

Chinese Fakes
By Rick Snow

There has been a huge influx of fakes from China in the past few years. In earlier times, the products coming from Southeast Asia were whimsical and curious. 1795 Trade Dollars, 1845 Bust Halves, Bust dollars with reeded edges. One of the ones where they got the date and type correct were not too deceptive because they looked like obvious cast fakes.

However, today the fakes that are coming out of China are very well made and some would certainly fool a collector buying a coin from a fuzzy image on eBay. They are even faking certified holders.

The Chinese counterfeiters do not operate in the dark. They are perfectly legitimate in their own country as businessmen making trade items. They are not bound by our copyright and counterfeiting laws except that there may be import restrictions they are bypassing by selling these directly to buyers here. To get around this, these coins have been shipped in bulk to sellers here in the United States in boxes marked "Machine Parts," for example.

These counterfeits show up at swap meets and places where they might trap the unwary beginner collector. If you see sellers offering these fakes, you may want to tell the show promoter.

They show up on eBay too. If you see any coin you suspect to be fake on eBay, please report it to eBay. Send a note to the seller and, if you like, to me as well.

The current pieces coming out now are no longer fanciful pot-metal jokes. They are die struck on planchets closely mirroring the original coin. Some take expert knowledge to detect. Others are clearly odd-looking under close examination and, from afar, they look too good!

Since these are die struck, there are numerous error pieces that get made, probably on purpose. Double struck, and off-center



Small coining press



Large coining press



Large coining press



Counterfeit dies

strikes are the most prevalent. Nothing seems to be out of bounds and their knowledge and ingenuity are improving.

I have heard that these can be bought for between 50¢ and \$3 at bazaars in the major cities in China.

The typical counterfeit Indian cent that I have seen are not too deceptive, but I am not sure they couldn't fool some less savvy collectors.

Here is an example of the crude type of Indian cents that have been showing up for many years. We all recognize that the date is not right - it's curved rather than straight, as all real ones are. These dies are probably lightly transferred and then enhanced by hand. After that, the date of choice is added and wholla! You can start your own home mint!

If you find any of these fakes, please post a link on the Fly-In Club forum so that others won't get taken.



Counterfeits waiting to be shipped.



1871 Indian Cent Chinese Counterfeit