to place Hell notes intact in the loved one's coffin, or simply to release them into the wind so they'll waft to the afterlife that way. Some families will distribute Hell notes to mourners as they arrive for just this purpose.

Although many young Asians continue to use Hell notes today, they generally do so out of respect for family tradition rather than any literal belief in the notes' power.

That's certainly what a group of anthropology students found when they interviewed a young Vietnamese woman burning Hell notes at a Taoist temple in California. Their interview also gives an intriguing glimpse into how different generations of the same family view this custom. This became clear from the students' very first question: "What is Hell money?"

"It's not Hell money, it's Heaven money," the young woman replied. "My dad got mad at me for calling it Hell money.

"I personally don't believe in Heaven money and all the other stuff that goes along with it, but I know it meant a lot to my Grandma, so I was mainly doing it for her and other members of my family. All I know is that my mom made me do it, and she told me the money floated up to Heaven for Grandma to use."

At this point, the young woman's mother came over to see what was going on, and the students were able to interview her too. "I have done the same thing my parents and their parents did before," she explained. "We pray for the dead person to give us good luck and good health. We burn Heaven money and paper clothes on the anniversary of the death.

"Burning Heaven money is mostly religious, but it can be somewhat of a cultural thing also. They use the money to buy a Prada suit or something."

The other young people burning Hell money at the same temple gave very similar answers to this woman's daughter, placing them more in the cultural camp than the mother's religious one. For those without this family's traditions to follow, it may be popular culture like gaming and TV which provides their only encounter



with Hell money.

The 2012 video game *Sleeping Dogs: Murder at North Point*, for example, asks players to collect Hell money from various hidden shrines in Hong Kong. The game itself pits cops against supernatural gangsters, so you can see how Hell notes fit its theme.

The X-Files has used these banknotes in one of its own plots too. In the season three episode *Hell Money*, Fox Mulder finds the charred remains of a Hell note on a murder victim's body in San Francisco's Chinatown, and it provides a vital clue.

Told by local detective Glen Chao that only a few shops in Chinatown sell the Hell money – a fact I can vouch for myself – Mulder replies: "That's good. Maybe we just found a way to identify the body."

Nielsen ratings show this particular episode of *The X-Files* was watched by close to 15m people on its first airing alone, giving Hell notes what's almost certainly their biggest exposure yet to a mainstream western audience. Factor in repeats, syndication and video/DVD sales too, and that number would be much higher.

I've also seen pictures of Hell notes featuring actors such as Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart and James Dean. Another set concentrates on dead world leaders, presenting the unlikely quintet of John F Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Ho Chi Minh. ■



\$1m. Actual size: 17.5cm x 8.5cm. Note corporate wording: "promises to pay the bearer on demand ... by order of the Board of Directors". This Hell Bank tells us it was "Est. 1998", and has a "General Manager".



¥500. Actual size: 16.0cm x 6.9cm. Lion image on front stolen from HSBC's genuine banknotes (that's HSBC's Hong Kong HQ in the background). Lunar New Year image on reverse even leaves HSBC's © sign intact!



\$50m. Actual size: 19cm x 9.0cm. I wonder if the pagoda really represents Taoism's wang xiang tai? Dead people use this viewing platform to take a final glimpse of mortal life as they pass towards the underworld. (20)







\$1bn (pink). Actual size: 14.8cm x 8.0cm. The feng huang (phoenix) and the dragon flanking The Jade Emperor here are both Chinese symbols of good luck. Hell Notes carrying a value of \$1bn or more are quite common.



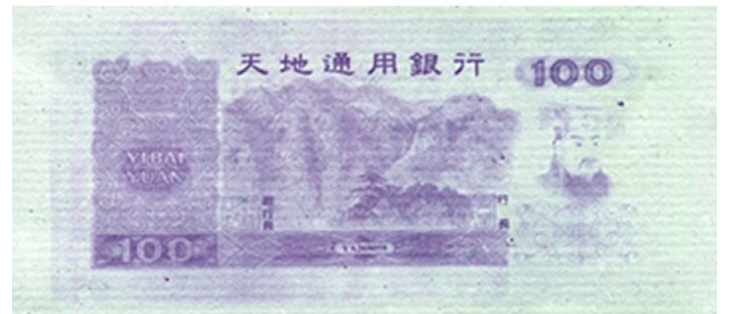
\$1bn (white). Actual size: 24.5cm x 13cm. The largest note in my collection, and the most beautiful. The figures flanking the Jade Emperor here are the Eight Immortals, revered by Taoists for bringing prosperity and longevity.



¥100 (red). Actual size: 15.8cm x 7.0cm. I've set these last three notes apart because I bought them in London's Chinatown, not San Francisco's. Even there, I found Hell Notes denominated only in US dollars or Chinese yuan.



