

Hong Kong Small Crown Circle Paid Fakes

The "original finds" are three covers, all with enclosure addressed in Indian language (Sanskrit?) to Bombay as Lots 60, 63 and 64 of the John Bull Stamps Ltd. W.H. Lu sale 16 February 1985. All three covers bear the so-called "Extra-Small Unrecorded Crown Circle Paid at Hong Kong" in red measuring 20-mm instead of 21.5 mm on the front and Hong Kong type 9 c.d.s. dated 27 August 1854, 6 October 1854 and 16 November 1854 on the back. In addition, Calcutta and Bombay arrival c.d.s. are found on the reverse of each cover.

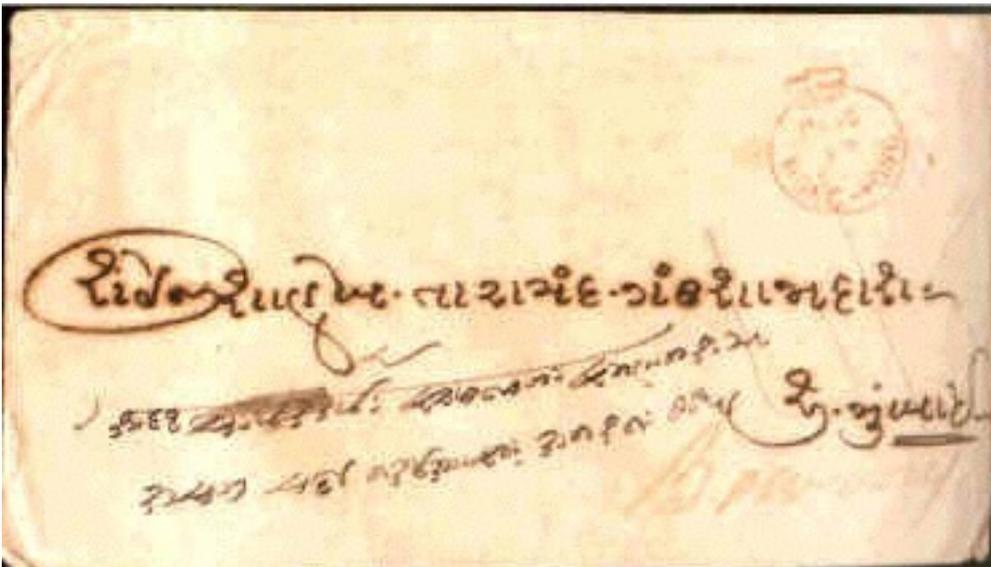
The subject was reported in Hong Kong Study Circle Journal No. 256 December 1985 p. 7 and the editor at that time, Mr. Chris Riding commented that 'It is surprising that there should be three examples in one collection of a postmark that is not recorded by Webb!' This was followed up in HKSC Journal No. 257 March 1986 p. 5. 'Mr. Philippe Orsetti has sent me a photo-copy of the "Extra Small PAID AT HONG KONG" that he purchased through the John Bull/W.H. Lu sale;K(lot 60)' It was noted that there are significant differences of the lettering compared to the 21-mm version and in particular, the hyphen between HONG - KONG is more to the right than in the original. Furthermore, the Bombay and Hong Kong type 9 backstamps are so faint that they could be fakes.

Another report in HKSC Journal No. 258 June 1986 p. 3 mentions that 'Messrs. Pearson and Goldsmith are not willing to accept this handstamp (as genuine) since only ONE* 'Small Crown Circle' was sent from the U.K. GPO Proof Book, 16 June 1862' (*sic.* 1852).

HKSC Journal No. 261 March 1987 p. 4 mentions that Mr. Pearson saw a fourth copy in Mr. Lee Scamp's exhibit in Ameripex 1986 and suggested that Lee should get a certificate from the RPSL Ltd. He did and the RPSL experts pronounced the handstamp a fake. Thus it was concluded that the three examples from the Lu sale are likely to be fakes.



