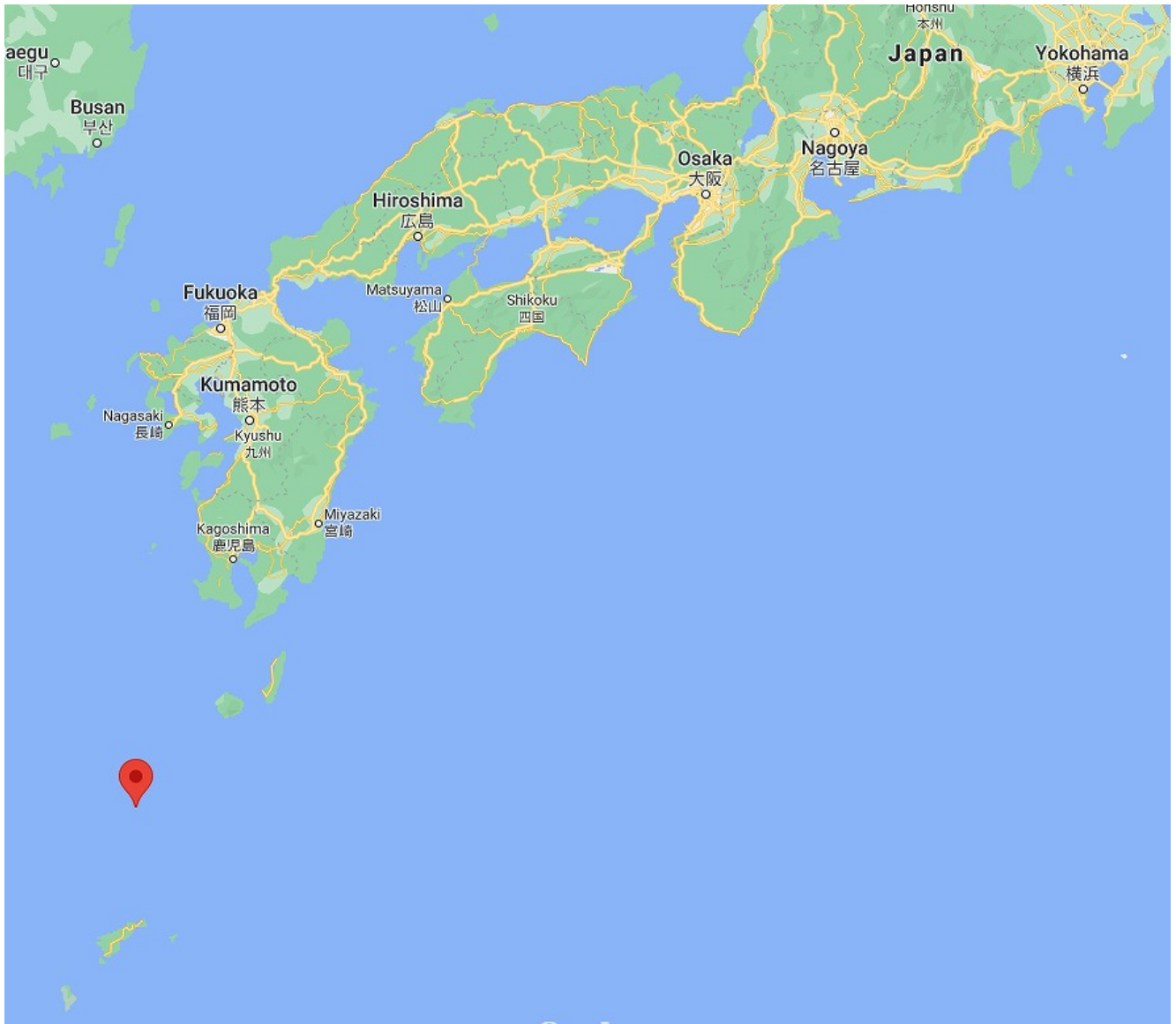
