Kasari Area, Amami City Tale of Beru 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

Beru (*Buru* in local dialect)

Beru Community is famous for its beautiful sunrise from the horizon in summer as well as the heart warming full moon and falling stars on the 15th of the Lunar calendar. On the 1st and 15th of the Lunar calendar, the opening coral reef provides a good fishing spot for day and night in summer and winter, respectively.

1

Beru shoreline (*Kobore* rock)

At Beru shoreline, horse races and boat races used to be held.
The reef contains *Kobore* rock and *Tuzungomori*, a perfect deep marine playground for children. On the southern side, however, there lies a sanctuary the locals fear. The locals purify their community with incense and *Shutsukesuna* (shorefront sand) on January 15th of the Lunar calendar, praying for protection from venomous Habu snakes and household peace.

2

Twimi-gora

Beru has three streams that provide rich water resources to the community. *Twimi-gora* stream runs along the northern side of the community, *Buru-gora* stream was developed for the fields, and *Meikyo-gora* stream runs along the southern side. While all of them provide the residents with a daily supply of water, the residents hold fears against *Twimi-gora* stream as it is said a *Kubikirya ufa* (headless hog) appears along the stream. There is also *Dondongora* waterfall at the upstream of *Buru-gora*.

3

Utanchiji

Utanchiji is sacred spot located in an elevated forest on the southwest side of the community. The entire community can be viewed from this spot. There is a small shrine at the top of the hill. Steps are formed around the shrine, considered to have been remnants of a watch tower. The locals hold various community events, including *Rokkatsudo* (summer festival), a Sumo competition, and a rainmaking ritual at this location.

4

Cycad Bonsai (Potted Plant) at the Higos household

Beru Community is home to Buru *Gusuku* (fortress) plateau in the north, Sunozaki plateau in the south, and a swamp on the western mountain side, full of rice fields. And most of the hill area stretching to the mountain forms cycad fields, according to one of the eldest residents. Cycad was a popular plant among *bonsai* lovers.
The community developed the land for cycad fields. The Higos is a household famous for a rich cycad bonsai collection.

5

Amuigo

Sunozaki plateau, sticking out like a tongue on the south of Beru, is a border between the Buru and Suno communities. The edge of the plateauis feared by people in Buru and Suno as a sacred place. *Amuigo*, enshrining a water deity, is at the western slope, where *Yuta* priestesses purify themselves.
Today, few people become *Yuta*, and the spot is covered by bushes.

6

Kami Michi

There is a narrow pathway running to the top of Sunozaki plateau on the east side of *Amuigo*. Along the path, rows of banyan and cycad trees darken the area. The entrance of the pathway goes by a house, purified with white sands. The pathway is considered a sacred *Kami Michi*. As this pathway is a sanctuary for the island natives, visitors are encouraged only to look into the pathway from a distance, rather than stepping into it.

7

Coral wall

Beru Community consists of a newly developed block with migrated residents and a block rooted in old tradition.
The southern part of the community has a smaller number of households, with *Kami Michi* (deity's path), *Amuigo*, and a nest of *Kenmun* (Amami's mythical local monster). Some houses have coral walls covered by *Minko* (known as *Itabi* in mainland Japan, *Ficuserecta*), representing scenery of the good old days.

8

***Harmisha* rock**

Beru (*Buru*) Community consists of a few blocks: *Buru Gusuku*, *Hyango*, *Kanengo*, *Makko*, and *Nyato* (from north to south). The old *Buru* Community was located in *Buru Gusuku*, but the people moved to the Kasari and Beru communities after a big fire. *Hamisha* rock is situated along the shoreline forming the edge of Sunozaki cape at southern side of Beru Community.
The place has a footstep of a mythical giant, *Hojyoromui*, from Suno Community. The local residents also fear this spot as the mythical monster *Kenmun* appears at this place.