Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Setta 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
- Major Sightseeing Spots and Facilities
- Rest area
- Barrier-free toilet
- Kasari Branch, Amami City

Amami City HP

Administration: Amami City

Setta (*Shitta* or *Swita* in local dialect)

Setta Community is known for its Setta Mankai ritual, an intangible folk-cultural property designated by Kagoshima Prefecture. This traditional performing art, in which a male group and a female group sing songs alternately, was seen across all Kasari area. Today however, only Setta Community inherits this tradition, and all residents strive to preserve their folk-cultural heritage.

1 Setta Beach

The majority of the south side of Setta Community faces the ocean. The community consists of, from the north to the south: Shiroma, Inukawa (*also called Ingo* among the locals), Akaren (*Agare*), and Kominato (*Kuriyata*). Setta Beach has clusters of textile-screw pine trees (lauhala). People used to have *maaseebu* horse races as well as catch fish by driving them into an enclosed fence using textile-screw pine tree leaves.

2 New Year *Mankai*

This is a traditional event held on New Year's day of the Lunar calendar. The participants are grouped by their gender and sing songs alternately while gesturing invitingly. Three-stringed instrument *Sanshin* and handheld drum *Chijin* accompany the songs. While other communities used to have similar events, only Setta Community inherits this tradition. Kagoshima Prefecture designated Setta *Mankai* as an intangible folk-cultural property on April 22, 2008.

3 *Amandi* and Amamiko Shrine

Amandi is situated on Okariyama Mountain at a height of 180m on the north side of Setta Community. At the tip of its midslope, a stone monument was built in 1901 to indicate the first place where Amamiko deity came down from heaven. Down to the south, Amamiko shrine is situated on a hill in the community. These shrines indicate that the island inherits composite myths of *Tenson Korin* (the descent on the earth by the creators) and *Neriyakanaya* (paradise over the horizon).

4 Stone Monument

The narrow path running on the western slope of Amami Park's entrance was developed as the first route to Wano Community. A stone monument stands at Amami Park's side to tell this fact. The area is called *Mattsunuhira*, containing *Kami yama* (sacred mountain), *Kami michi* (deity's path), and *Kami kawa* (holy river).

5 Setta *Tachigami*

A giant rock approx. 20m tall situated in the ocean on the south side of Setta Community is called Setta *Tachigami* (or *Tachigan*). Setta *Tachigan* consists of three small *Tachigans*: The largest rock is known as *Uya Tachigan* (parent), the small rock is *Kwa Tachigan* (child), and the smallest is called *Maa Tachigan* (grandchild).
It is said night fishers often see *Kenmun-macchi* (mysterious fires) in this area.

6 Setta Stone Quarry

The mountains on the west side of Yo Community are collectively called "Murayama." Hachiman Shrine was built at the midslope of Murayama, which has long been considered as an elevated sacred spot. The deity of this Hachiman Shrine was enshrined from Arata Hachiman Shrine, in Kagoshima, in 1890 to protect the community which experienced serious damage from fire and typhoons in the Meiji period. The current shrine was rebuilt in 1936.

7 *Tachiganmui* (*Tachigami* Forest)

The forest area over the rocky place sticking out to the ocean on the south side of Setta Community is referred to as *Tachigamui*. Setta *Tachigami* is situated on the southern beach. Buried human bones are scattered around this giant rock, evoking fear among the locals.
In the 1980's, the community residents, trying to develop and organize the area to make a park, found a number of human bones. Although their park building project was abandoned, a cemetery park might be better suited for this spot.

8 *Kami Michi* (Deity Path)

There are two *kami michi*, on the east and the west, in Setta Community. On the western slope of Amami Park area, runs Kami Michi River along one *kami michi*. The bridge over it has the name of *Kami Michi* Bridge. The other deity path is found between Setta Community Center and Setta Nursery School. Setta is a representative community that illustrates the island's connection with deities, featuring the *Tenson Korin* myth, Amamiko Shrine, coral stone tombs, and *Noro* priestess tombs.