

Cape Shionomisaki

Cape Shionomisaki is the southernmost point of Honshu, Japan's largest island. It is the point where the warm Kuroshio Current, originating in the Philippines, comes closest to the shore, allowing some of the world's northernmost coral communities to thrive.

At the tip of the cape is Shionomisaki Lighthouse. It was built in 1878 to guide ships safely past the rocky cape. It is one of Japan's first stone lighthouses, designed by Richard Henry Brunton, a British engineer.

In 1890, a Turkish ship ran aground nearby in Kii Oshima, killing 587 people. The local villagers were able to save 69 people and care for them until they could return to Turkey. This kindness has fostered a strong and long-lasting relationship between the two nations. The Kushimoto Turkish Memorial and Museum marks the tragedy.

The cape itself was once an island, created when seismic activity pushed two coastal terraces up from the seafloor. The land gradually rose from the sea, and it continues to rise five centimeters a year. Slowly, a sandbar built up between the peninsula and Cape Shionomisaki, connecting it with the mainland.