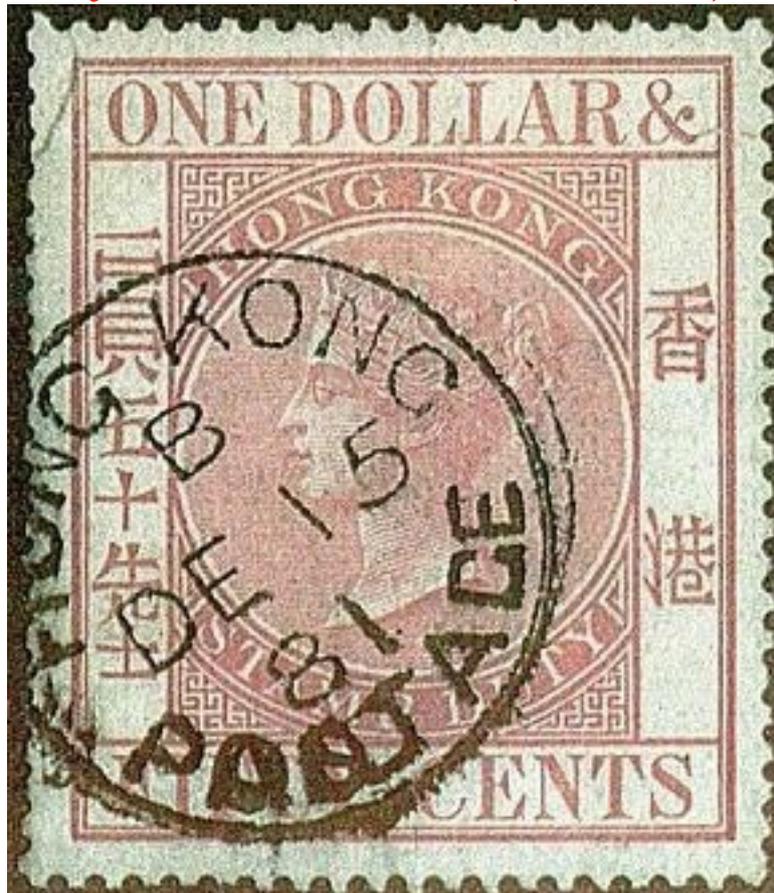


Tale of a *REALLY* Bad Fake by Robin Clarke (Canada)



The following short tale will, I hope, serve to point out that we should study our material, and really look at what we have, so as to recognize it for what it is, or what it should be.

A few years ago, while attending a rather large stamp show in the U.S., I happened to stop by one of the dealers from Oregon State whom I had known for years. While browsing through his stock books, looking for (what else?) Hong Kong items, I turned to something that instantly caught my eye.

On a page, all by itself was the stamp shown as figure 1. It was a Queen Victoria \$1.50 Revenue issue with a lovely sharp cancel - "Hong Kong / B / DE 15 /81" and what appeared to be the word "POSTAGE" over the existing "PAID ALL". "HONG KONG PAID ALL" c.d.s. was used for canceling fiscal stamps on document and it is strictly speaking, a fiscal cancel. At one time it was "borrowed" by the post office and used as a dater on letters

sent by the trans-pacific mail service to the U.S. before Hong Kong becoming a member of the U.P.U.

The dealer had noted on the page below the stamp that this must be an un-listed variety as he could not find it in any catalogue. He was asking for US\$200 for it! Ouch!

As I had known this dealer for quite a number of years, I felt fairly comfortable telling him that “I had good news and bad news about this stamp” and that I didn’t want to appear to be a “know-it-all” and “rain on his parade”!

The “good news” - I would like to buy this stamp, (but not for the original price of course!) and the “bad news” - what he had was a really bad fake! I explained that this stamp would be found in a Revenue catalogue - the item was Barefoot #6 \$1.50 chestnut shade, watermarked Crown CC produced in 1867.

He took the information very well, agreeing that dealers (and also, collectors) can’t possibly know everything about everything!

He kept the stamp until the next day, wanting to show it to some other dealers at dinner that evening, and, as he said, “having some fun with them”. In the morning, I purchased the stamp for \$10, and I am delighted to have it.

The moral of the above, if indeed it needs one, is probably “know your material” or at the very least, read a bit about it, so that when something like this happens, you will recognize it for what it is.