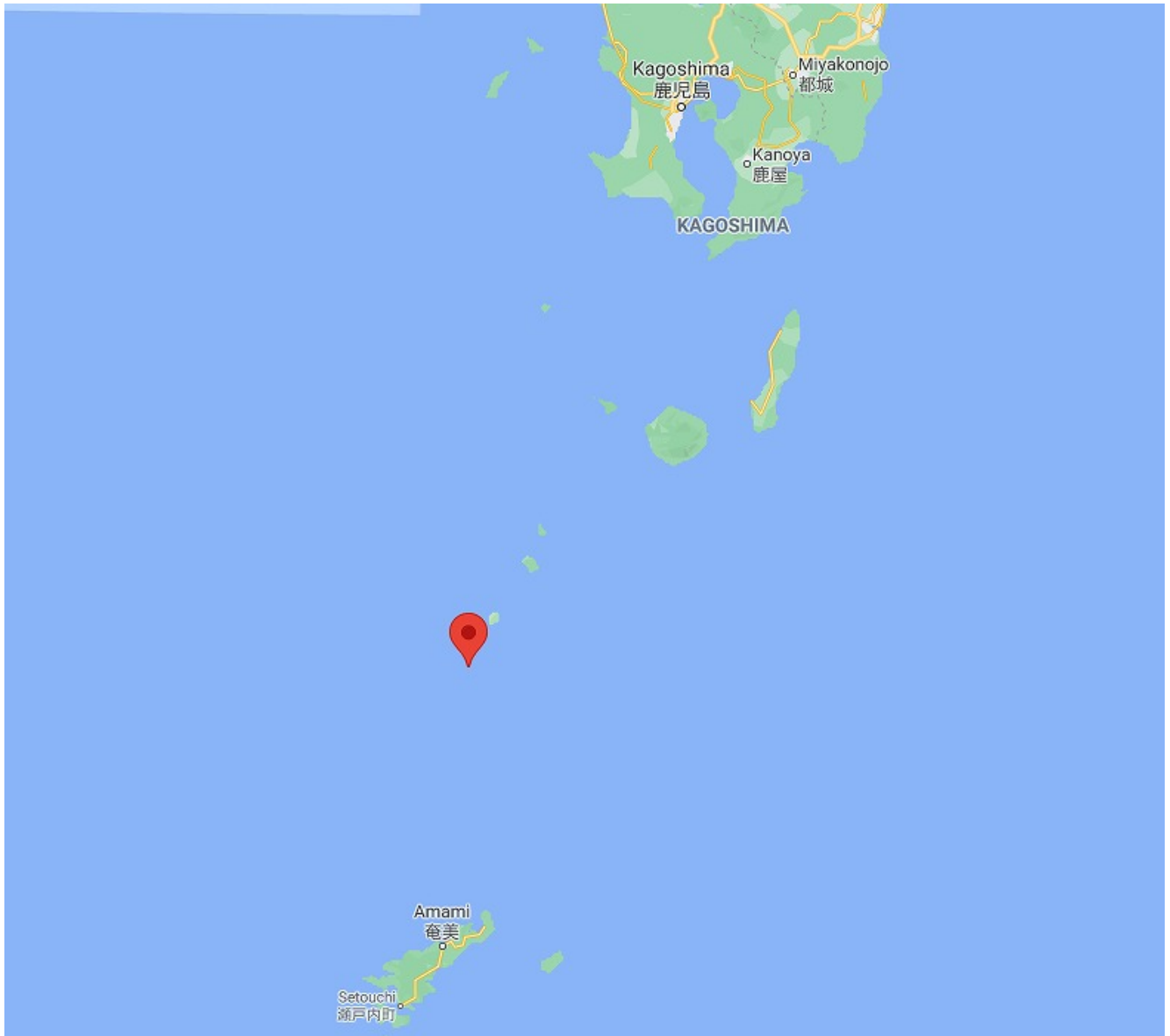


