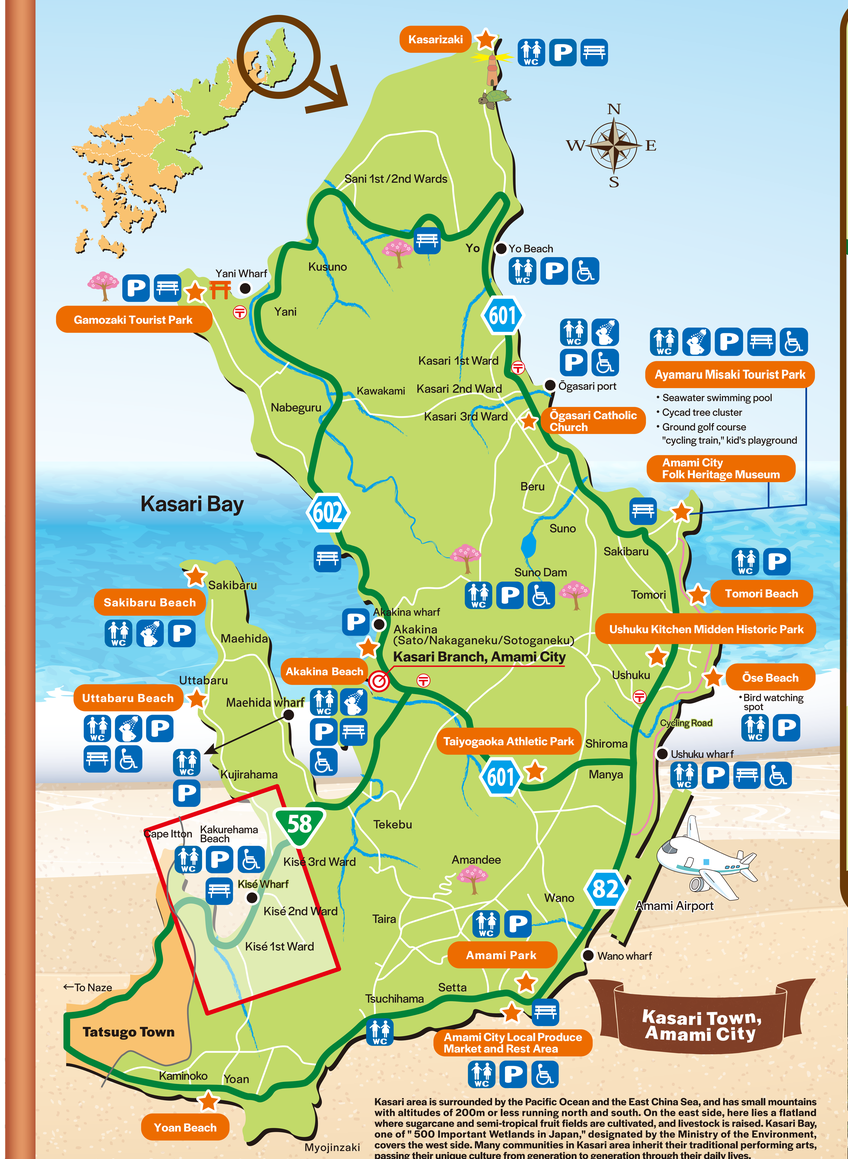
Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Kisé Community



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

Kisé 1st ward (Kisé)(*Kishi* in local dialect)

Kisé Community has its famous Kakurehama Beach, one of the designated unique community brands of Amami City. This beach, which only appears during low tide and the flood tide, is a popular spot among tourists. This is also the northern limit of *Derris trifoliata*, a tropical/semi-tropical plant. There used to be Kisé hogs, a local breed of Amami island hogs, but only the improved breed can be found today.

1 *Kocchi* (Kawauchi)

The area with a rich water resource between the mountains is called *Kocchi*. This is a kind of hidden spot in Kisé Community. The eastern mountain, called *Nanasaki* or *Nanandee*, has a number of streams, which allowed for rice farming in the valley area until the end of WWII. On the plateau on the north side of the community, Midorigaoka Elementary School, established by merging former Kisé Elementary Schoolry School in 1963, is situated.

2 *Chumawashida*

The plateau, called *Chumawashida*, where Midorigaoka Elementary School stands, has paddy fields on the north and west side, and a few residences are found at the bottom of the northern side. With its rich natural environment, the terraced paddy fields have an *Ijyungo* spring nearby. This water resource was widely known as *Chumawashida Ijyungo* until the community had their water pipes laid. The spring still rushes with rich water today.

3 Muntayama (Kisé *Gusuku*)

The mountain is called Muntayama and was the evacuation site in the event of a flood, the old locals say. While farm fields stretch at the top of the mountain, some residence remains can still be found. Artificial remains, including remains of a charcoal making shack, an earthwork relic, stacked stones, *Kamuyaki* potsherds from Tokunoshima island and celadon porcelain pieces, indicate the site shifted from a residence to a *Gusuku* fortress in the middle ages.

4 *Katabaru*

Katabaru refers to a floating island existing in the east side of the mouth of Miyakuta River. The place used to be a sandbank where young males and females had Shimauta island folk song singing sessions. Kisé singers had a distinguished singing style, called *Kishi-uta*, which implies the community residents were actively engaged in singing sessions.

5 *Nansaki* and *Ijyungo*

Nansaki refers to the curved area between Itton sub-community and Kisé Community. There are *kami michi* (deity path) and an *Ijyungo* spring along the road running from *Nansaki* on the Itton side to *Naano* mountains. The spot was a sacred site where *Noro* priestesses purified themselves as well as a water resource for people in Itton. People fear *Nansaki* area, saying a *Kubikiriya ufa* (headless hog) appears there.

6 *Naano*

There are *kami michi* (deity path) and an *Ijyungo* spring along the road running from western *Nansaki* to *Naano* mountains. At the top of the mountain, visitors can enjoy a panoramic view. While it is said *Naano* area is a holy mountain spot, no detailed academic research was conducted. People used to stop here for breaks while walking on the old road. The great view over the entire Kisé bay refreshes the visitors.

7 *Noro* Priestess Tomb

At the bottom of a mountain on the west side of Itton sub-community, there lies a rectangular stone coffin surrounded by coral stone plates, covered by a bush. Behind the bush, visitors can find the coffin with its lid slightly slid off. The shape of the coffin indicates it was a *Noro* priestess tomb, but the legend in the community says it used to be a checkpoint with samurai warriors who often cut people's heads here. This is the scariest spot among the locals.

8 Cape Shroura

(where people saw off soldiers going to war)

Prefectural road 58 runs through the south side of Itton sub community, making a large curve at Cape Shiroura at the border between Kasari area and Tatsugo Town. From Cape Shiroura, visitors can enjoy a panoramic view overseeing Itton sub community and Kisé Bay. During WWII, families of soldiers saw them off through their kitchen doors with a wish for their safe return, pretending as if it were just a normal day, and accompanied them to Cape Shiroura.