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 2nd ward (Sato)

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

Pakkemara Mountain

Pakkemara Mountain, 100m high, is situated at the center of the community. This mountain divides Miyata district in the north and Sato district in the south. According to one of the eldest residents, the name of the mountain comes after its shape resembling a penis. A myth says after a big flood occured a long time ago, a man and woman were the only survivors after evacuating to this mountain, and they subsequently built Kisé *(Kishi)* community.

2

Miyata *Gusuku (Tana Gusuku)*

The ridge spreading from Pakkemara Mountain westward gets narrower at a height of 45m, spreading out in a palm shape. The ridge forms a plateau at a height of 24m, filled with cycad fields on the *Gusuku* (fortress) site. There remain earthwork and stone wall remains, and celadon porcelain pieces from ancient China were discovered from the site. People fear this area for they believe *Kenmun*, a mythical monster, appears here.

3

Noro Priestess Tomb

The 20m high tongue-shaped plateau spreads southward. At the tip of the plateau, two rectangular stone coffins are exposed. One of them lies with banyan tree roots surrounding it, and visitors can find human bones inside. The locals say it is a *Noro* priestess tomb.
The spot is situated at a place where one can view over the community and Kisé Bay. The current graveyard lies underneath. The area from Pakkemara Mountain and *Gusuku*, and this *Noro* priestess tomb spot is feared among the community residents.

4

Tonochi

Visitors can enter the community by following the mountain road from Kisé graveyard leading to the bottom of Miyata *Gusuku*. The community is situated on the south side of the mountain, where there used to be wide paddy fields. The spot, covered by large trees, in the depths of the southern foothills of Miyata *Gusuku* is called *Tonochi*. This spot is one of the sacred places for the community people, along with Miyata *Gusuku* in the north, *Kamiyama* mountain (holy mountain), and the *Noro* priestess tomb.

5

Moori (forest)

The *moori* behind the community forms a round forest at the tip of a low ridge. The mountain behind is a part of 187m high *Nanandee* (Nanandake) Mountain where the upper stream of Kisé River runs through. The *Moori* is situated at a certain distance from the community. The ridge behind is covered by cycad trees, expressing a quiet mountain atmosphere. This is a sacred place for the locals.

6

Satongo (Sato River)

Two rivers, divided by the *moori* behind the community, merge in the community. While the bridge has the name of Kiségawa River, people in the community call this river *Satongo*. Each of the two branch rivers had a dam to draw water to the paddy fields. The water was used for washing vegetables and clothes, and the river mouth was a good spot for cattle bathing. The upstream is still the source for the community's water supply today.

7

Iiyungo

At the midpoint of northern bottom Munta Mountain, where a fortress site lies at a height of 25m, there is a common well called *Kubota's Hairosama*. The eldest residents say that collecting water was a job for children. They carried drinking water through a narrow footpath. This common well was reproduced by a group of volunteers.

8

Old Paths

There is an old path leading to Tsuchihama Community through the *moori* forest, paddy fields, and *Nanandee* (Nanandake) Mountain. The *Iiyungo* well located halfway, covered by natural tunnels formed by various trees, was a place people feared. "It took quite some time to hear a sound after dropping a stone down there," the senior residents say. "We never went to Tsuchihama Community alone through that path." The old path in the sacred *Nanandee* mountains refreshes people's body and soul. As the road is closed today, visitors can only see its entrance.