

Right: the Lunar New Year – Year of the Dragon Generic Sheet, released on 20 January



Lunar New Year – Year of the Dragon Generic Sheet Specifications

Date of issue	20 January
Number of stamps	20
Stamp design	NB Studio
Stamp illustration	Kam Tang
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	20mm x 24mm
Sheet design	Hat-trick Design
Sheet illustration	Rebecca Sutherland
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	15 x 14
Phosphor	Bars
Gum	Self-adhesive

Year of the Dragon On 20 January Royal Mail issues a Smilers® Generic Sheet marking the Lunar New Year, which begins on 23 January. The sheet features 20 stamps surrounded by dragon illustrations by Rebecca Sutherland. It costs £13.95.

In Asian culture, each lunar year is 'ruled' by a different animal, each bestowing their distinctive characteristics to those born in that year. This year marks the reign of the Dragon, the fifth animal in a cyclical series of 12. Associated with royalty, wisdom and fearsome strength, the legendary dragon is said to live in the clouds nearest to heaven and ranks highest of all the animals.

Other European postal bureaux issuing stamps to celebrate the Year of the Dragon include

Liechtenstein and France, as well as the USA and more obvious contenders such as Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan ●

Historic Cachet Cover The House of Windsor and Saxe-Coburg Gotha Cachet Cover is the sixth and last of the limited-edition cachet covers which have accompanied each stamp set in the Kings and Queens series. The cover bears a special Buckingham Palace cachet, as well as a special first-day postmark for 2 February and the stamps that feature the monarchs: Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, George VI and Queen Elizabeth II (see December *Bulletin* page 108 for more details).

An illustrated information card inside the cachet cover describes each of the featured monarchs of the House of Windsor and Saxe-Coburg Gotha, with a timeline showing significant moments in their reigns. The cover is issued in a limited edition of 5,000 and priced £9.99 ●