

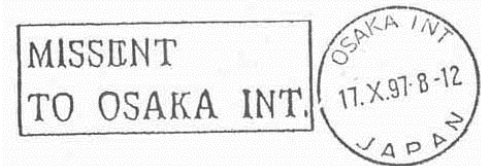
Ōsaka International Postal Markings

In the latter years of his life, the late Charles “Chuck” Swenson concentrated his philatelic research on postal markings, in particular the roman-letter postal markings that Japan uses to process overseas mail. He shared a lot of this research in the pages of JP and in two separate ISJP monographs. Always thorough, Mr. Swenson not only identified many different markings but also maintained comprehensive lists of all post offices at which each specific marking had been reported used, in particular noting any design aberrations.

An item recently acquired by ISJP member Pierre Tissot van Patot would have intrigued Mr. Swenson, as it has an example of both a previously unreported “Missent To” marking and a previously unreported instance of a cancel used for “administrative purposes”, both supplementing lists published by Mr. Swenson shortly before his death. The item in question is a registered airmail letter that was sent from Egypt addressed to Finland in 1995.



For some inexplicable reason the letter was sent to Japan, where it was processed at the Ōsaka International post office located at the Kansai International Airport. This post office processed the bulk of incoming international mail to Ōsaka, and on receipt of this letter applied a “MISSSENT / TO OSAKA INT.” handstamp to it in red ink. Although this handstamp marking has never been previously reported, its design is very similar to that of a label (right) that Mr. Swenson had initially reported at JP 61/17 and later at JP 64/392. The label was applied to a postcard sent from Spain addressed to the Netherlands in 1997 that had been mistakenly sent to Ōsaka.



Although the text of the handstamp on the 1995 letter and the label on the 1997 postcard is the same, the appearance and style of the words are markedly different, with the label looking very amateurish in comparison with the presentation of the handstamp. It does seem rather bizarre that a very professional-looking handstamp should be replaced with such a crudely designed label.

On the reverse of the letter is a circular datestamp applied at OSAKA INT (right) when processing the missent letter on “29 8. '95.”. In Mr. Swenson’s terminology it is a Single-Circle Roman-letter foreign-mail datestamp modified expressly for administrative purposes. The difference between Single Circles used for postal purposes and administrative purposes is that the latter do not have time intervals after the date.



This previously unrecorded example from OSAKA INT is the fifth, and earliest known, instance of a post office using such a modified Single-Circle datestamp for these purposes. The other four are also post offices that process (or processed) large amounts of incoming international mail. They comprise, with the earliest recorded usage in brackets: TOKYO AP (22 .II .97), Kawasaki Port (21 XII .01), TOKYO INT (23 .IV .11), and KAWASAKI HIGASHI (16 XII '15.). The formats of the dates are as they appear on each of the individual cancels and reflect the differences in appearance among the four post offices, each of which was responsible for

its own design rather than adhering to a national template. The OSAKA INT cancel is no exception, and displays a marked difference from the others by expressing the month in Arabic numerals (i.e., 8) rather than roman numerals (VIII). It also has an apostrophe placed before the last two digits of the Gregorian year, a characteristic that had been previously reported for only the KAWASAKI HIGASHI cancel. ■

