

Tokyo's Treasure Island... **Toshima!**

A Message from a Keika Girl!



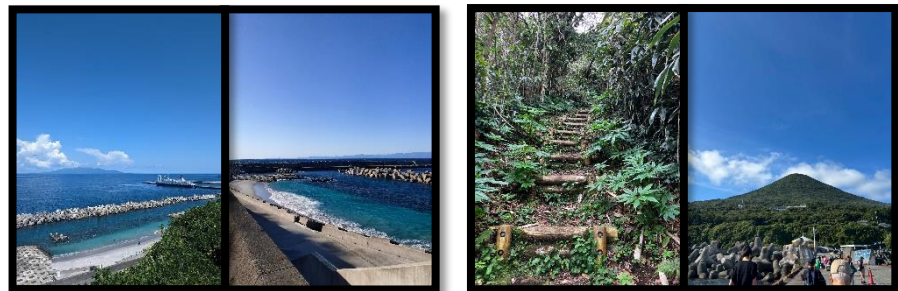
My Hometown



"Hello!"

I will start my presentation now. I will introduce my hometown. My hometown is Toshima. This is a small island in Tokyo. I moved to Toshima when I was a child. And I grew up on this island. There is no high school in Toshima. So, when we become high school students, we leave the island. And I entered Keika Girls' High School.

This island is a very fascinating place. I will talk about the good points of Toshima.



First, there is a lot of nature. There are oceans and mountains. In the summer, I play in the sea with my friend every day. We can see a lot of fish. In addition, you can see a beautiful starry sky in winter. When you lie on the ground, the stars look very bright. It is very fun.



Second, everyone is very kind. The population of the island is about 300 people. So, all the people know each other. On weekends, we eat together and watch movies. It is very enjoyable and happy.

**The
January
2026
Issue**

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this issue:**



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Treasure
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Toshima!**

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Student's
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Teacher's
Trip?**



Third, the local specialty is camellia. Do you know camellia flowers? [They are called *tsubaki* 椿 in Japanese.] We make camellia oil until the end of the year. Its production volume is among the highest in the country. Camellia oil is used by applying it to the hair and skin. In winter, camellia flowers bloom all over the island, turning it bright red. It's very beautiful. These are the charms of my hometown.



My friends from Keika visited the island this summer. The four of us stayed at my house. On the first day, we all got on the ship. We boarded the ship at 10 p.m. and arrived at the island at 7 a.m. We woke up at 4 a.m. to watch the sunrise over the ocean. I was very sleepy, but it was a beautiful morning.



When we arrived on the island, we first went to the beach and the pool. We were tired from the ship ride, so we slept on the beach. Then my skin got really sunburned. We played with elementary school students from the island at the pool. On the second night, we went to the mountains to see the starry sky. There were no lights on the mountain so we could see stars very well. The four days I spent with everyone were so much fun and happy.

I gave a presentation about my hometown. Toshima is a very important and beloved place for me. Let's all cherish our hometowns! And please come visit Toshima someday!

Thank you!"

XOXO,
A Keika Girl



Sheila's Dream Trip to Toshima Island?



In November 2025, I learned about Toshima Island for the first time. **Once upon a time**, I heard that there were some **mysterious**, far away **islands** in Tokyo... but I had never really thought about them. So, I was very moved to learn from our Keika student about her lovely Tokyo island **hometown**.

I love looking at the **sky**, so I really wanted to see a colorful **sunrise** over the sea and then the **twinkling** stars at night on the mountain. I love all types of flowers, but winter flowers like camellias are my favorites! Their red and pink **hues** are so bold! And when I studied abroad in Japan, my **host family** taught me how helpful *Camellia* *Japonica* oil can be for skin and hair. I thought it would be nice to buy some special oil from the **local** community. I also read about a famous shrine called Azusawake-no-mikoto, which is a New Year's Festival shrine on Toshima. I thought seeing the **dolphins** in the sea and play on the beach, I thought the festivals in winter would be better.



As you can see, after learning about all the unique and beautiful points of the island, I knew that I must visit! After all, the student said, "Please come visit Toshima someday!" right? So, I thought that **winter vacation** 2025 would be the best free time. However... there were a few **unexpected** barriers (バリア) to my dream trip...

First, in English, the place name is a little **confusing**! In Tokyo, there is Toshima Ward (豊島区, *Toshima-ku*) and Toshima Island (利島, *Toshima*), right? In Japanese, the kanji characters are very different... but in English, they are both just Toshima. So, international **visitors** must be very careful when **researching** them! If they just search "Toshima, Tokyo," they could get either!

Next, though the student explained how small the island is, I did not understand exactly what this means for life there. Things can be so different in the big **city** vs the **countryside**! The student said that there are no high schools on the island, so she had to move to **attend** Keika. She also said that there are only about 300 people on the island. Then, she said that she and her friends rode a **charming** overnight boat to reach the island. So, I knew a little, but I didn't realize that...

...the only ways to get to Toshima are by boat or by **helicopter**. There is a fast boat and a slow boat but all types of **transportation** are **expensive**. Also, you cannot bring big bags or certain **materials** on your trip. This is to protect the **nature** and people on the island and because there is not that much space on the boats and helicopters. Then, the boat and helicopter only come & go one or two times a day, so you must be very **careful** about time. If you make a **mistake**, then you can be **stranded**?!

What about hotels? Well, **according to** my research, because the island is so small, there are only a few places to stay. You must call far in advance. For restaurants, it seems like many are in local people's houses. So, the food is delicious and **homemade**, but you must call in advance as well. If you don't make a **reservation**, the family won't know that anyone is coming. What about just buying food from the **convenience store**? Well, it seems that there are no convenience stores on the island?! Websites **warned** me to bring any food or **medicine** I might need on my trip and to make sure to take my **trash** home with me. Of course, there are no trains on the island but **apparently**, there are no cars or buses there either. So, everyone gets a lot of good **exercise** walking!

Then, it turns out that although camellias do bloom in winter, their **peak** is closer to February. I also **realized** that I couldn't even get nice pictures with the flowers if I didn't find a friend to come with me! I think that if I went by myself, I would make a mistake and end up sitting alone in the cold on the beach or on top of the mountain all night long, waiting for someone to **save** me...

So, maybe with more time to find a friend, call hotels and restaurants, and book boats... I can finally visit Toshima Island for winter 2026! Wish me luck!

P.S. If YOU ever want to write a student story for the Keika Chronicle, then please talk to Sheila, Hrithika, or Anna! 😊

XOXO,
Sheila