

Sensory/able Spaces-Space, Art and the Environment

Kenichi Nonaka and
Nozomi Yanahara

**A Method
of**

**Representing Human-Creature Relationship
in the Form of Geographical Illustration
Using Comics or Cartoons**

or

Manga in Japanese

Kenichi Nonaka and Nozomi Yanahara

The background features a detailed line drawing of a human head in profile, facing left. The drawing is overlaid with various botanical and anatomical elements, including leaves, flowers, and what appears to be a cross-section of a brain or internal organ. The overall style is that of a scientific or medical illustration.

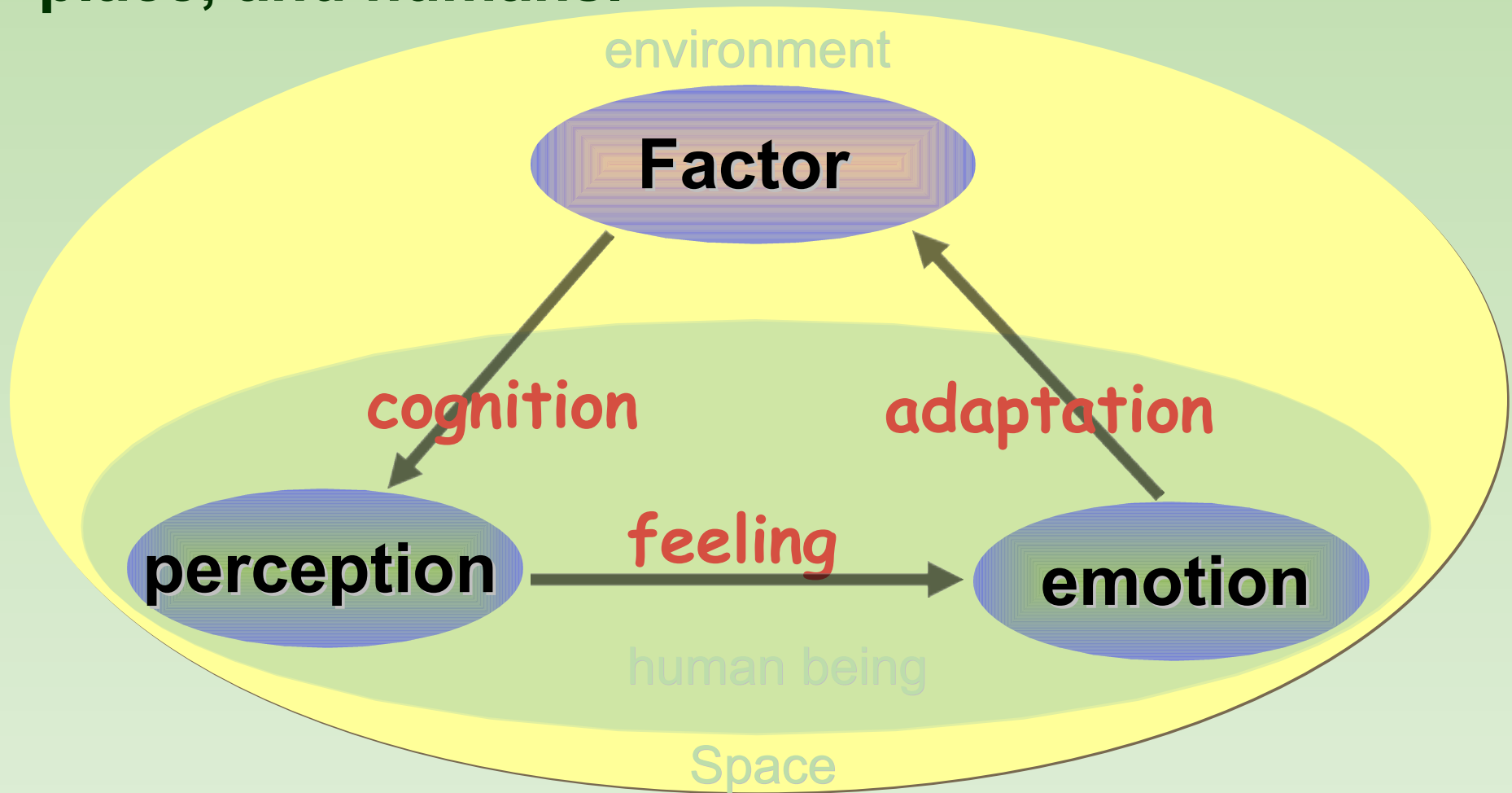
We propose “Geographical Illustration”

What is “Geographical Illustration”?

It is the Illustration representing human environment relations, including human feelings, sociality, and the scenes unfolding in the environment, geographical and biological space.

We view that human-environment relations consist of the following three elements.

