

## 1889 cover with interesting markings

by Zach Lawrence

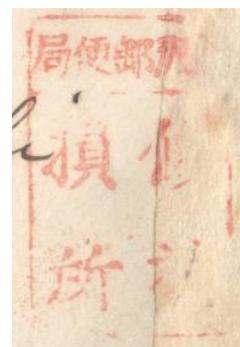
Late last year I purchased this cover (illustrated on page 37) on eBay. The cover was postmarked at Carlinville, Illinois on 18 March 1889, and addressed to Mrs. A. G. Taylor at Kanazawa, in Kaga Province, Japan. Alfred Taylor and his wife were sent to Japan by the American Presbyterian Church as missionaries in 1888, and remained there until 1893.<sup>(1)</sup>

It received transit markings at San Francisco on 24 March 1889 and Yokohama on 17 April on the back, and subsequently a receiver marking on the front. This receiver marking (enlarged at right) is a bisected-circle (*maruichi*) type applied at Kaga / Kanazawa on 21 or 22 April 1889. The dispatch index is 卜便 (*to-bin* or “7<sup>th</sup> dispatch”).



This cover has two additional and very interesting markings that are seldom seen. The first (enlarged at left), in red next to the Carlinville postmark, is a double-circle type reading 川支延着・金澤 (*Kawazukae-enchaku / Kanazawa* or “delayed by flooded river / Kanazawa”). Although it has the appearance of a double-circle type datestamp, it is in fact a “*jiko-in*” (occurrence marking like delay, disaster, etc.). It is also relevant that all the standard double-circle datestamp types had been discontinued after 1888.8.31.

The other marking, and arguably the more intriguing, is the boxed handstamp (enlarged at right) applied in red on both the front and back of the cover. Its text reads 修補・損所・金澤郵便局 (*Shūho / sonsho / Kanazawa yūbin kyoku*, meaning “repaired / Kanazawa post office”), and is a standard tie-mark found on repair strips and covers. Although paper labels introduced in 1885 were freely available for this purpose, these handstamps also continued in use until a much later period. Another interesting point about this cover is that the “repaired” marking reads 損所 *sonsho*, or “damaged location”, rather than the more typical 損傷 *sonshō*, 毀損 *kison*, or 破損 *hason* (all meaning just “damage”) found on most such markings.



The two kanji in the upper left corner (handwritten perpendicularly) read “Kanazawa”. The first two katakana characters in the next line read テイ (*tei* pronounced “tay”). While the rest would be expected to read ラア or ラー (*ra*) to complete the phonetic transliteration of “Taylor”, the lower portion appears to actually read ロル *roru*. This would make the name テイロル *Teiroru*, which reflects a direct transliteration of “Taylor” by someone who did not understand the phonetic values of the letters but copied the letters “lor” literally into katakana.

In conclusion, I would like to extend a special thank-you to both Florian Eichhorn and Ken Bryson for the translation and interpretation of the cover’s Japanese markings. ■

<sup>1</sup> Source: ISJP member Bernd Lepach’s excellent website *Meiji Portraits*: <http://www.meiji-portraits.de>

