Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Sakibaru 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

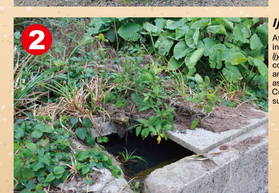
Administration: Amami City

Sakibaru

Along the coastline, Sakibaru Community has a perfect spot to view the New Year sunrise. The community has a New Year ceremony on this coastline in the early morning of New Year's day. The community's coastline is an attractive spot for fishers.

1 Cape Ayamaru, One of the "10Great Views of Amami"

Ayamaru is named after its circular shape resembling a ball (*mari*) made of twill fabric (*aya*).
It is said that local deities reside in the mountain at Cape Ayamaru, which is considered a sacred mountain, linked with the conception of Amami *Nirai* (paradise over the horizon) and the widely shared myth *Tenson Korin* (the descent on the earth by the creators). It is said that a holy temple stood at the top of Ayamaru mountain, where today's observation platform is situated. The entire hill at the cape was the ruin site of Ayamaru *Gusuku* (fortress) as is believed by the local people. The view from the cape is recognized as one of the "10 great views of Amami."



2 *Ijyungo* at Ayamaru

At the north side of the grass skiing field in Ayamaru Misaki Tourist Park, there is an *Ijyungo* (well) whose concrete water tank is covered by grass. This place used to be an *Amuigo* for *Yuta* priestess purification as well as a water resource for Sakibaru Community residents before the water supply system was established.

3 *Amuigo*

Visitors can find a unique and peculiarly mysterious stairway at the concrete wall in the parking lot by acycad cluster.
It is an add-on stair way built after the concrete wall blocked the pathway to the *Amuigo*. The stair way provided *Yuta* priestesses with access to their sacred *Amuigo*.
The island's religious space, representing the close relationship between nature and mankind, could not be maintained without such consideration of the people's local worship of nature.

4 Fujie Uemura and Kunitaka Sato

Amami Oshima has a number of legendary Shimauta (island folk song) singers.
Fujie Uemura, born in Sakibaru Community in 1929, was famous for her sophisticated song battles.
Kunitaka Sato, born in 1919, lost his eyesight when he was young, and was known as a wandering singer. People loved his deep husky voice with his harp and three-string *sanshin* (a guitar- shaped instrument).

5 *Kami Michi*

Visitors can find a unique and peculiarly mysterious stairway at the concrete wall in the parking lot by acycad cluster.
It is an add-on stair way built after the concrete wall blocked the pathway to the *Amuigo*. The stair way provided *Yuta* priestesses with access to their sacred *Amuigo*.
The island's religious space, representing the close relationship between nature and mankind, could not be maintained without such consideration of the people's local worship of nature.

6 Priestess' Prayer Site

A hearing investigation in Sakibaru Community revealed that people considered the Cape Ayamaru area as a sacred place.
The investigation also unveiled that it was a consecrated spot for *Noro* and *Yuta* priestesses to make prayers and purify themselves. Such sacred places are vanishing from Amami Oshima as traditional beliefs make way for modern life.
Some people are working to preserve the tradition.

7 New Year Sunrise Viewing Spot

The community residents say they have a perfect spot to view the New Year sunrise. While viewing the New Year sunrise from the top of Cape Ayamaru is considered the island's "standard," the locals in Sakibaru Community seem to prefer a view from their *Hamajoguchi* pathway leading to the beach.
Covered by tall beefwood trees, the place provides a beautiful scene of the ocean and the coastline.

8 Ayamaru #2 Kitchen Midden

At Ayamaru #2Kitchen Midden site, a number of kitchen midden ruins from a period between *Jomon* period (approx. 13000-2300 years ago) and *Yayoi* period (approx 800-400 century) were found in the dune in the cycad cluster.
The discovered artifacts, including potsherds, stoneware, and shell rings, indicate the ancient islanders caught fish and shell among the developed coral reefs and resided at the back of the sand dune.
In modern times, the dune was a place to obtain salt from seawater until the 1940s.