Boze ~The strangest visiting deity





Date: July 14 of the lunar calendar (around mid-August)

Location: One of the Tokara Islands, Toshima Village, Kagoshima County, Kagoshima Prefecture

Access: By air, from Kagoshima airport there is a limousine bus (1250 yen) to Kagoshima Honko Minami port. By train, from JR Kagoshima Chuo Station take the Sakurajima shuttle bus (160 yen) and get off at the High Speed Boat Terminal, or take a 15-minute cab ride from Kagoshima Chuo Station. Then take a Ferry from Kagoshima Port which runs twice a week.

Prologue

Boze is a strange visiting deity. Or maybe it's not even a

deity. It could just be a monster. He does not resemble any masked deity in all of Japan. Just by looking at his appearance alone, it is difficult to instantly determine which country he is from. Access is also poor. The only way to get there is by ferry, which only runs twice a week. Moreover, the season is typhoon-prone. There was a high possibility that even the ferry would be cancelled. Moreover, the ferry only takes 15 to 20 minutes to arrive. Still, there is no end to the number of people who are eager to see Boze every year.

Akusekijima (Akuseki island)

Akusekijima 隠岐島 (Akuseki island) is a small island with an area of 7.49㎢, a circumference of 8.8km, and an elevation of 584m. The population is about 80. As I briefly explained in the "Access", you need to be prepared to go here. The only ferry that goes to Tokara Islands (Toshima Village), where Akuseki Island is located, is the village-run ferry "Ferry Toshima", which usually departs from Kagoshima Port only twice a week. From Kagoshima Port, you can take the ferry that leaves on Monday or Friday. Each will arrive at the island the following day.

If you want to go to Kagoshima Port from the island, you can take the ferry on Wednesday or Sunday. However, it is highly recommended that you book your accommodation for the last day in Kagoshima if you live outside of Kagoshima, because the ferry arrives at Kagoshima Port late at night.



The island is also reluctant to engage in tourism. On the day of the Boze, all the people on the island come together to prepare for the Boze, and they shut down all the guest houses. This is the reason why the island has refused to allow tourists to come to the island. However, this changed in 2009 when the solar eclipse occurred. At that time, a very large number of visitors came and brought a lot of benefits to the island. Since then, the island has been actively accepting visitors during the Bose period. Nowadays, tours are also organized.

“Boze” festival

Usually people call it the Boze Festival, but it's actually a Bon dance. It is also a valuable dance that has been passed down from generation to generation and is unique to this island. The festival is held for three days starting on July 14 of the lunar calendar. On the evening of the last day of the festival, the masked god Boze suddenly appears.



<https://hanatsubaki.shiseido.com/jp/trip/622/>



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Boze wears a strange mask made of a bamboo basket with gods and other objects pasted on it. He wears leaves of a palm tree wrapped around his body. In his hands, he holds a stick called a “bozemala.” This stick has red clay on its tip.

At the end of the dance, they suddenly appear out of the forest. They chase the people around. Children and women are especially prone to attack, as it is believed that if they are poked with the sticks, they will become healthy and have children. Then, after throwing everyone around into confusion, he vanishes into nowhere. In the past, everything was burned down right away, but nowadays, they are left for while to take a photo with tourists later. The dance continues throughout the night.



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What is “Boze” ?



<https://www.kagoshima-kankou.com/event/20278/>

What is this “boze” that destroys Bon dance, causing chaos and leaving like a whirlwind? According to one theory, they are responsible for returning the souls of the dead to stay forever in the other world after life. Others say it is a way to purge the surroundings of the souls of the dead. No one knows the real reason now. The only thing I know for sure is that his appearance is nothing like any other masked deity in Japan. I think it’s worth a visit to check out the human imagination.

Escaping from the real world

There is also a rare hot spring here called Underwater Hot Springs. There is also a hot spring with a view of the sea. There is also a jungle-like walkway. Even if you wanted to go home, you couldn’t until the ferry arrived. You just get lost

in a different world where strange monsters rule. It's not a bad idea to have such a summer once in a lifetime.





<http://www.tokara.jp/tourism/profile/akusekijima/>