

HONG KONG POSTAL STATIONERY

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with contributions from members of the HKSC, HKPS, and others

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Part 1. INTRODUCTION

I expect to see “new finds” (redundant, but that is what discoveries are dubbed in our philatelic parlance) in Hong Kong postal history. That’s what makes it fun. That’s why I collect it. I don’t expect to see dramatic new finds in Hong Kong postal stationery, any more than I expect to see them in Hong Kong stamps. I can’t recall the last time I saw something new, and really of major significance, in Hong Kong stamps. Until 2003, the last significant “new” item I recall in Hong Kong postal stationery was the 20c KG V registered postal envelope with flap folding to the rear, and I was one of the discoverers of that. And then in the Spring of 2003 along came the Hong Kong registered envelope with “R” in oval at the top left, and “Fee Paid” at the bottom left, both in bright red – not just one example, but eight used and one mint, of which I am aware. Now how could something that amazingly different go unrecognized / unreported for so long?

So when Dr. Cheung twisted my arm hard enough for me to agree to write an article for the HKPS journal, Hong Kong postal stationery new finds came to mind. After I completed the original HKPS registration envelope article, I thought I should expand it beyond the constraints of that topic to encompass new finds and to include updates to the earliest and latest dates that Col. Webb and others have recorded for the rest of the various types of Hong Kong postal stationery. This occurred not just because of the new “R” in an oval registered envelope finds documented in the predecessor article, but also because of a few “new” items that have come to hand in recent years that I hadn’t yet gotten around to reporting. Don’t get your hopes up – nothing as dramatic as the new registered envelope with “R” in oval, but still interesting. Also there are a couple of items that I would term “fly speck” finds, if I was joshing one of my China-collecting friends about a find of similar magnitude in Chinese stamps. Then again, rounded versus pointed flaps of KG V postal stationery envelopes could also be termed “fly specks,” but they are cataloged.

Hong Kong postal stationery has been one of my collecting interests for many years, initially because it was a relatively inexpensive topic that bridged the gap between stamps and postal history. Another attractive feature is that, with the exception of a handful of rare and expensive items, a Hong Kong postal stationery collection can be “completed” (if you’re willing to settle for just one of each cataloged item) without having to mortgage the house. Speaking of cataloged, that is another reason that I decided to do this article on Hong Kong postal stationery. Besides Webb, there are five other catalogs of, or including at least parts of, Hong Kong postal stationery. And as with any publication, some errors have crept into each that need to be corrected for the record. No disrespect is intended in pointing out the mistakes of those authors. It is just a matter of continuing to improve the body of philatelic knowledge for the benefit of contemporary and future collectors. I assume mistakes will be found in this effort, and hope those who find them will let me know, and/or publish corrections of my goofs.

As any of you who know me well are aware, Col. Webb’s penchant for Earliest Recorded Date (ERD) and Latest Recorded Date (LRD) rubbed off on me. It adds another reason to continue the hunt. From a postal history view point, ERD is of considerably more significance than LRD. The fact that someone found an old QV envelope laying around and used it in 1910 is really of little significance, but Colonel Webb started it, so I will carry it on. Similarly, modern philatelically contrived “first day covers” commemorating the issue of a new aerogramme don’t do much for me, but they do serve to document the fact of the issue and in some cases they are the only such record. I sometimes chided one of my postal history mentors for creating paquebot covers. His response was that if he had not, there would have been a number of such marks that never would have been documented. This wise gentleman also had a favorite saying: “Finds are where you find



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