

# Rumor of Monsters



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## The Birth of Kudan umor

Kenji Sato

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# Rumors of the Monster called Kudan



- A cow with a human face
- It dies soon after its birth
- It speaks human language
- Its prophecy is always correct

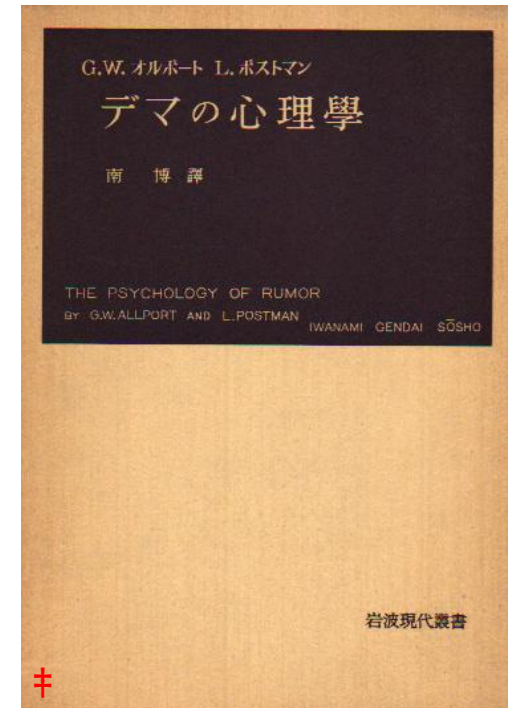


# Studies of Rumors



Cantril, H.,  
Invasion from Mars, 1940

Allport, G.A., Postman, L.J.,  
The Psychology of Rumor, 1947



# Allport's Classical Formula

$$R \sim i \times a$$

The amount of rumors   Importance   Ambiguity



# Allport's Classical Formula

▷Formula of  $R \sim i \times a$

importance

ambiguity

▷In message game,

leveling

emphasis

assimilation

▷Distortion by bias

A figure used in message game [Allport 1947]



→ established a theoretical basis for rumor studies in the 1940's and the 1950's



# Are Rumors False? Groundless?

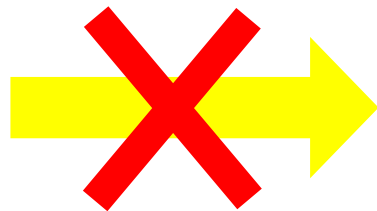
Rumor

s

To spread groundless rumors

Groundless  
Rumors

Irresponsibly spread groundless rumors.



False/ Wrong/ Groundless/  
Untrue/ Fallacious/ Conspiracy?





