

STORY OF A COVER IN TAIWAN

Ai Li-shan

My introduction to the efficiency of the Chinese postal service came in January 1968. At that time I had moved to Taipei from the United States, and shortly after was told this interesting story by another collector.

"A wife in Kaohsiung went to the train station very early in the morning to see her husband off to Taipei for business. To save money, he had taken the slow train (versus the express train at many times the cost). When the wife returned home, she was dismayed to find that her husband had forgotten the important papers that he must have in Taipei. She immediately placed the papers in an envelope and marked his name and the train number and arrival time in Taipei on the outside. As soon as the post office opened, she explained the urgency and mailed the papers by registered - prompt delivery mail. The post office sent the letter by express train to Taipei.

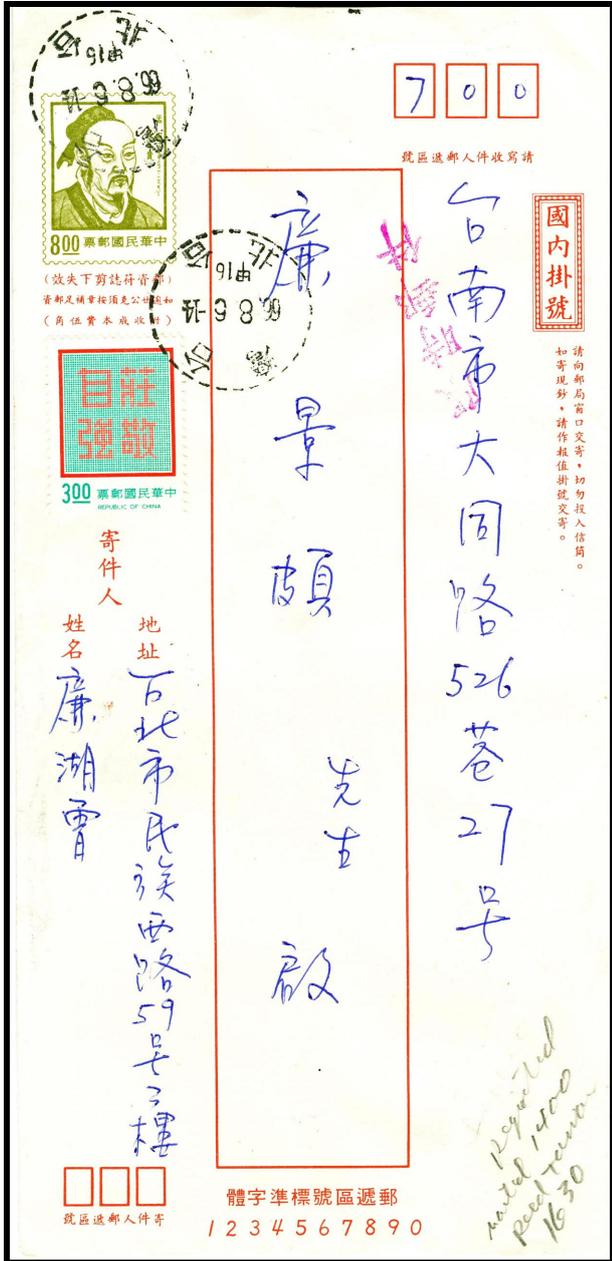
When her husband arrived at the Taipei train station, he was surprised to hear his name being called by a postman. He receipted for the letter and was surprised to find the important business papers since he had not missed them"

This story has of course been told many times over the years, with of course many versions!

In August of 1977 was living in Tainan and found that I needed some very important papers from a relative in Taipei. Time was of the essence since they were required as attachment to documents to be filed by August 7th. I telephoned the relative in Taipei and asked him to take them to the main Taipei post office (across from the train station). This was done, and he called to say that they were mailed at 1:50 p.m. I would like to point out that Tainan is approximately 268 km by air or about 308 km by road.

You can imagine my surprise when returning from work at 5:00 and found the letter had been delivered at 4:30 that afternoon! It must have been taken immediately to the Sungshan Airport for the domestic flight to Tainan. At that time, I believe there was only the one flight per day, landing at the Tainan Air Base (also serving as the commercial airport). Being a military airport, any passengers had to assemble at the China Airlines office downtown and take their bus to the airport. No one could drive to the airbase and be allowed to enter. Anyone meeting a flight waited at the downtown office for the arrival bus. I believe the plane arrived about 3:15 in the afternoon, but not sure of the time. The delivery address was located on the South edge of town, not far from the airbase.

I think we can all agree - Taiwan must have one of the most efficient postal services in the world! Here is the envelope with the appropriate markings:



Taipei main post office 1977.18.6 1400 hours

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郵
件

Time sensitive
Prompt Delivery

(an inquiry to the post office about the use of this chop in October 2011, came back with the response it was not a regular post office chop but private. However, it was applied by the post office). I have since found other offices using the same chop.



Receiving cancel Tainan 1977.8.6 1700 hours,
registered mail, cancel 3 on the reverse (in green)