

Japan's Most Famous Surveyor: Ino Tadataka and his Iconic 1821 Map of Japan

John F. Brock

Brock Surveys Pty. Ltd.

brocksurveys@bigpond.com

ABSTRACT

Having examined famous surveyors and surveys from all over the world, it is not often that one encounters a country that was so proud of one of its legendary surveyors that it struck a postage stamp to him for his survey work. However, it was delightful to discover that the Japanese nation had dedicated an 80-yen postage stamp to their hero surveyor Ino Tadataka who had been responsible for surveying the country to provide the details for the first accurate map of its territory in 1821. Even though this large chart was published posthumously, he is rightly celebrated as the genius behind this masterpiece of cartography, having spent the last 17 years of his life personally walking (carrying heavy instrumentation and supplies?) and measuring the entirety of its coastal boundaries from the advanced age of 55 years, a feat commemorated in a play based on his achievement called “The Man Who Walked 40 Million Steps”. This presentation traces the life of this great man, highlighting the Edo Period of Japanese history along with the techniques and surveying equipment utilised by Ino and his survey teams to collect the measurements required to produce the first accurate delineation of the coasts of their nation. Along the way we visit Ino’s house, various museums and statue monuments honouring this surveying hero and his remarkable achievements in precise mapping during a time before GPS, drone and aerial photogrammetry and remote sensing from satellites. This presentation is based on a paper presented at the International Cartographic Conference (ICC2019) in Tokyo, Japan, which is available for download at <https://www.proc-int-cartogr-assoc.net/2/11/2019/ica-proc-2-11-2019.pdf>.

KEYWORDS: *Historical surveying, Ino Tadataka, Edo Period, 1821 Map of Japan.*