# Two Types of *Rumors* by Ikutaro Shimizu



✚ 1937

Ikutaro Shimizu, *Rumors*, 1937

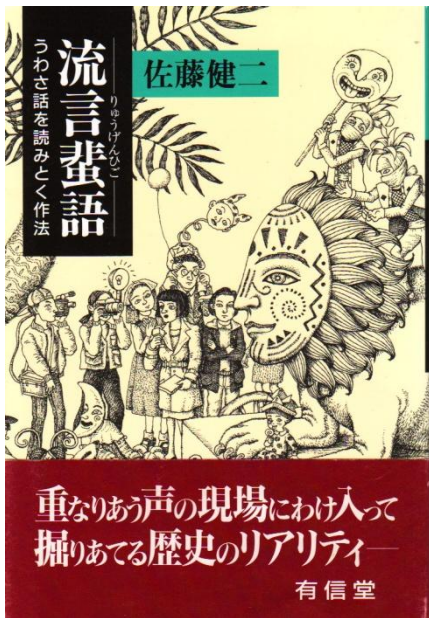


✚ 1947

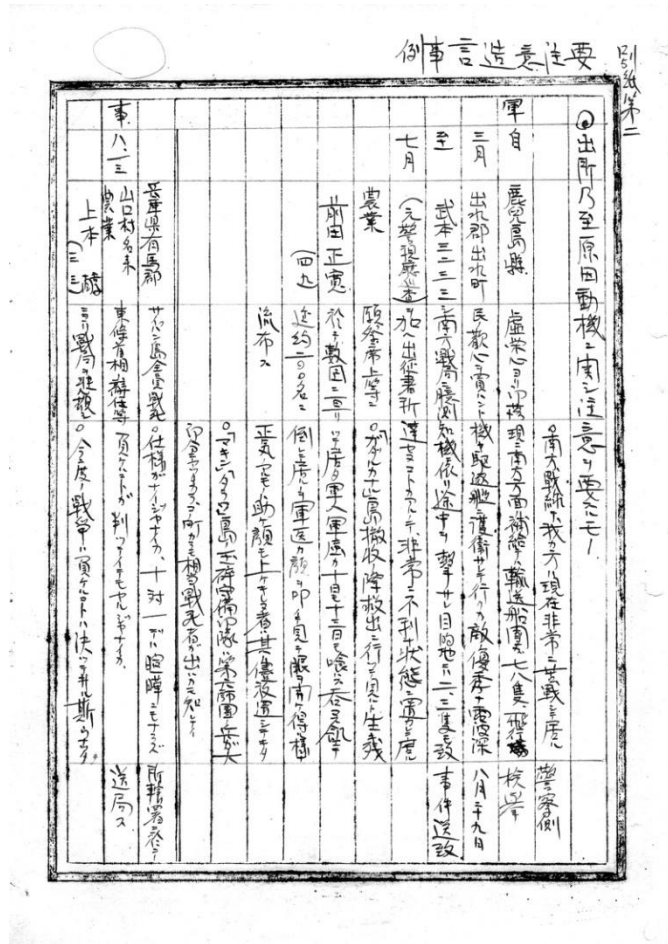
Ikutaro Shimizu, *Rumors*, 1947



# My Work on Rumors



Kenji Sato, *Rumors*, 1995



| <div style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 40px;">           祕         </div> <div style="clear: both; text-align: center;">             昭和十六年度<br/>見習工員採用適性検査           </div> |   |
|--|---|
| 志望部課 _____<br><br>職 種 _____<br><br>検査日時 _____<br>昭和十六年    月    日<br><br><div style="text-align: center;">             午前 _____ 時<br/>             午後 _____ 時           </div>  | <div style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;">             検 査 成 績           </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">1 _____</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">2 _____</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">3 _____</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">4 _____</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">評 _____</div> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>   | <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>  |
| <div style="text-align: center;">             受験番號 _____<br/>             姓 名 _____<br/>             生 年 月    大 正 _____ 年 _____ 月<br/>             出身學校 _____ 第 _____ 學 年<br/>             同 所在地    縣 _____ 市 _____ 町 _____           </div>         |   |

# Studies of Record of Rumors in the collection of Hajime Ikeuchi



# Basic Perspective

From Perspective of  
Media Studies

& that of  
Historical Sociology

I critiqued existing theories



# Six Characteristics in the Record

- ① This monster is called “Kudan”
- ② It is written “件”(half human, half cow)
- ③ It has a human face and a cow's body in drawings
- ④ It prophesies a big harvest or an epidemic
- ⑤ Information to avoid crisis
- ⑥ The concluding sentence of deeds is derived from this monster



