Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Yoan 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.

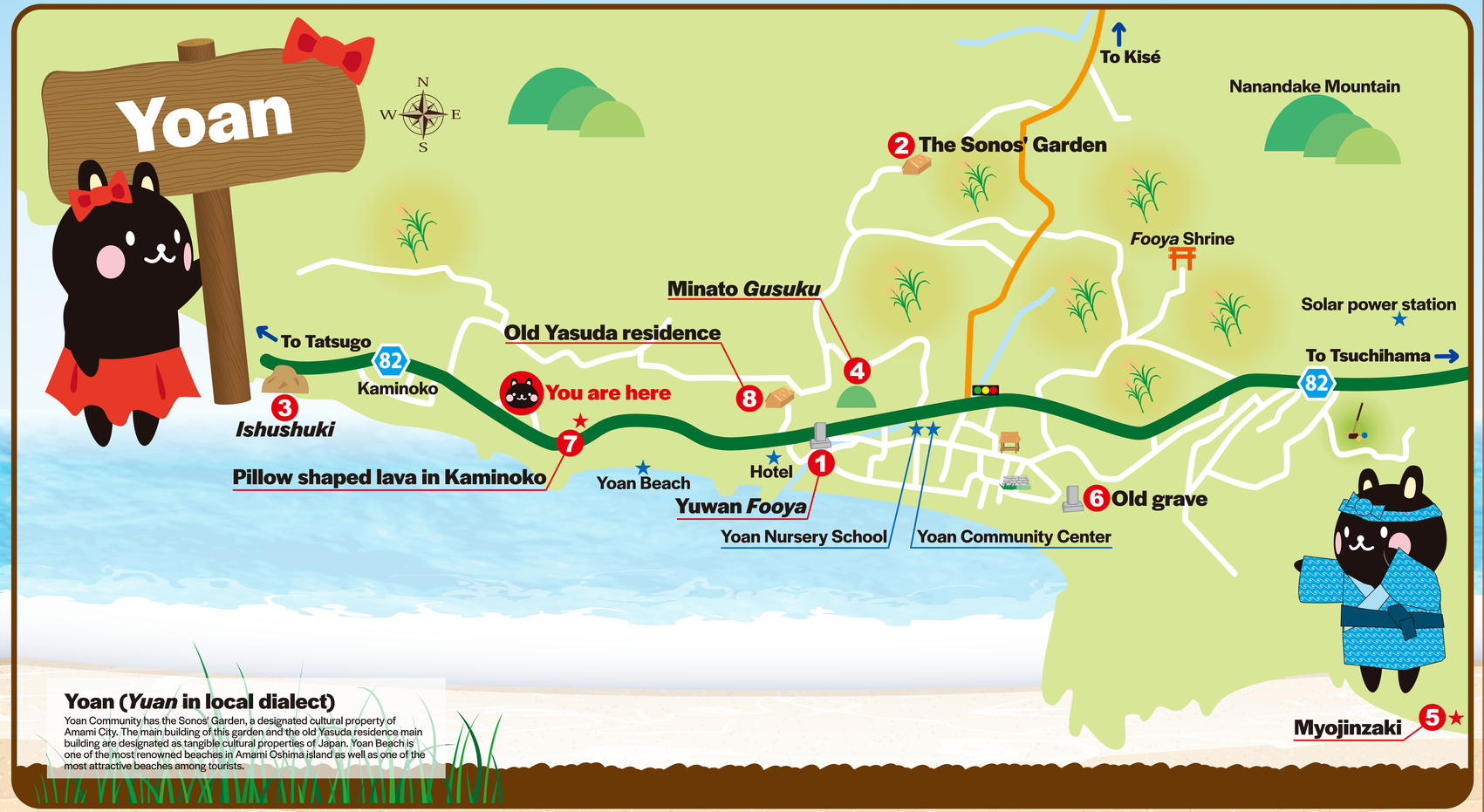
0Km 1Km 2Km 3Km 4Km 5Km

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



Yoan (*Yuan* in local dialect)

Yoan Community has the Sonos' Garden, a designated cultural property of Amami City. The main building of this garden and the old Yasuda residence main building are designated as tangible cultural properties of Japan. Yoan Beach is one of the most renowned beaches in Amami Oshima island as well as one of the most attractive beaches among tourists.

1 Yuwan *Fooya*

During the Ryukyu (Okinawa) reign, several *Fooya* officers were appointed by the Ryukyu kingdom. Kasari has Ushuku *Fooya* and Kisé *Fooya* offices and related *Gusuku* (fortress) sites. Yoan had Minato *Gusuku* and Yamato *Gusuku*, as well as a *Tofuru* tomb that is said to belong to a Yoan *Fooya* officer. A monument of Yoan *Fooya* is situated along the prefectural road near a tourist resort, Bashayama Village. Other variations of Yuan *Fooya* are found in Yuwandake Mountain as well.

2 The Sonos' Garden

The Sonos' residence, a compound consisting of the main building and annex, was designated as a tangible cultural property of Japan. The garden on the east side is a designated cultural property of Amami City. The building, featuring a hipped roof with steel sheet roofing, consists of a main room (8-tatami mats large), a bedroom and an annex. The complex illustrates Amami's representative and traditional architecture.

3 *Ishiushuki*

Running southward on the prefectural road, visitors would find an isolated *Ishiushuki* rock along the coastline near Akaogi Community. The rock is said to have been a fortress of the Yoan *Fooya* office to guard the coastline. Legends tell a variety of episodes: people collected stones to throw against enemies, and people threw stones at this rock for purification when they passed through this place as they feared this coastline.

4 Minato *Gusuku* (*Nyato Gusuku*)

Yoan Community had three *Gusukus*: Minato *Gusuku*, Yama *Gusuku*, and Foo *Gusuku*. They formed a complex to defend the coastline. Academic research was held at Minato *Gusuku*, located at a height of approx. 25m, in 1992 and a relic of a four-pole structure building was found. Celadon porcelain pieces with a twin fish design pattern, found at the site, indicate people at that time communicated with nations overseas, including China.

5 Myojinzaki

From Yoan Community to Tsuchihama Community, the tip of the large curve is called Myojinzaki. People walked along the coastline before the prefectural road opened. Myojinzaki was the most difficult place to go through at that time, and people feared Myojinzaki as they believed *Kenmun*, a mythical monster, would appear. On the other hand, the coastline has a beautiful beach and an archaeological site (Myojinzaki ruins).

6 Old Tomb (*Agare Baka*)

A small stream, *Agarego*, runs on the east side of the community path leading to the wharf. A few giant trees, including a banyan, stand at an elevated spot near the mouth of the stream. *Agare* Baka is situated among the roots of these trees. The rectangular graveyard featuring coral stones are covered by the roots of a banyan tree. The community residents fear and pay respect to this cultural property.

7 Pillow Shaped Lava in Kaminoko

The lava is exposed at the curve of the prefectural road between Yoan and Kaminoko communities. The lava was formed in pillow shapes when the lava ran into the ocean and the surface was rapidly cooled down by the sea water. While similar sites can be found across Japan, this site indicates there used to be a submarine volcano in this region.

8 Old Yasuda residence

The old Yasuda residence features a unique architectural complex structure from the late Edo period (1840's - 1960's). The main building has two rooms with iron plate roofing. Behind the entrance, there are two small rooms (4.5-tatami mats large) and one large room (10-tatami mats large) on the right. The old Yasuda residence was relocated to the current location from Yo Community in 2003. The property was designated as a tangible cultural property of Japan in 2007.