We pay attention to human behavior and feelings to interpret interrelations among environment, place, and humans.



A tripod symbolizing human-environment relations

To represent relations, actions, and emotions in the form of illustration

For example, what is “hot”?

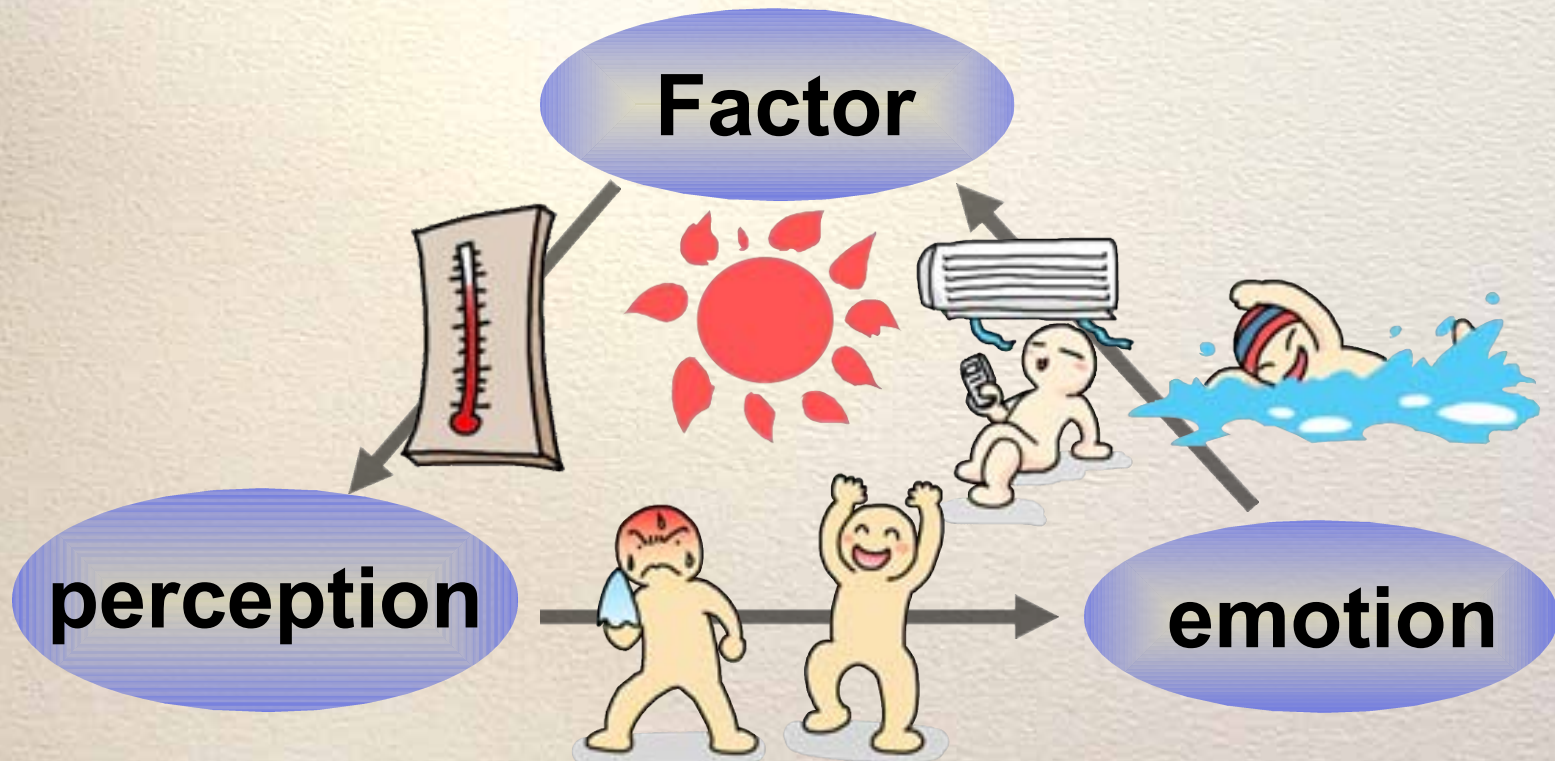
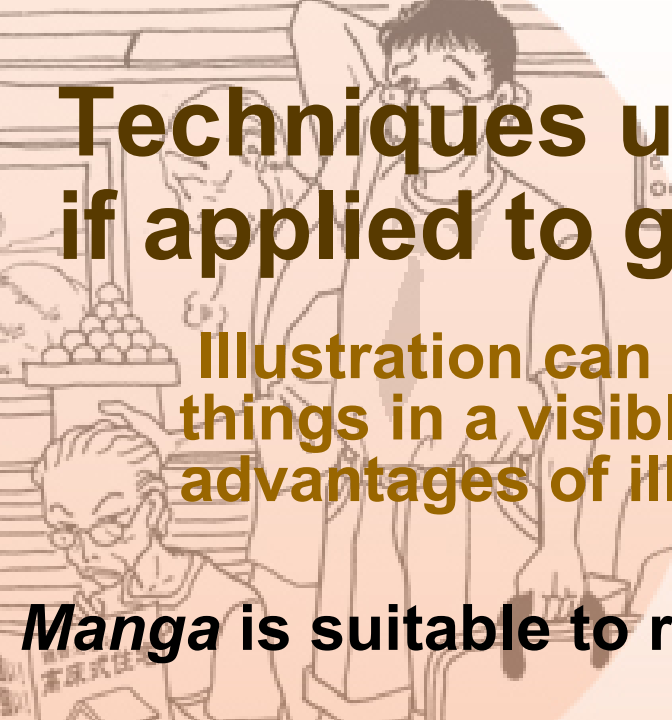