# Analysis

| Materials                          | Rumor |   |   | Folklore |   |   | Newspaper<br>(today) | Newspaper<br>(old) |   |   | Essay |   |   |
|------------------------------------|-------|---|---|----------|---|---|----------------------|--------------------|---|---|-------|---|---|
| Contents                           | ①     | ② | ③ | ④        | ⑤ | ⑥ | ⑦                    | ⑧                  | ⑨ | ⑩ | ⑪     | ⑫ | ⑬ |
| (1)Name                            | ○     | ○ | ○ | ○        | ○ | ○ | ○                    | ○                  | ○ | △ | △     |   |   |
| (2)"Kudan" in<br>Chinese letters   | ○     | ○ | ○ | ○        | ○ | ○ | ○                    | ○                  | ○ | ○ |       |   |   |
| (3)graphical<br>Characteristics    |       |   |   |          | △ |   |                      | ○                  | ○ | ○ | ○     | ○ | ○ |
| (4)prophecy                        | ○     | ○ | ○ | ○        | ○ | ○ | ○                    | ○                  | ○ | ○ | ○     | ○ | ○ |
| (5)Oppositional<br>Magic           | ○     |   | ○ | ○        |   |   |                      | ○                  | ○ | ○ | ○     | ○ | ○ |
| (6)Origin of<br>concluding remarks |       | ○ |   | ○        | ○ | ○ |                      | ○                  | ○ |   |       | △ |   |



# Existing Theory #1

## Social and political insecurity and collective



ex. Lady with split mouth→ Insecurity in Urban Society?  
School horror stories→ Frustration with systematic education?

→Collective insecurity may be one reason  
But frustration and insecurity are everywhere





# Existing Theory #2

## Structural Ambiguity, Ambivalence



Confusion of classification  
Subversion of Order



Discrimination, deviation  
Adoration and exclusion  
Stigma

→ Cultural dynamism through anthropological explanation  
But it is not linked with “prophecy”



# Existing Theory #3

## Diminished power of religion, tradition and God

Religion Belief  
Traditional  
authority



Irrationality  
Oddness

God

Greek mythology  
Chinese classical texts  
Japanese mythology etc.

Weakened meaning system

Monster

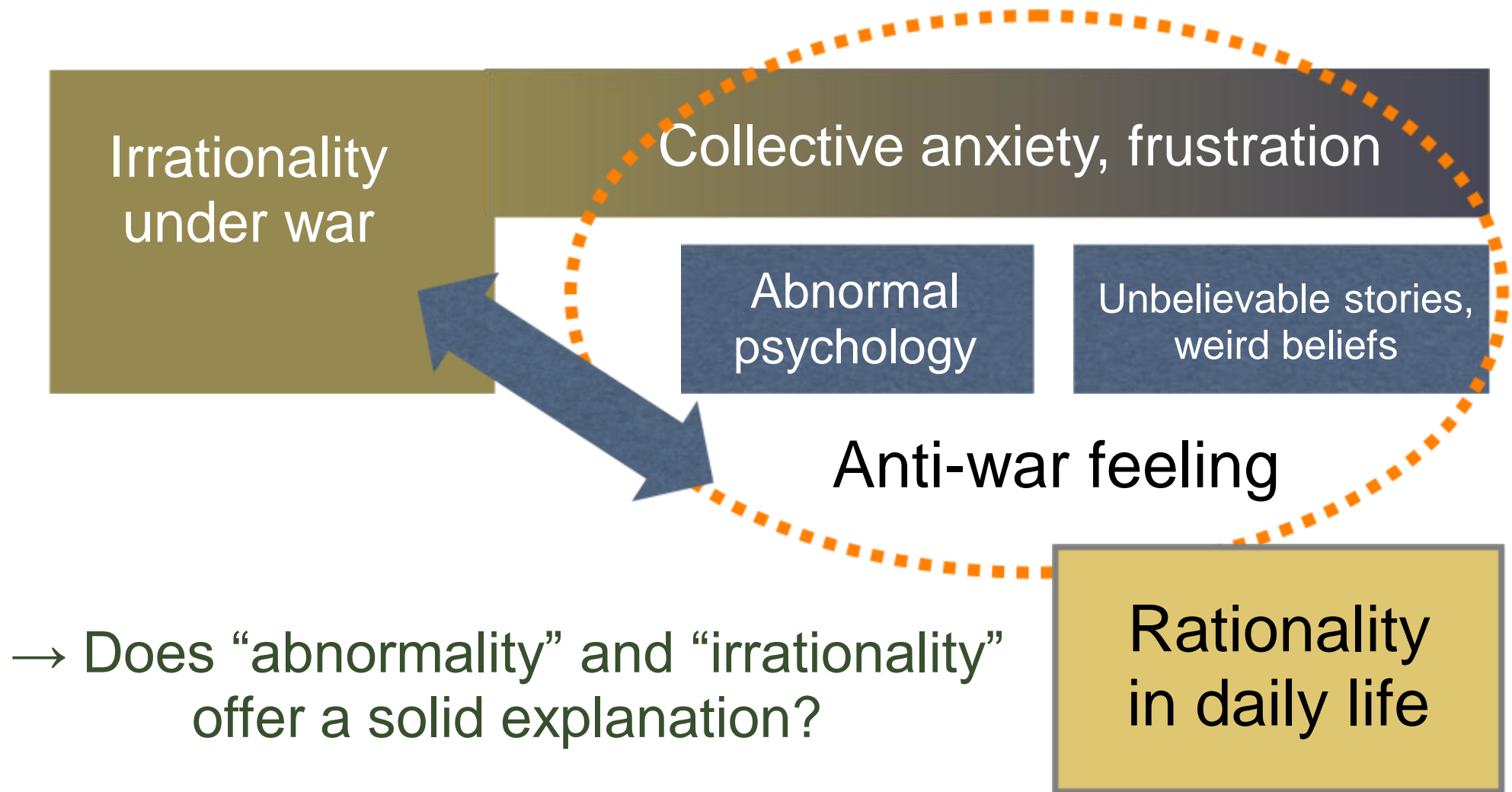
Ghost stories  
Urban myth  
Unbelievable stories etc.

