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 3rd ward (Ura)

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

Hyukkura

The border between Uttabaru and Kisé communities on the northern coastline of Kisé Bay is called Cape Hyukkura. Hyukkura, an offshore spot, is a fishing spot among people in Kisé, and small wooden boats transport people from the shore. While people could catch many fish, they often had difficulty reaching the spot no matter how hard they rowed their boats. It is said that *Kenmun*, a mythical monster, would shake the boat if one screams out of fear. The legend suggests people remain quiet when venturing out to sea.

2

Kisé Ura *Gusuku*

A residence remain was discovered in the middle to top part of 30m high Nagomata Mountain. Celadon porcelain pieces and Kamuiyaki potsherds from the 13th - 14th century were discovered at the site, whose northern side has collapsed. The ridge running to the mountain on the east side is blocked by two knot-like earthworks, and the other ridge is also blocked by earthworks. The southern side has a two-step edge, implying that a residence with defense functions once stood here.

3

Kishibuta (Kisé Hog)

People in Amami Oshima call black Kisé hogs "*Shimabuta*' (island hogs), which are essential ingredients for their New Year dish. Improved breeding of Kisé hogs was promoted in the post-war era. The Kisé hogs were the original species of today's Kagoshima black hogs. The island people refer to their hog species as *Kishiuwa* (Kisé hog). A typical female bears 10 - 12 piglets at once. People from other communities come to Kisé for these piglets. Cooked potatoes and fish are fed to the hogs, whose fat, in addition to the meat, tastes delicious.

4

Community Remains Site

There used to be a few residences in Tabukuro area in Kisé Ura, which were considered to be the origin of Kisé Ura sub-community. The place had paddy fields and farmland, close enough to the ocean, and the people had easy access to resources in both mountains and sea. In addition, a river and a water source allowed for a self-sufficient community. Today, the place is organized as a farmland, with cycad fields, some paddy fields, and part of a residence.

5

Old Path #1

From Nagazaku to Chumawashida, a route to the old Kisé Community site, there runs an old community road leading to Youan Community through Nanasaku peak.
A stream runs along the road, entering the mountains through the valley. Although this is an ideal road for nature observation, visitors should pay attention to venomous *habu* snakes in summer.

6

Old path #2

People used the old commuting road from Nagazaku to *Koochi* in Tekebu Community until the mid 1950's, taking and bringing cattle and horses between communities. The road went through a spot where a *Kenmun*, Amami's mythical monster, allegedly appears. The path has long closed today, and visitors can only see the entrance.

7

Naabama (Kakurehama Beach)

A few times a year, a sand beach appears from the ocean at low tide. People call this beach *Naabama*, and consider it a dangerous spot. At the edge of this beach, when it appears, one must beware of deep spots which may draw them deeper in the sand, similar to quicksand. Rare fish and seashell species can be found in the area.
(One of the designated unique community brands of Amami)

8

Gunmui *Sanshin* and *Kishi* Songs

People in Amami Oshima island often display their three-stringed *Sanshin*, *Chijin* hand drum, and traditional Nanko game board in the display area of their houses. *Sanshin* and *Chijin* are indispensable music instruments for Kisé Community's distinctive Shimauta folk songs and August Dance. Thus, the one who plays *Sanshin* - the leading instrument - sings, leads people to dance, and is considered to be a community leader. Gunmui was a legendary *Sanshin* maker, whose instruments today are called prestigious Gunmui *Sanshin*.