

## An Island Committed to Protecting Its Heritage

The landscape of Taketomijima (Taketomi Island) is the result of natural blessings merged with cultural traditions. The attractiveness of the carefully tended white sand roads, limestone walls, and red-tiled roofs is more than aesthetic. It is testimony to the will of the residents to preserve their community, along with the beaches, forests, and spiritual sites (known as *on*), and protect the island from overdevelopment. This commitment is spelled out in the *Taketomijima Kensho* (Taketomi Island Charter) adopted by the island in 1986 and revised in 2017. The *Kensho* lists five undertakings:

1. “Do not sell”: Do not sell land or houses of the island to people outside the island or lend them in a disorderly manner.
2. “Do not pollute”: Do not pollute any part of the island such as the sea, the beaches, and the villages. Furthermore, do not allow others to pollute.
3. “Do not disturb”: Do not disturb the aesthetic appearance of the villages, roads, coasts, etc., with advertisements, signboards or other things. Furthermore, do not disturb the island’s moral order.
4. “Do not destroy”: Do not destroy the unique rural community landscape or the beautiful natural environment. Furthermore, do not allow others to destroy it.
5. “Make full use”: Use traditional ceremonial events, the folk performing arts, and local industries as spiritual support for residents and to promote the island.

These principles were and are viewed by the people of Taketomijima as being vital to preserving the island’s traditional culture and natural environment for future generations.

Taketomijima’s residents welcome visitors, but the island is a small one, with a circumference of only 9.2 kilometers and a population of less than 400. In accord with the undertakings of the *Kensho*, visitors are requested to observe the following rules:

1. Taketomijima has many visitors. Please take any rubbish home with you.
2. Do not enter areas bounded by rock walls around houses. These are the residents’ private spaces.
3. The villages are where residents live their daily lives. Do not walk through villages in revealing clothes or swimwear.
4. Spending the night anywhere except in accommodation facilities is forbidden. You may not camp or sleep outside.
5. Flowers, plants, shellfish, fish, and butterflies are to be observed only, not touched. Each one is a tiny life.
6. *On* are sacred sites. Do not enter. Please understand the meaning of “sacred”.