→However, there is no such beliefs or traditions



# Existing Theory #4

Irrationality or non-daily life such as war



# 1) A society where literacy is important

Kudan is spelled as a combination of letter of “human” and “cow”



The Chinese character consists of human and cow





## 2) A contact-based society

The idea that Kudan prophecy originates from the knowledge and experience of contract

Contract



declare  
promise

predict

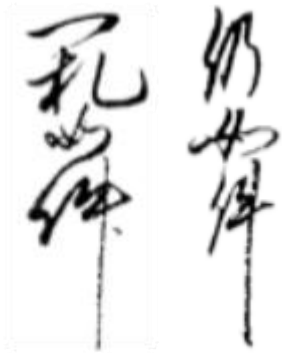


Future state



### 3) Knowledge as Voice, Level of Education

The usage of this phrase was fairly common



Everyone knows that this  
is a conclusive statement  
in a contract

In the manner of Kudan



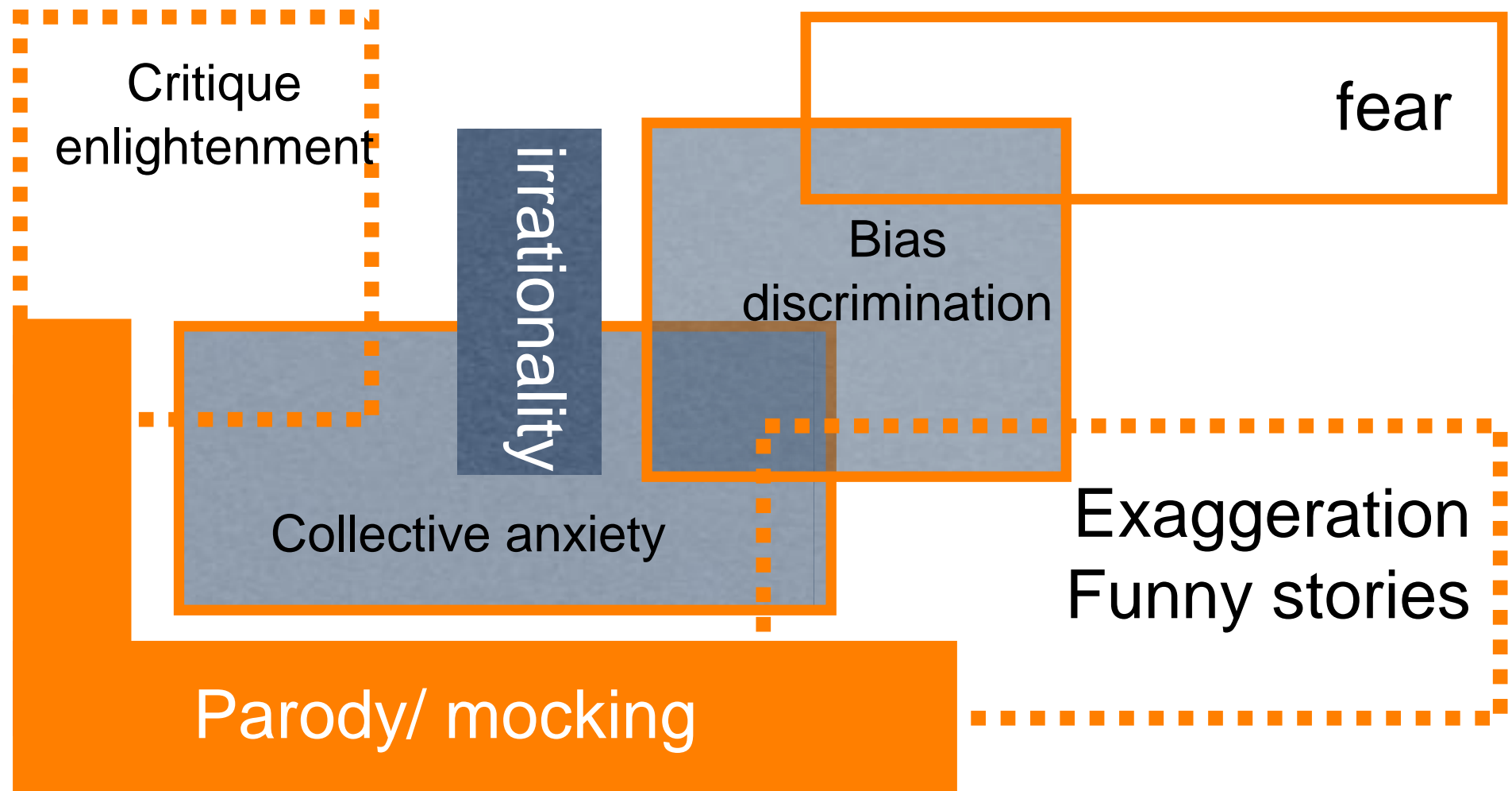
mystery = blank

Nobody knows why it  
is written

Blank in daily life  
A story as an explanation  
Room for explaining  
cause and effect



