

## Mail Between, and Via, Canada and Japan, 1873-1898

During 1873-1898, postal administrations of the world transformed themselves into humanity's first global communication system! In 1874, 21 countries, all but three European, created "a single postal territory", which they called the General Postal Union (GPU). New members could join by six bureaucratic steps. In June 1878 at Paris, the GPU radically simplified its admission criteria: "Countries [wanting to be in the single postal territory]... are admitted... upon their demand." And in harmony with that openness, the GPU declared itself to be the Universal Postal Union. But let's hesitate. Was it really "Universal"? We may see a small hint towards the universality in the easy acceptance of Japanese iconography on mail, pp 4 & 10.

### Postal Routes

This frame exhibits mail between Japan and Canada in the quarter century beginning in 1873. San Francisco was then the only route used. In 1887, the Vancouver route opened. In a few years, it was not only the fastest between Japan and Canada, but also a fast route between East Asia and western Hemisphere, Europe, and even West Africa! Had the route become universal? Perhaps. The wide use of a via Vancouver route was a contribution to the UPU's goal of universality.

### Organization

Many letters were endorsed via cities or routes, even pacific ships! With the aid of shipping dates in newspapers (some have been gathered and published) one can distinguish four routes. This frame is organized by those four routes, with a fifth group of wider use via Vancouver.

- A. via San Francisco - the only route until 1887 - pages 2 to 4;
- B. via Vancouver (for Victoria) - the shortest and fastest route - pages 5 to 9;
- C. via Britain - the longest and slowest route for Japan-Canada mail - pages 10 to 11;
- D. via Tacoma (USA) - close to Vancouver and used only by exception - page 12; and,
- E. via Japan and/or via Canada - a route for half the world! - pages 13 to 16. And Page 6!

### Maps

Postal Routes between Canada & Japan, 1873 - 1898

Vancouver, Victoria, and Tacoma