\$10,000. Actual size: 15.5cm x 6.5cm. Another note mimicking real US dollar currency, but this time labelled as a "Heaven bank note" rather than a "Hell" one. Christian concepts of the afterlife do not apply here.



¥100 (blue). Actual size: 16.7cm x 7.4cm. The Chinese word for "four" is a homonym for the word meaning "death", so it's normally considered bad luck. Four Jade Emperors on a Hell Note seems quite appropriate, though.



Half way between Hell banknotes and the replica gifts you can also burn lies this pack of gold ingots, also made entirely from paper. Gold is not only valuable in its own right, but also seen as a symbol of good fortune.



## Hell money: continued



I also bought this gift pack of paper cigarettes, which they've gone to the trouble of manufacturing with the fags themselves visible. The two packs mimic Kent and Marlboro's real branding - and there's that lighter again.



Paper telephone on sale in the same shop. Note the many lucky 8s in the subscriber's home number. Paper cellphones have now replaced items like this, including the latest generation of iPhones and Blackberries.



It would take a younger man than me to tell you precisely which gaming console's been copied here. I didn't even realise I'd placed it upside-down till I got back to London and had my photographs developed.



One of the items I bought and took home with me was this paper jewellery set. It comprises a watch, a fountain pen, two rings, a bracelet, a neck chain, some Edna Everage spectacles and a rather chic cigarette lighter.



Paper replica clothes on sale in Bangkok, 2008. Items shown in the background include two sets of paper replica false teeth. Photograph by [Jorge Lásca](#).



## FAMOUS COIN COLLECTORS:

Coin collecting may be a popular hobby drawing millions of people worldwide to this alluring pastime. But have you ever wondered which famous people are coin collectors? You might be surprised to learn what well-known figures you share coin collecting with.

### Franklin Delano Roosevelt

The president often nicknamed FDR collected coins and later became associated with the dime (on which he has appeared since 1946) for a very important reason: he led the effort to end polio — the disease with which he lived. The March Of Dimes is one of the most successful programs that, through fund-raising campaigns, contributed to ending the widespread incidence of polio.



The Roosevelt Dime was introduced in 1946, honoring the memory of the nation's 32nd President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

## JAN. 20th, 2015 NSNS AUCTION

**To facilitate paying for your successful bids, please bring small bills (\$5s or \$10s) or coins. We only have a limited amount of cash on hand to make change.**

- 1 U.K. 1887 Shilling VF-20 Est. \$15 Res. \$10
- 2 U.K. 1901 Farthing - MS-62 Est. \$40 Res. \$30
- 3 Canada 1997 Roll of 50 Cents (25) Est. \$25 Res. \$18
- 4 Hawaii Medallion - 1 oz Silver Proof Est. \$25 Res. \$20
- 5 Canada Roll of 40 1943 Tombac 5c- F-VF Est. \$14 Res. \$7
- 6 Belgium 250 Francs 1976 MS-60 Est. \$30 Res. \$20
- 7 Mexico 25 Pesos 1968 AU-55 Est. \$25 Res. \$12
- 8 Canada \$1 - 1911-2011 Proof Est. \$75 Res. \$45
- 9 Canada \$1 Jubilee Silver UNC Est. \$24 Res. \$15
- 10 Canada 2000 PL Set - Est. \$14 Res. \$10
- 11 Canada 25c Shinplaster 1923 (DC-24c) - VF Est. \$25 Res. \$18
- 12 Canada \$1 - 1867-1967 (5) UNC Est. \$25 Res. \$20
- 13 Canada 5 PL Sets - 1989,90,91,92,95 Est. \$78 Res. \$55
- 14 Bank of Canada \$2 - 1954 (BC-38a) AU Est. \$27 Res. \$20
- 15 Canada 1989 Proof Set - Est. \$30 res. \$20

**If you wish to place a item or items in the auction and have your entry appear in the Shoreline email Lynn Balmer at [balmoralnu@shaw.ca](mailto:balmoralnu@shaw.ca)**

**Floor submission items can be submitted by members at the meeting.**

**All submissions FREE of charge.**

**Keep the Auction interesting - Bring Your floor submissions.**

**The auction is a good way to clear out some of those extras that accumulate.**

### *QUOTE:*

When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.  
Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted Kansas City Star, June 5, 1977  
32nd president of US (1882 - 1945)



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**MAR. 28TH. (SAT.) - MAY 30TH. (SAT.)**

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*(SHOW HOURS - 9AM - 3:30PM)*

**ADMISSION \$2**

*(16 & UNDER FREE WITH ACCOMPANYING ADULT ADMISSION)*

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