

Part 2: POST CARDS

Introduction

(updated 5. 2013)

Regulations of the General Postal Union (GPU), and its successor, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), required that post cards (PC) be made available to the public, and Hong Kong (HK) complied, although somewhat belatedly. HK has issued more different PCs than any other type of postal stationery. PCs are probably the most collected item of HK postal stationery, and they are, correspondingly, the most well-studied.

No major “new” post card types have been cataloged since Colonel Webb’s book was published. Six new post card subtypes are recorded herein, dealing with the deletion (4 examples), or non-deletion (2 examples), of “REPLY” on the two part reply paid post cards. These are denoted by “NEW” in Table PC-2d. Additionally, inverted 4c red and 4c black surcharges on the 3c brown card have recently been identified. These are also denoted by “NEW” in the applicable tables.

Quite a number of earlier and later dates of usage have been identified than those recorded by Col. Webb, the Hong Kong Study Circle (HKSC), and Mr. Proud. Unfortunately, Col. Webb’s Earliest Recorded Dates (ERD) are misleadingly listed in the Yang catalog as if they were the actual issue dates. Three of what I believe to be the most significant ERD advancements for QV post cards are illustrated in figures PC-1c: the 3c/16c on white card; PC-2a: the 4c grey definitive; and PC-3d: the 4c in red on 3c brown card. Each of these “finds” has implications that serve to update previously held understanding of the postal history related to postal stationery.

The postal rates established by government authorities, generally within GPU / UPU guidelines, are the key to understanding when and what value stamps and postal stationery were issued. However, while Hong Kong adhesive postage stamps are cataloged in great and generally correct detail, the same cannot be said, unfortunately, for postal stationery (PS), nor for the complete and accurate publication of the rates upon which those PS issues are based (see post card rate issue example in KG VI section).

The “Hong Kong Post Card Rates by Surface Mail” table provided by Dr. Schoenfeld (subsequently abbreviated “Sch.” herein) in HKSC Journal 301/4 was used as the basis for an attempt to update the PC rates recorded by various authors over the years. In a number of cases, it became necessary to consider extant examples in an effort to resolve the rate discrepancies between these authors. Such efforts are discussed in the pertinent by-reign sections, and the resulting primary HK single PC surface rates have been compiled into Table PC-1 (see Crewe and Halewood books for PC airmail rates). The rates for “double” (two part) reply paid cards are not provided in Table PC-1, but they were twice those for single PCs. My thanks to Chi Ho Chan for noting that the 1880 1c PC rate to East Asian countries (list in Table PC-1) was replaced by the 4c UPU PC rate, when those countries joined the UPU on 1.1.95.

Two PC rates, which 1) are somewhat obscure, 2) are a bit too complex to be reduced to the abbreviated tabular format, and 3) for which no PCs at those rates were issued, are therefore also discussed in the pertinent (KGV) section. Both of these HK PC rates are based on Chinese rates that were reciprocated by HK. A 6c rate, for post cards sent from HK via China to other countries, was in effect from 1923 to 1930. A 6c franked PC is discussed and illustrated as Figure PC-7k. A 2.5c PC rate, which was applicable to paquebot mail handed in onboard vessels bound from HK to Canton and other Chinese ports, was in effect from 1932 to 1940. A 3c franked PC (rounded up from this 2.5c rate) is discussed and illustrated as Figure PC-7g.



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