## 4) Game with Various Motivations



Rumor is a game with multiple motivations



# Parody (twist)





# Parody (twist)

豆屁

糞

臭い

健康

息災

家内まめべくそくさい延命うたがひなし



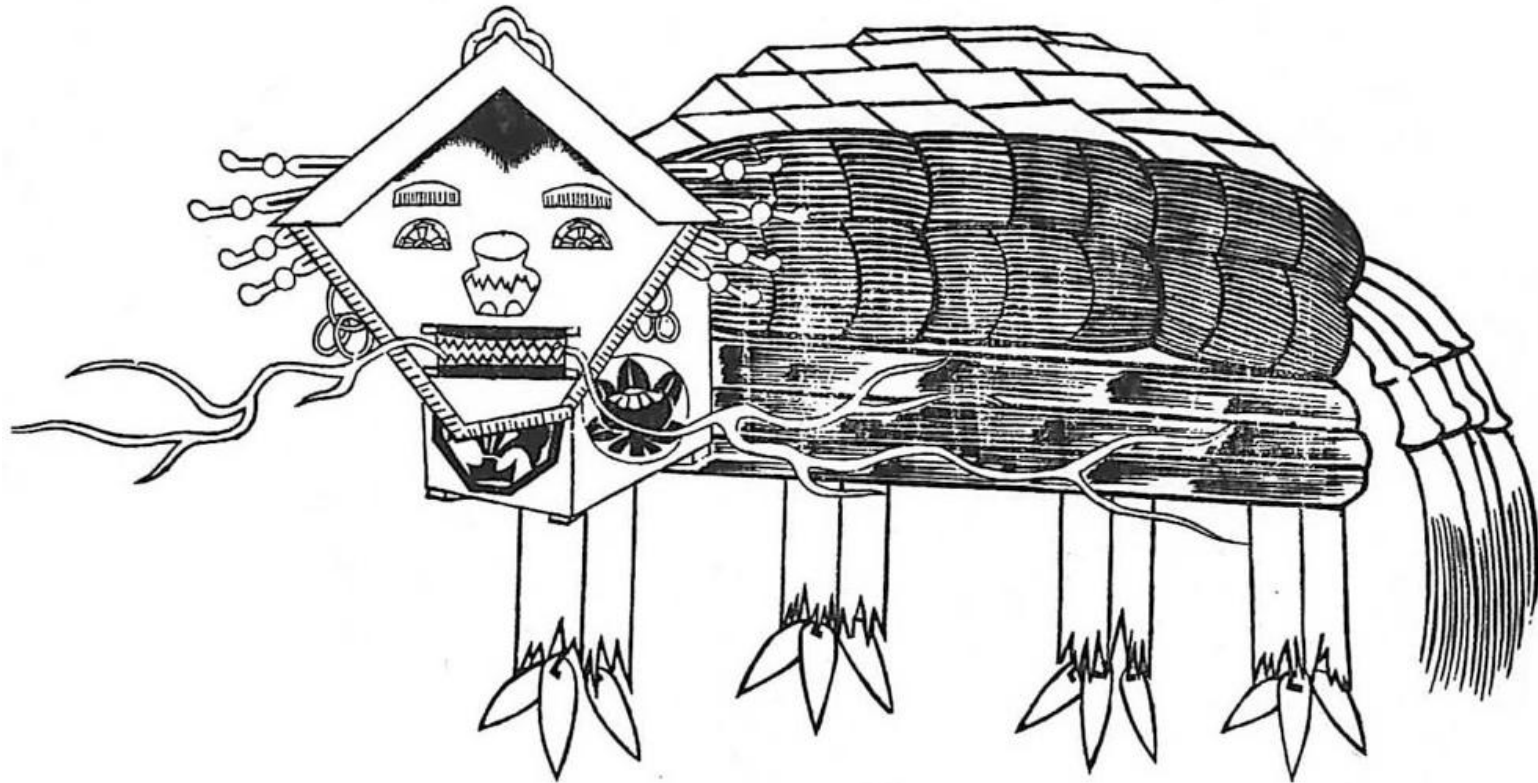
(healthy)

(safety)

Kanai mamebeku sokusai enmei  
(bean)(fart) (poop)(stinky)



# Parody (troublesome monsters & birds)



# Hidden Letter Game, Quiz, Word Game

Hand (te)voiced consonant

て

濁音

で de



Can you decipher this?

≧ я ё、ナよω τカゝレ、τ ㇿカゝわカゝレ) Ma&カゝ？





# Voice = Phonetically Thinking,

kudan

= Euphony of “Kudari” and “kudaru”

kudari

= Can be written as  
件・条・章  
terms

kudaru

= going down  
reading vertical lines



小品般若波羅蜜經卷第一  
姚秦三藏法師鳩摩羅什譯  
初品第一  
如是我聞一時佛在王舍城耆闍崛山中與大比丘  
僧千二百五十人俱皆是阿羅漢諸漏已盡如調象  
王所作已辦捨於重擔逮得已利盡諸有結正智解  
脫心得自在唯除阿難爾時佛告須菩提汝樂說者  
為諸菩薩說所應成就般若波羅蜜舍利弗即作是  
念須菩提自以力說為承佛神力須菩提知舍利弗  
心所念語舍利弗言佛諸弟子敢有所說皆是佛力





# Ending Remarks

