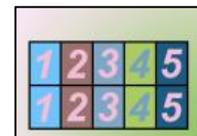




2018.9.3
Lighthouses 150th Anniversary



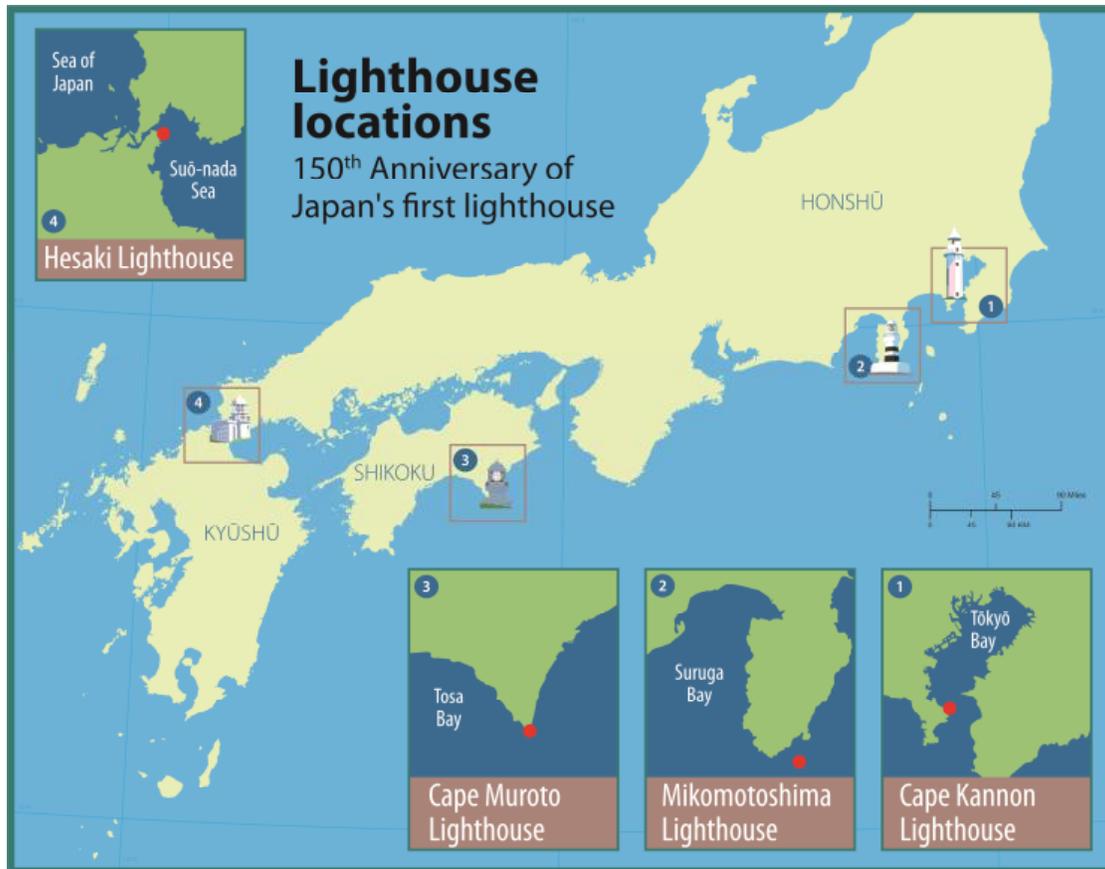
The opening of Japan to international trade in 1858 brought an influx of foreign ships whose masters complained about the lack of navigational aids, especially lighthouses, on the approaches to the treaty ports. Consequently, when Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the Netherlands signed a revised commercial treaty with Japan on 1866.6.25, they took care to write into it a requirement that “the Japanese Government shall provide lighthouses.....for the safety of ships entering and leaving the ports that have been opened to foreign trade”.

In compliance with this agreement, the Tokugawa shogunate began preparations to obtain from France and Britain both technicians and equipment for lighthouse construction, an obligation which the Meiji government agreed to fulfill following the imperial restoration. On 1 November 1868 (Meiji 1.9.17), work began on the first lighthouse, which was located on the western side of the entrance to Tōkyō Bay, on the tip of Cape Kannon. This lighthouse was completed just 3 months later and went into operation on 11 February 1869.

