

# Mengkiang Fore-runners

## Zhangjiakou - Kyoto, Japan, 17 3 28 (1939) cover

Zhangjiakou is written 张家口 in simplified Chinese and 張家口 in traditional Chinese. It is Zhāngjiākǒu in pinyin and the name means "Zhang family gate." Older names for the town in Chinese include Zhāngyuán (張垣), used in the Republican era, and Zhāngjiāpù (張家堡).

Zhangjiakou was historically known to the Europeans as Kalgan (喀拉干) until the mid 20th century.

The European name derives from the Mongolian name of the city:

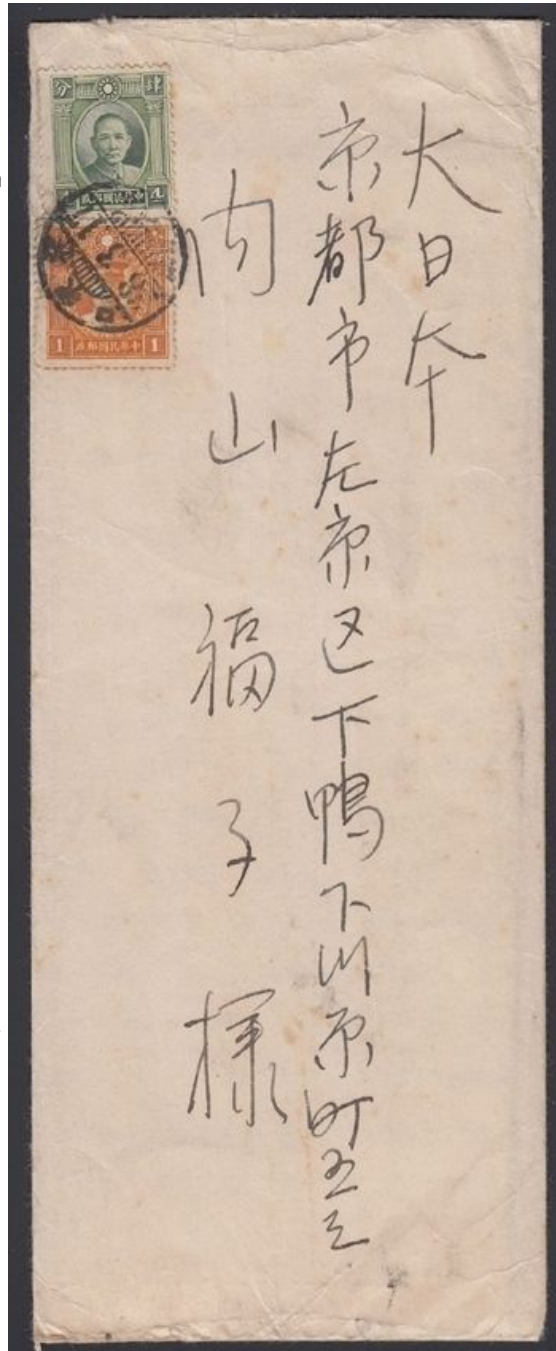
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"Chuulalt haalga", or for short,

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"haalga" which means "the gate" (in the Great Wall).

Because of its strategic position, northwest of Beijing, Zhangjiakou has been nicknamed "Beijing's Northern Door".



In 1937 the Japanese occupied the region and made Kalgan the capital of the autonomous Cha-nan (South Chahar) Province. The Federated Mengkiang Commission was set up to supervise the economic affairs, banking, communications, and industry of Japanese-occupied Inner Mongolia (Mengkiang).

In 1939 the Japanese were still using Republic of China stamps in North China (and other regions). It seems that the republican Chinese Post Office was allowed to function more or less normally in occupied regions. However, the circular date stamps (c.d.s.) were changed in Mengkiang (and North China) to the style shown on this cover, with the 'comb' pattern above and below the date. This type was also used in c.d.s. of Manchukuo. They were not always replaced immediately after the war, and so are sometimes seen on later Republican or Communist issues.

Ref: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhangjiakou>