

Bundi



The Sacred Cow Issue, 1915 - 1941

By Robert Goldberg

Stamps of the Indian Native States have had a long history of neglect, chiefly because of difficulties in classification and the limited amount of material available. Recent studies indicate that many provide virgin fields for philatelic discoveries. One of the most interesting in 20th century Indian philately is the "Sacred Cow" stamp of Bundi, first issued in 1915, overprinted for official use in 1918, and released perforated in 1941.

The first specialized study of these stamps was made in England, by Harry Burgess and C. T. Sturton, and I am indebted to them for certain information contained herein. The Scott Catalogue listing is completely inadequate, with some of the types listed in footnotes only. The Stanley Gibbons Catalogue listed the various types for the first time in the 1967 edition. The listing of major varieties is quite good, but not yet complete.

Eight major types have been

discovered to date. At least five different kinds of paper were used and there are three different types of overprints for Officials. There are many shades and various colored inks were used in overprinting. The 16 values of the basic set ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 2, $2\frac{1}{2}$, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 annas and 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 rupees) can easily be expanded into several hundred varieties, if the stamps can be found.

The market value of these stamps has been increasing steadily because of greater interest in them and the discovery of the scarcity or rarity of many of the types. Unrecorded stamps are still being found, more than 50 years after they were issued, and the discovery of a "one-of-a-kind" copy is still possible for any collector.

Design

The design shows the Maharaja Sir Raghubir Singh, a Bundi ruler who saved sacred cows from slaughter by a Mughal army. This symbolic scene is incorrectly described in Scott's Catalogue. The

stamps are typographed, printed by letterpress in sheets of four and rouletted in color.

Because of the limited postal need, printings were very small. Each new printing brought new types, papers and shades. None of these were purchased in quantity by stamp dealers. Only accidentally were some made available for collectors. My own copies of the scarce perforated Officials were found in a mounted packet of 1,000 different Indian states made up about 1941 in India. The dealer who made these up probably is responsible for whatever copies are available.

