

The research aimed to determine how development may be promoted and sustained using community-based attributes such as tradition, culture and value systems. Taketomi Island, in the Yaeyama Island Group in Okinawa, was used as a model. The island was designated as a “District for Preserving a Major Traditional Architecture Grouping” in 1986. This designation strengthened tourism in the island which receives 420,000 to 450,000 visitors each year.

In spite of the success in tourism development and exposure to other cultures, the *tehdhunhito* (people of Taketomi) have managed to sustain their traditional landscape and way of life with little interference from the municipal, prefecture and national government.

The researchers have learned that the success of maintaining the island’s cultural landscape and surrounding environment is closely linked to the interrelationship between the *utsugumi* spirit and the religious beliefs and practices of the *tehdhunhito*. The word *utsugumi* is unique to Taketomi and means “collaboration as a way to survive in a bleak island”. Stovel associates *utsugumi* with “a sense of shared purpose...” Tomoko Uesedo explains it as “joining of arms and hearts to work together towards a single goal”. These values are instilled in the hearts and minds of the *tehdhunhito* at a very early age at home and in school.

The islanders do not regard the maintenance of the cultural landscape as a way of promoting tourism but rather, as a way to worship their gods. For the *tehdhunhito*, maintaining the beauty of the cultural landscape including the shrines (*utaki*), the wells, red-tiled houses, black coral walls, white sand paths, surrounding fields and the sea is a way of worshipping and giving thanks to their gods whom they believe visit these areas frequently. The islanders’ efforts have a greater meaning which sustains interest and commitment to support the community activity.

The same is also true for the festivals. The *tehdhunhito* dance in festivals not to attract tourists but to commune with their gods. Uesedo explains that “dancing is an offering to the deities. The offering is expressed in the movement of the hands and feet. The dance should be done with a feeling of constant gratitude lest the offering will not be communicated to the gods.”

In Capul Island, Philippines, the people practice a similar cultural attribute referred to as “*pintakasi*”. The term implies working together for the good of the whole community. The spirit of “*pintakasi*” is alive on occasions such as preparing and beautifying the surroundings before the town/barangay festival, repairing barangay halls or school buildings, clean-and-green programs of the local government, and many other works of similar purpose.

There is no record of the *pintakasi* being associated with the need to survive on the island unlike the *utsugumi* spirit. Also, unlike in Taketomi Island, there is no record of the *pintakasi* being linked to the belief system of the people. Further studies are needed on how the *pintakasi* can be encouraged and developed to approximate the *utsugumi* of Taketomi Island.

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* Abstract will be emailed to <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/10-conferences/sustainable-tourism-2010.html> in October 2009.