Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Sotoganeku 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

Amami City HP

Administration: Amami City

Legend

- Toilet
- Shower
- Parking area
- Rest area
- Barrier-free toilet
- Kasari Branch, Amami City
- Major Sightseeing Spots and Facilities

Sotoganeku (*Kaneku* in local dialect)

Akakina Community is a collective term consisting of Sato, Nakaganeku, and Sotoganeku sub communities. The origin of "*Hakina*" (Akakina) is not known, but some say it is from *Kina*, which means field burning. Akakina is one of the largest communities in Kasari area, and has been the political and economic center of northern Amami Oshima island. The community has a number of historical remains and sites.

Graveyard (Nyatojiri Graveyard)

A number of records of graveyards are found in Akakina, including the *Shumma*, Maeshimas' grave, Kannon-ji temple, *Sudageda Tofuru*, *Nyatojiri* grave, and Mente grave.
Under the Satsuma (mainland Kagoshima) reign, regular burial was introduced, replacing the island's traditional sky burial, and many graves were relocated to *Nyatojiri* graveyard (today's Kaneku graveyard). There were many island officers in the area, and their statuses were represented by the tombstones. Among such tombstones, each tombstone made of precious stones from Yamakawa and Kajiki in Kagoshima are said to have been worth approx. 540kg of sugar.

Coral wall

The coral walls in Sotoganeku are higher than those in Sato.
The senior locals say "The coral stone walls are hardly heated during the summer. They absorb wind and waves and hardly fall down during a typhoon. The brick walls are heated in the summer, and they are easier to fall down as they do not absorb wind and waves in a typhoon. We should pay respect to the wisdom of our ancestors." Wisdom for the island's everyday life is seen here.

Akakina (*Hanaki*) *Tachigami*

Referred to as *Tategami* in mainland Kyushu and *Tachigan* in Okinawa, *Tachigami* rocks are found among the Amami islands.
They are characterized by their offshore location and upright postures. The name *Tachigami*, or "standing deity," represents the islanders' worship to nature.

Mijyora Clay Pit for Roofing Tiles

Mijyora is situated on the north side of Sotoganeku, surrounded by paddy fields and farmlands in the mountains.
The *Mijyora* clay belongs to the Paleozoic strata, distinguished by its grayish brown color and viscosity. Some fossil remains of small seashells are found in the clay, indicating the site was a tideland. The clay was used for roofing tile manufacturing in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

Itsukushima Shrine

The origin of Itsukushima Shrine was Benten Shrine in Nakaganeku, located on the north side of Sotoganeku. After changing its name, the shrine was relocated to the current site in the late 1890's, enshrining deities of voyage, art, and easy child delivery. All of Sato, Nakaganeku, and Sotoganeku sub-communities have shrines in Akakina *Gusuku* (fortress) area on the north side of Akakina Community. The area represents the community's worship.

Sudageda Spring

113 residences have their own well in Akakina Community. Most of these wells were the sources for daily water. There were five wells that provided drinking water among three sub-communities. In Sotoganeku sub-community, *Sudageda Ijyungo* well was the one for drinking water. The well is still full of natural spring water, and people continue to use it.