This original Cape Kannon Lighthouse was destroyed by an earthquake on 26 April 1922. Its replacement was completed on 15 March 1923, but it in turn was destroyed by the Great Kantō earthquake on 1 September of that year. The third and present lighthouse was completed on 1 June 1925. The ¥15 stamp that Japan issued on 1968.11.1 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the commencement of construction on Japan’s first modern lighthouse (pictured at right) depicted two illustrations of the Cape Kannon Lighthouse, the original 1869 version at left, and the present lighthouse at right.



This present stamp issue commemorates the 150th anniversary of Japan’s first modern lighthouse, although we’re at a loss to identify the significance (if any) of the 3 September issue date. The issue comprises five ¥82 designs (25.0 x 35.5 mm) by Kusuda Yūji arranged as five vertical pairs in sheets of 10 (5 x 2) measuring 168.0 x 115.5 mm. A total of 1.4 million copies of each design were printed in 6 offset inks by Joh. Enschedé Stamps. The titles of the designs do not appear on the stamps themselves, but in the sheet’s margin above each vertical pair. The description of the design of each stamp is numbered in accordance with the sheet layout.



**Design 1 →
Cape Kannon Lighthouse**

As mentioned in the introductory notes to this issue above, the 1968.11.1 stamp issued for the 100th anniversary depicted both the original 1869 Cape Kannon lighthouse and its present-day equivalent. Japan Post must have liked that concept as it has done something quite similar for this issue, depicting the present Cape Kannon Lighthouse in Design 1, and the original 1869 version in Design 5. One thing about the present lighthouse that was not the case in 1968 is its switch to remote monitoring in May 1989, which means that it has been unmanned since that date.



**Design 2 →
Mikomotoshima Lighthouse**

Located on small rocky islet about 12 km south of Shimoda Harbor in eastern Shizuoka Prefecture, the Mikomotoshima Lighthouse is accessible only by boat. Made of stone and painted with distinctive black and white horizontal bands, the lighthouse is 23.3 m high and the altitude of the light is 50.8 m above sea level. It was designed by British engineer Richard Henry Brunton, who also supervised its construction which began in the spring of 1869. The lighthouse began operations on 1871.1.1 (Meiji 3.11.11) and is the oldest Western-style lighthouse surviving in its original form in Japan. It was declared a national historic site during celebrations in 1969 marking the 100th anniversary of commencement of its construction.





← Design 3
Cape Muroto Lighthouse

Cape Muroto is situated at the southeastern tip of the island of Shikoku, at the southern end of the Anan Coast and the eastern end of Tosa Bay. Located at the point of the cape is the cylindrical cast iron tower of the Cape Muroto Lighthouse, which began operations in 1899. The tower is centered on a round 1-story cast iron keeper's house, which these days functions as a visitor center and museum. The lens suffered damage during a typhoon in September 1934, and later from a US aircraft carrier strike in March 1945. It was previously depicted on a 1966.3.22 Muroto-Anan Coast Quasi-National Park ¥10 stamp, but as can be seen from its reproduction at right, you need a microscope to see the lighthouse.



← Design 4
Hesaki Lighthouse

This is another lighthouse designed and constructed by British engineer Richard Henry Brunton. It is situated on a promontory overlooking the Inland Sea about 16 km northeast of Kitakyūshū in Fukuoka Prefecture, and marks the eastern entrance to the Kanmon Straits. It is Kyūshū's oldest lighthouse, having begun operation on 1872.1.22, just 10 months after the commencement of its construction on 1871.3.12. The 10 m high cylindrical granite tower has an attached 1-story semicircular keeper's cottage also made of granite.



← Design 5
Cape Kannon Lighthouse (initial version)

As mentioned in the description to Design 1, this design depicts the original version of the Cape Kannon Lighthouse, Japan's first modern lighthouse, which was completed in 1869 and destroyed by earthquake in 1922. This original version was also depicted on the 1968.11.1 stamp issued for the 100th anniversary of its construction commencement.



First-day cancellations: The officially designated first-day post offices were Tōkyō Central and Nihonbashi. Examples of the pictorial datestamps (both LCDs) applied at Tōkyō Central are shown below. The unframed (machine) datestamp, left, depicts the original Cape Kannon Lighthouse built in 1869 as it appears in Design 5, while the framed (hand) datestamp, right, depicts the present version of that lighthouse, but different from its portrayal in Design 1.