Yet another cover also addressed to Bombay appeared recently in 25 June 2005 Zurich Asia auction (Lot 908). The cover is dated 1854 and rated 4 shillings and it is shown below: -



The 'Crown Paid at Hong Kong' mark measures 20.5 mm cover and it has the same characteristics as all the Lu's covers as well as Lee Scamp's. Distinguishing features including the following: -

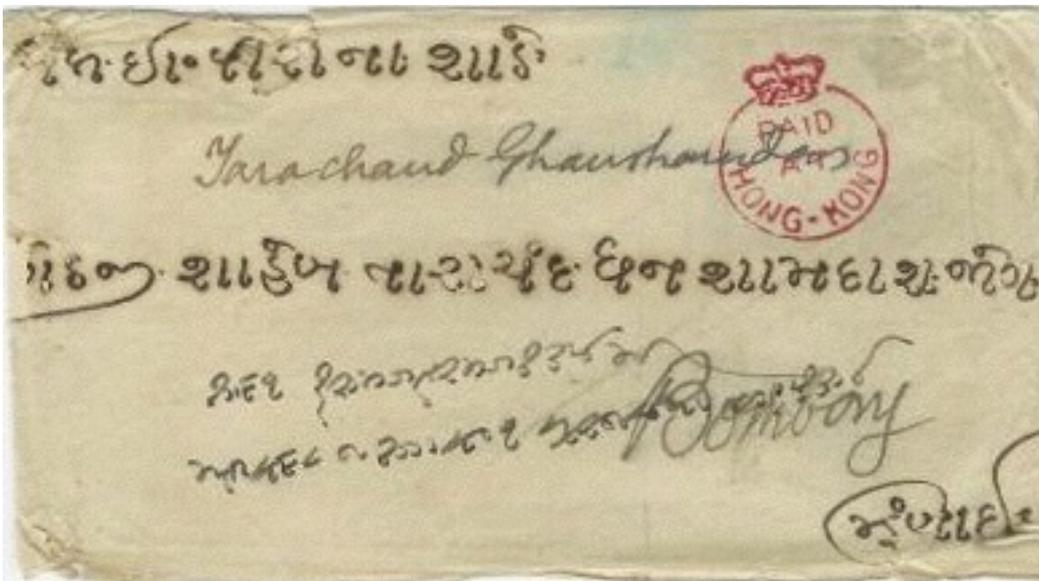
- Right side of the 'D' is broken.

- The first 'G' of HONG is extra large.
- The dash between HONG KONG is towards the right rather than in the middle.
- The serif of the second 'G' is over-exaggerated.

It is critical to examine the back of the cover since there is a Hong Kong dispatch c.d.s., a Calcutta transit and a Bombay arrival. If all three datestamps are genuine, perhaps we have to re-consider the status of the "Extra-Small Paid At Hong Kong" c.d.s. Unfortunately, no picture of the reverse is shown in the catalogue but we would like the buyer of this lot to send us a photocopy or a scan of the back please.

**We have a copy of the G.P.O. Proof Book and on p.129, there is actually a second partial strike (only the letters HONG KONG are visible) above the Hong Kong entry to the right of the broken-ring BUFF BAY JAMAICA strike dated AP 30 1852. It is not unreasonable to expect a second 'Small Crown Paid' handstamp was sent to Hong Kong as two 'Large Crown Paid' were sent on 17 October 1843 (impression on p. 186 of the G.P.O. Proof Book)*

Fake No. 2



Our member Charles Chan FRPSL informed us of another dubious type 11 on an 1857 cover addressed to Bombay which was recently sold on the Internet. The Crown Circle Paid appears to differ from the "Extra-Small Paid At Hong Kong" type mentioned above and the exact size cannot be ascertained. Furthermore, the seller did not show the reverse of the cover on the Internet. Upon request, he cooperated and sent us a scan of the back and it bears an unclear strike of a broken-ring Bombay datestamp and the date is ?? 27 1857. There is no Hong Kong dispatch.

PAID : -

P sloping to right (dissimilar to lot 908 Zurich Jun05)

HONG :-

O with right side straight instead of oval curve

N short in appearance

G large in size, end serif over-emphasis

KONG :-

K with short top, top slanting bar join vertical bar at wrong positioning (too high)

O in squat instead of oval

Inking colour in deep bright purple red instead of normal orange-red.

The differences pointed out by our member, the absence of rate mark on the front and Hong Kong dispatch all indicate that the 'Small Crown Paid At Hong Kong' is a fake mark. However, we are unsure whether the Bombay arrival is genuine since we do not have sufficient cross-reference material.

This letter was most likely sent privately by an Opium Clipper to India (consignee cover?) and we would like our members who could read the Indian script to tell us what is actually written on the front of the cover.