

TIBET



1903 - 1/4 RUPEE - OBVERSE

TIBET, Under Chinese Authority
CHENGDU MINT

1/4 RUPEE 19MM .935 FINE 2.8 GRAMS

(1903) (nd) 822,805 rare

^OV: Head of Kuang Hsu wearing mandarin cap, with pigtail, facing left.

^RV: 4 Chinese characters around rosette in center (Made in Szechuan Province) arabesques design, around.

EDGE: Reeded

MINT: (no mintmark) = CHENGDU, Szechuan Province, China

REFERENCE: Y-1

FOOTNOTE: The Tibet or Szechuan Rupee series of rupee, 1/2 rupee and this 1/4 rupee were designed to replace the Victorian rupee series issued first by the British East India Company, which as they were of good silver quality had become widely accepted by the natives of Tibet and crossing the border into western China. The Imperial Chinese Government in an effort to replace this foreign coinage struck starting in 1903, this new series showing a mandarin with cap and pigtail (said to be Emperor Kuang Hsu) facing left similar to the Victorian portrait. Since the natives were mostly illiterate, the rupee coins were well received in Tibet and the design was struck for many years first at Chengdu and later at Kanton (Kang-ting). The smaller coins were not as well received and did not continue to circulate. The Victoria 1/4 rupee is shown as part of the Indian series.



1903 - 1/4 RUPEE - REVERSE



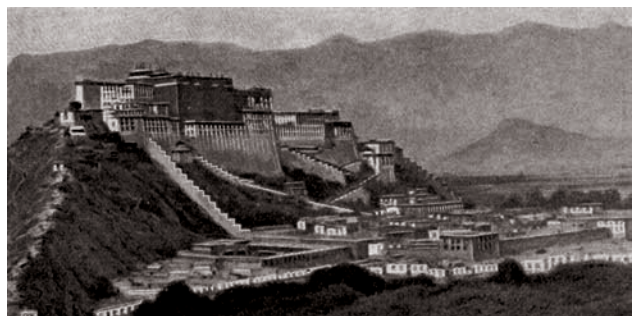
Chinese Emperor Kuang-hsü

FOOTNOTE: Tibet, a country in central Asia in the Himalayas with an elevation of 16,000 ft. above sea-level, the highest plateau in the world. The people speak Tibetan with an almost endless number of dialects. Polyandry is a custom of the people, all the brothers in a family having the same wife. Though nominally dependent on China the real rulers of Tibet having for many years been the Lamas, whose authority is vested in the Dalai Lama at Lhasa. There is a Chinese Resident at Lhasa, who officially represents China and is known as the Amban. From very early days Tibet was the object of explorers, but owing to its position their journeys were fraught with much difficulty, and up to the time of the British Expedition of 1904 no European had succeeded in penetrating to Lhasa. Of the early history of Tibet little is known. In 1720 the country was brought under Chinese rule. India had always been anxious to open up trade with Tibet and between 1872 and 1886 three different missions were organized but were given up. In 1888 the Chinese invaded Sikkim and a military expedition was sent to drive them out, which resulted in a treaty in 1890. The Lamas not having been consulted in the matter they took offense, and revenged themselves by trying to bring about a treaty with Russia. Further inroads were made into Sikkim, and Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, came to the conclusion that strong measures were necessary. Colonel F.E.Younghusband was sent with an escort to see if he could come to terms, but he was unable to do anything. It was then decided to send an armed expedition, and in December 1903 Colonel Younghusband with General Roland MacDonald in command of the troops set out, and after some severe fighting they reached Lhasa on August 3, 1904 and the Dalai Lama fled. Peace was concluded in September by a treaty which provided against further incursions into Sikkim and established British trade marts, and also prevented any foreign power receiving concessions in the country; the Tibetans also had to pay an indemnity; China signed an agreement to this in April 1906. A treaty with Russia was concluded in the following year. In 1908 the Dalai Lama was reinstated in Lhasa by Chinese authority, but an insurrection taking place Chinese troops were sent to quell it and came into collision with the Dalai Lama, and this resulted in his being deposed by China, and he fled to India hoping to obtain help from the British in 1910. When later a revolution broke out in China, the Tibetans took the opportunity to rise against the Chinese and in August 1912 a treaty was signed which agreed that the Chinese should leave the country, and return to China by way of India. The Dalai Lama then returned.



Native of Tibet and a yak

FOOTNOTE: Tibet, extending from the Pamir region eastwards between the Himalayan and Kwen-lun mountains to the frontiers of China, has a population estimated at 6,500,000. the only census ever taken was by Chinese in 1737 and showed a population of 316,300 lamas (monks) and 635,950 laity. Lhasa, the capital has from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. The country being bleak and mountainous and strangers having been jealously excluded, wide regions are still unexplored. The head of the government is the Dalai Lama, who resides at the Po-ta-la (or palace) near Lhasa. *The Statesman's Year-Book, London, 1916.*



The Palace of the Grand Lama

Pictures - Roddy's Complete Geography, 1902.