Illustration is a good way of representation to integrate these elements.



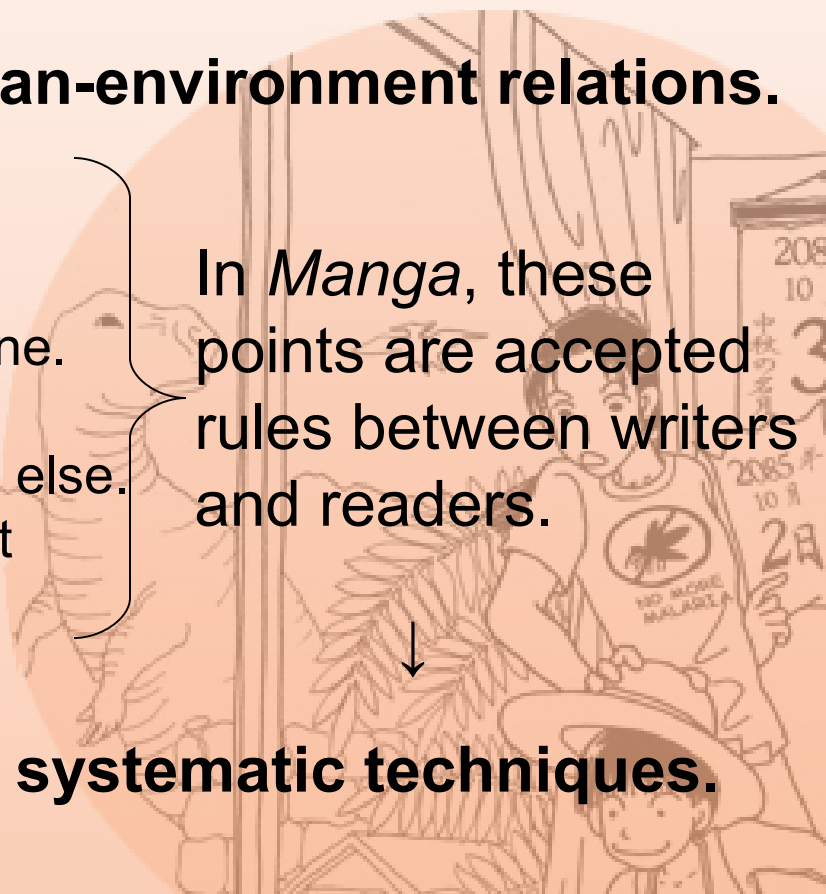
Techniques used in *Manga* are useful if applied to geographical illustration.

Illustration can represent invisible or intangible things in a visible way; we further develop such advantages of illustration.

***Manga* is suitable to represent human-environment relations.**

Features of *Manga* [cf. cartoons and comics]

- They can express complex human feelings.
- They can represent the atmosphere of a scene.
- They can show movements.
- They can replace something with something else.
- They can guide the eyes of readers to look at what we want them to look at.



In *Manga*, these points are accepted rules between writers and readers.

***Manga* can be established as systematic techniques.**

Examples of Geographical Illustration

Our column appeared serially in “Chiri (Geography)’with the title of ‘*Wakuwaku Ikimono Chirigaku* (Exciting Biogeography)’ ”(6.2005-5.2006).

The serial deals with traditional practices concerning their relations with creatures as its subject.

Towards creatures in diversity, change, and motion, how do humans act on;how do they bring them into their life; or how do they confront them?

In the serial, illustrations were drawn with the focus on human feelings that are evoked in the process of relations being established between humans and creatures.

Wakuwaku is onomatopoeia in Japanese to express human emotions concerning interest, discovery, surprise, excitement, and deep impression.

Visualization of relations and values

Traditional practice of breeding and eating a kind of wasps, Yellow Jackets, in the mountainous areas of Central Japan



- ