

Naaji Kaa (Nakasuji Well): The Tale of the Dog's Wet Tail

The humid sea breezes and lush vegetation on Taketomijima may suggest abundant rainfall, but water, in fact, is the island's scarcest resource. The island has endured punishing periods of drought, and residents who dug *kaa* (wells) often found that the water in them became undrinkable when seawater seeped through the coral bedrock. An undersea pipeline laid in 1976 brings sufficient water from Ishigaki for daily needs, but *kaa* dot the island, and some are still utilized. This one, called *Naaji Kaa* (Nakasuji Well) after the village that once stood here, is used for ceremonial purposes such as *wakamizu*, drawing the first water of the new year, or splashing a newborn baby for their first bath. It is a sacred site that, according to legend, was discovered when a dog belonging to the village's founding deity, Arashihana Kasanari, was seen with a wet tail during an extended dry period, and led villagers to the source.