Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Sani 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.

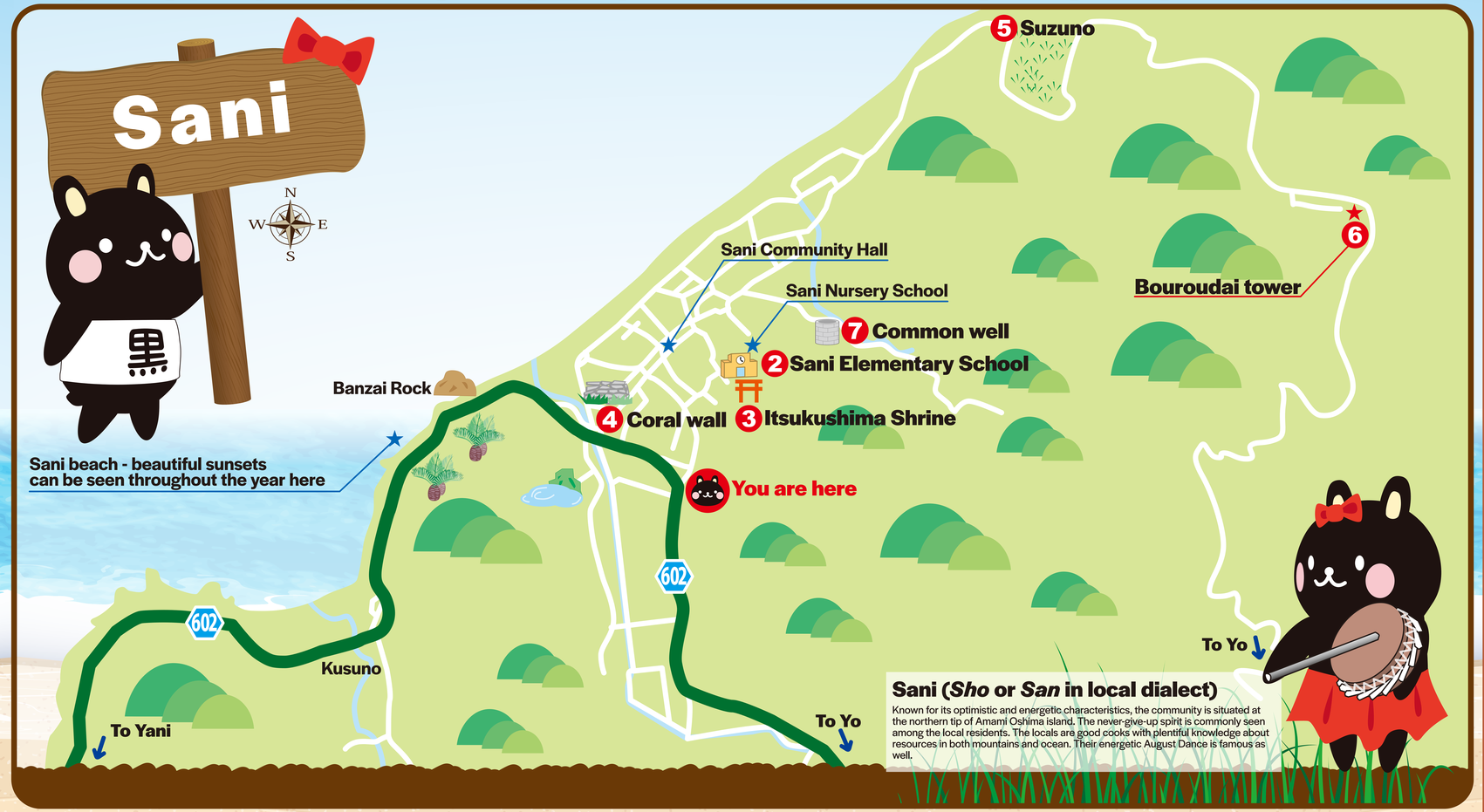
0Km 1Km 2Km 3Km 4Km 5Km

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



Sani (*Sho* or *San* in local dialect)

Known for its optimistic and energetic characteristics, the community is situated at the northern tip of Amami Oshima island. The never-give-up spirit is commonly seen among the local residents. The locals are good cooks with plentiful knowledge about resources in both mountains and ocean. Their energetic August Dance is famous as well.

Sani August Dance

Designated as an intangible cultural folk asset of Kagoshima Prefecture in 2011. In August of the Lunar calendar representing the beginning of a new season, the community residents visit each other's houses and dance on two occasions: *Arasetsu* (new beginning) and *Shibasashi* (purification). They dance to pray for safety, purification, and reposing the souls of ancestors. Today, the ritual is simplified and combines with a previously separate event, *Taneorosh* (harvest festival). The dance ritual/festival finishes with Amami's traditional up-beat *Rokucho* dance.

Sani Elementary School

(Rice paper butterfly rearing observation)

Established in 1879, and relocated to its current location in 1912. The school celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1980. With its long focus on education, cultural heritage, and environment protection, Sani Community has an educational policy passed down through generations, which merges children's school lives and their living environment. Since 2002, the school has been doing biological research and observation of rice paper butterflies (*Idea leuconoe*) as a part of its environmental education. The activity continues today under designation from Kagoshima Prefecture as a research collaboration school.

Itsukushima Shrine

Itsukushima Shrine, situated on a platform at Sani Aza Tobaru, is built on a ruin which is considered to have been a *gusuku* (fortress) equipped with a defense function. Its origin is unknown, however, the Heike legend in the northern part of Amami Oshima island implies its relationship with Heike clan's guardian deity "Itsukushima Jinja" shrine in Hiroshima. The shrine has been relocated a few times in the past, and has now relocated to the original location, enshrining a deity for safe voyage.

Coral wall

The coral wall represents Amami's unspoilt landscape. The structure of the coral wall demonstrates the high skills of craftsmanship in the old days. The coral walls were found everywhere in the community, serving as windbreakers and residential fences. Its number has decreased recently because the gaps between coral pieces are known to be pits for venomous Habu snakes and thus, modern concrete blocks are now commonly used.

Suzuno

Located in the north of Sani Community, the plateau on the east side provides a panoramic view to the visitors. The view includes faraway Tokara islands on a fine day. Farmland spreads on the hill, beyond which the white beach forms a coastline running north and south. The beach is an egg-laying site for turtles, and the community is actively engaged in its protection.

Bouroudai

The Imperial Japanese Navy had watch towers along Japan's major coastlines. From Cape Yo to Kasarizaki in Sani Community, the entire northern ocean can fit into one's field-of-view. The Imperial Japanese Navy soldiers watched ships traveling north and south from this point. A round piece of earthwork is left at the top of the mountain. Visitors can enjoy a great panoramic view, covering the ridge of Nagakumo Mountain in the south, the Pacific Ocean in the east, and the East China Sea in the west.

Common well

At the bottom of the mountain in Sani Community, there are a few common wells which were used in the past to hold spring water suitable for drinking. Another set of wells provided daily life water to the local residents. Water from the well regarded as the one providing the most delicious water was formerly used for the first offering of water in the New Year and prayers for rich harvest. A large broad leaf tree used to cover the well from above.