*Kaiji Hama* (Kaiji Beach):Star Sandand Subtropical Foliage

The subtropical vegetation along the coastline, among the few natural forests remaining in Okinawa, makes the beach area a rewarding spot to observe Taketomi’s diverse natural environment.

Each of Taketomi’s beaches – north, south, east, and west – has its own unique characteristics, but the most distinct feature hereis *hoshizuna* (star sand), which is made up of star-shaped particles.Theseare the remains of thesingle-celled marine organism *Baculogypsina sphaerulata* that are washed up on shore after becoming attached to marine vegetation. These creaturesgive the waters their emerald-greenappearance.

Folk belief has it that star sand brings happiness. According to an old tale from *Aiyaru Hama* (Aiyaru Beach), the tiny forms are the bones of baby stars that were eaten by a great sea serpent.Burningthem in an incense burner allows the star-children to return to heaven.

PLANTS (NB: Japanese romaji and hiragana for graphics positioning only)

**A)** Gajumaru がじゅまるBanyan (*Ficus benghalensis*)

**B)** Momotamana ももたまなIndian almond (*Terminalia catappa*)

**C)** Oohamahou おおはまほうHamabo hibiscus(*Hibiscus hamabo*)

**D)** Hasunohagiri はすのはぎりLantern tree (*Hernandia nymphaeaefolia*)

**E)** Terihakusatobera てりはくさとべらJapanese pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira*)

**F)** Soushiju そうしじゅAcacia petit (*Acacia confusa*)

**G)** Terihaboku てりはぼくBeauty leaf (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)

**H)** Sotetsu そてつCycad (*Cycas revoluta*)

**I)** Monpanoki もんぱのきCommon heliotrope (*Heliotrope arborescens*)

**J)** Adan あだんScrew pine (*Pandanus odorifer*)

**K)** Hamadaikon はまだいこんJapanese wild radish (*Raphanus sativus* L. var. *raphanistroides*)

**L)** Getto げっとうShell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*)

**M)** Gunpaihirugao ぐんぱいひるがおSeaside morning glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*)

**N)** Hamayu はまゆうSpider lily(*Crinum asiaticum*)