Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Suno Community

Kasari area is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and the East China Sea, and has small mountains with altitudes of 200m or less running north and south. On the east side, here lies a flatland where sugarcane and semi-tropical fruit fields are cultivated, and livestock is raised. Kasari Bay, one of " 500 Important Wetlands in Japan," designated by the Ministry of the Environment, covers the west side. Many communities in Kasari area inherit their traditional performing arts, passing their unique culture from generation to generation through their daily lives.

※ The scale below is presented as an approximate guideline.

0Km 1Km 2Km 3Km 4Km 5Km

Legend

- Toilet
- Shower
- Parking area
- Rest area
- Barrier-free toilet
- Kasari Branch, Amami City
- Major Sightseeing Spots and Facilities

Amami City HP

Administration: Amami City

Suno

Suno Community is located near the east beach in Kasari area. Behind the community, there are wide fields of sugar cane, beyond which Suno Dam, the water resource for Kasari area, is situated.
Suno Dam is a perfect bird watching spot, and visitors can find a wide variety of birds including nightingales and Blue rock thrushes.

Suno *Hojyoromui*
(*Hojyoromui* is a honorific title for a heroic strong man)

The Suno and Yocommunities share a legend of two *Hojyoromui*. These two heroic figures, representing their own communities, did not wish to settle a fight by force. Both of them committed suicide by *harakiri*, leaving a will stating, "If our communities wish for conflict, bury us in the upper part of the river. Otherwise, lay us to rest in the lower part of the river."
Both communities chose the lower part to bury their *Hojyoromui*.
These heroic figures often emit, it is said, blue light and red light in Suno Community and Yo Community, respectively, to remind the community residents of their will for peace.

Noro Priestess Tomb (Kobiro Beach)

Omorosushi song book edited by the Ryukyu Kingdom (ancient Okinawa, 1429-1879), has a line saying "*heru kasari*," implying a relationship at the time between Kasari and Okinawa represented by Beru *Gusuku* (fortress) and Beru *Gusuku Udon*.
Suno has a number of sacred spots related to the Ryukyu-origin *Noro* priestess, and the tomb of *Noro* is one of these places.
At Kobiro Beach, a rectangular coral coffin and a tomb covered by textile screw pine trees (*Iauhala*) lie on a dune with an expansive view.
This is a sacred spot that the locals fear.

Itsukushima Shrine

Itsukushima Shrine is located on a hill with a wide view on the southeast side of Suno Community.
From the names in Suno, such as Sato, *Gusuku*, Saki Gusuku, and Daido, researchers have deduced that this place could have served as either a fortress facility, a disaster shelter, or a watch tower.
The shrine enshrines the sea goddess, and its summer festival, *Rokkatsudo*, has been admired by the local residents.
It is said there are approx. 500 Itsukushima shrines nationwide. Its origin is considered to have come from Benzaiten, a Japanese Buddhist goddess who originated from the Hindu goddess Sarasvati.

Hamajyoguchi

Communities facing the ocean often have *Hamajoguchi*, pathways to the beach. Suno Community, an old fisherman village, has a *Hamajoguchi*, too.
The pathway used to be an open wide sand beach with rich textile screw pine trees. Today, a seawall stands along the shoreline to protect the community at the same altitude as the sea level.
The community still preserves their *Hamajoguchi* thanks to the seawall.

***Foo Ishi* (giant stone)**

The Sunozaki Plateau stretches to the northwest side of the community with its base reaching some residential houses.
A large stone behind one of these residential houses is called "*Muri-no Foo Ishi*" (giant stone in the forest).
The stone is wrapped by trees growing on the beach.
This sacred place prevents people from cutting these trees.
Some trees fall when a typhoon hits the area, exposing the giant stone.
This area has been a place people fear and worship.

Kocchizaku

The Suno Dam contains *Kocchizaku*, Rankan Bashi, and Hachibira old road surrounding its lake.
Suno Dam was built between 1986 and 1998 at the height of 183m at the west side of Suno Community.
Kocchizaku was on the west side of the dam's lake. The area had rice fields and farmland, as well as old Suno community ruins, so it is said.

Rankan Bridge (Nanasaku Bridge)

A place called Ede once sank to the bottom of Suno Dam. It is said there was a Rankan Bridge (a bridge with rails) at that place.
Suno Dam consists of two parts: one for agricultural water and another for drinking water. Visitors can find a bridge near the division between the two. The plate on the bridge reads "Nanasaku Bridge."
It is thought there used to be old roads leading to Akakina Community and Yani Community from here.
Visitors can enjoy beautiful cherry blossoms near the dam in early spring.

Hachibira old road

The older residents recall, "during WWII, we saw off dispatching soldiers at Fukazaku, a place that looked over Suno, by passing through Hachibira old road from the bottom west side of present-day Suno Dam.
The old generation often express their wish to walk along the old path if it was still open. The Suno Dam lake holds old memories for senior Suno residents.