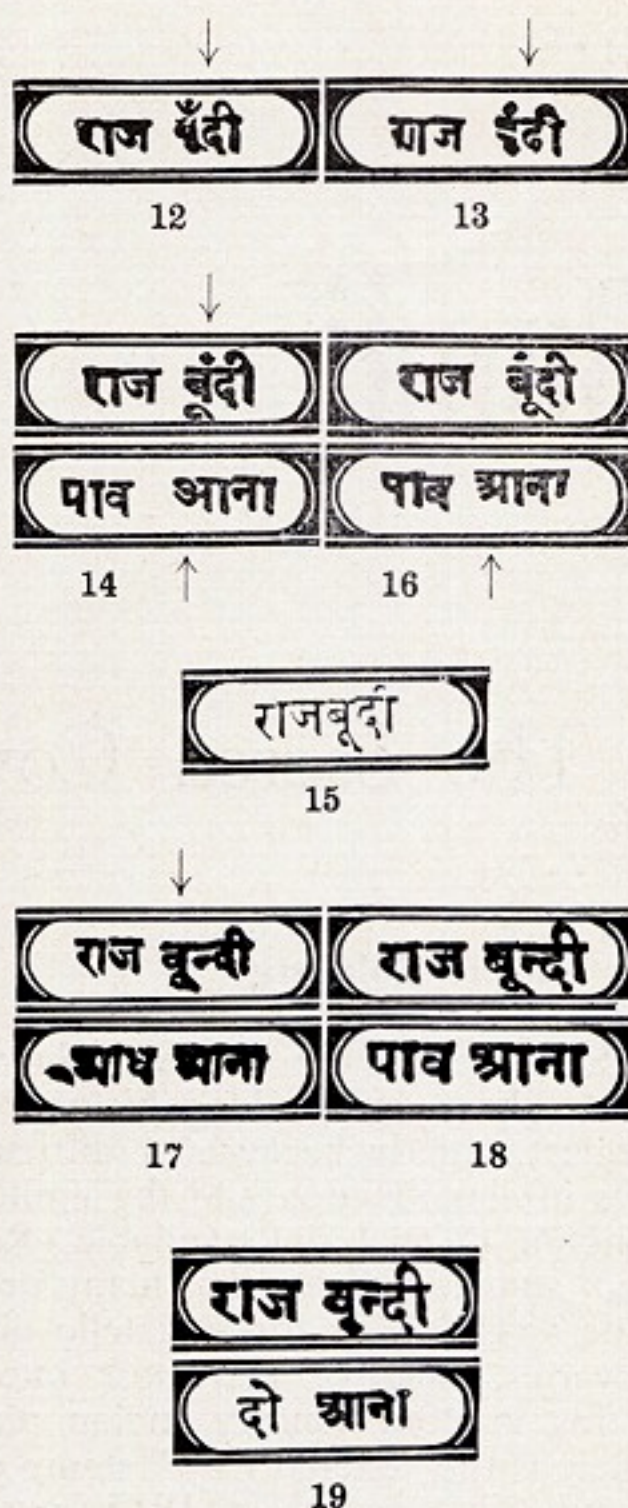
Types

The first type (Gibbons Type 12) is believed to be the first printing. It is distinguished by a dot over a semicircle above the first letter of "Bundi," the second (right) group of characters in the top label. The sheets of four in this type are known with the rouletting lines extending to the right. Values to 6 anna and 1 rupee are known.

The second type (Gibbons Type 13) is with the dot only over the same letter. This and the next are the commonest types. Values to 12 anna are listed by Gibbons, and I have a copy of the 1 rupee of this type.

The third type (Gibbons Type 14) has a tail at the bottom of the same character. It may be disconnected and would then resemble a loop under the letter. This type exists on all values to the 5 rupee except the 2½ and 3 anna. The 2 and 3 rupee denominations are known only in this type.

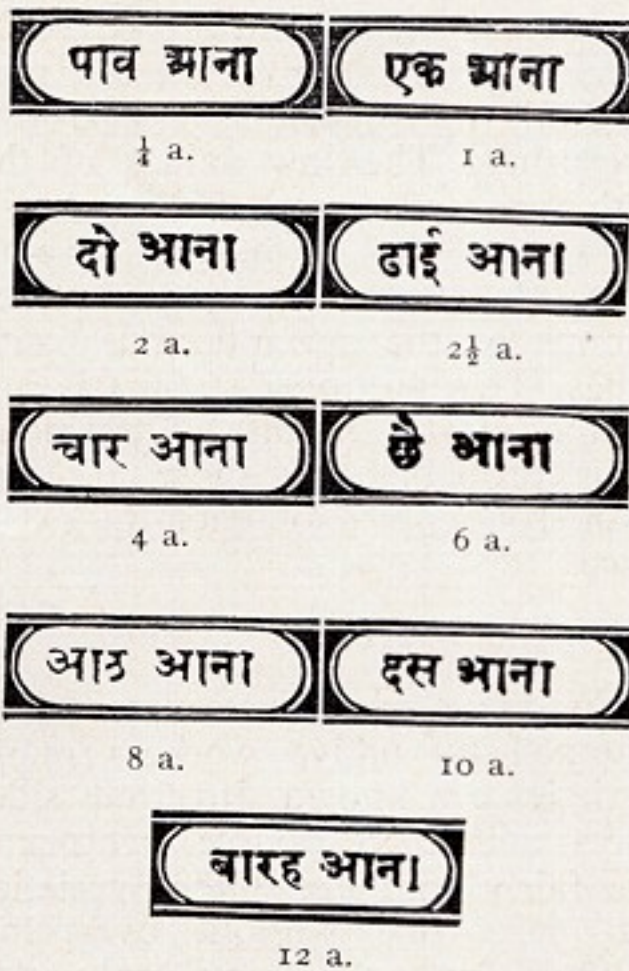
The fourth type (Gibbons Type 16) is easily identified since the top character is similar except that the first letter of the second word in the bottom tablet (anna) has



Types of the Bundi 1915-41 issue as illustrated in the Stanley Gibbons Postage Stamp Catalogue, Part One.

been changed. There is a straight line along the top which is the easiest identifying mark. Values are to four annas only.

The fifth type (Gibbons Type 15) has the top characters run together as if in one word. This type was listed by the Yvert Catalogue when no other types were recognized. It exists on only four values, the 2½, 3, 10 and 12 annas.



Denominations may be identified from these illustrations from the Stanley Gibbons Postage Stamp Catalogue. The $\frac{1}{2}$ a., 3 a. and rupee values can be easily distinguished by their color.

The sixth type (Gibbons Type 17) starts a new group all of which have a fourth character in the word "Bundi" at the top. The size of the letters is similar to the previous types and is known as the small lettering. It is found on the $\frac{1}{2}$, 1 and 4 anna values only, and is scarce.

The seventh type (Gibbons Type 18) has the same four characters, but in a larger and heavier lettering. The two words at the bottom may be found run together as one word. This type is found on four low values and the 4 and 5 rupees, which must have been a late printing. This is the last of the rouletted issues.

Perforated Issue

The perforated issue, the four low values to the 2 anna, comes in the same type as the last rouletted set with the larger and heavier characters.

The eighth type (Gibbons Type 19) is found on two perforated values, the $\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 anna. The top line is in the heavy lettering but the bottom line is in the smaller characters.

Se-Tenant Stamps

Sheets of four exist with two different types se-tenant. The second and third types (Gibbons 13 and 14) are listed in different combinations to the 8 anna in the Burgess study. I also have them in the 10 anna. The third and fourth types (Gibbons 14 and 16) are together on the $\frac{1}{4}$ anna and 4 anna in my collection. These are not recorded elsewhere. Burgess lists the $\frac{1}{4}$ anna with official overprints only.

Papers

There are five groups of papers:

1. Very thin pelure.
2. Thin transparent wove.
3. Medium wove.
4. Thick wove.
5. Laid paper.

The first three types are found in the thinner papers. The fifth type is on thin wove only. The fourth is on medium and thick wove. The sixth and seventh are on medium wove. The laid paper has been found on the fourth and sixth types only. The perforated stamps are all on medium wove paper. Gibbons lumps several of these together, but there are distinct differences.

Shades

There is a wide range of shades, particularly in the lower values.

The ¼ anna ranges from pale ultramarine to dark blue. The 1 anna goes from pale red to deep carmine. The 2 anna is found from pale emerald to deep green. Shades are almost as abundant on the other values. The ¼ anna exists in a slate black in Gibbons Type 16, but this is an error rather than a shade variety.

Varieties

Varieties have been found on only two of the types. On the fifth type, with characters run together into one word at the top, there is a 3 anna with dot at top omitted, a 10 anna with the fourth character turned to the left, and a 12 anna with a defective fourth character. In the fourth type, the ¼ anna exists in vertical *tete-beche* pairs, and the 2 anna and 1 anna exist in vertical pairs with one stamp printed on the back.

Official Overprints

There are three types of overprints, known as the native Hindi, the small British and the large British. The first two were applied to all values to the 5 rupee and the third to values to the 12 anna only. Not all types are known on all values, so there is still plenty of work to be done with this giant jigsaw puzzle. All four perforated values exist in all three types, though not all have been listed by Scott.

The first three types are the commonest. The four high values

are found in the third type (Gibbons Type 14) only, but are rare in both native and small British overprints. The low values of the fifth type are scarce. The rouletted stamps of the sixth and seventh types are rare as are the perforated stamps of the seventh and eighth types. This group of stamps is one of the most difficult to assemble. It is probable that there are less than 100 copies of each in existence.

Overprint Varieties

As these overprints were hand-stamped by native workers many varieties are known. Inverted, sideways and even double overprints are fairly common. Other varieties are pairs one without overprint, "Bundi" only, "Service" only, and various colored inks instead of black. Red is found on many values up to the 3 rupee and green on at least three low values. Scarcer varieties include *se-tenant* pairs with two different types of overprint, overprint on back, and pairs, one printed on the back, with overprint.

Used and Covers

All of the stamps, postage and official, are much scarcer used than mint. Making a representative collection of used stamps is an almost impossible job. Covers of even the commonest values are scarce. The scarcer values are almost unobtainable and many are unknown on cover.

बूंदी	BUNDI	BUNDI
सरविस	SERVICE	SERVICE

Overprints used for Bundi Official stamps.

Settings

There are many sheet settings which can be identified by the spacing of the frames, the spacing between the stamps and the placement of the various cliches. This is a study in itself.

Cliches

There are different markings on each cliche permitting ready identification. They were differently arranged in the various settings. Cliche markings on the later issues are prominent and easily identified. Among them are a recut lower frame line, the denomination in one word, and a small triangle at the left of the bottom panel. There are other markings as well.

Counterfeits

Surprisingly, this issue has been counterfeited, not only the better stamps but also the lower and medium values. This was done some years ago, so the counterfeiter was copying stamps with only nominal philatelic value.

The counterfeits are easy to recognize after a little practice. They have a muddy appearance and the

eyes are black blotches. Much of the detail of the original stamps is lost.

Unlisted Overprint

One last mystery is an unlisted "Bundi Service" overprint in small sans-serif letters about 2 mm. high. I have this on various values which are in my opinion on counterfeit stamps. I have heard and read of other examples of this type which are presumed to be genuine, but unless I see this on an unquestionably genuine stamp I can only consider it a forged overprint on a counterfeit stamp.

Cash Coupons

The same design was used on a buff cardboard and overprinted "Cash Coupon, Bundi State" in two lines, for use as currency during a shortage of small coins. The value was printed in English in the top panel. I have the 3 pies and the 1 anna.

The entire field of the 1915-41 issue of Bundi has been a continuing challenge to me and to other collectors who have tried to expand philatelic knowledge in this area. Why don't you try it?

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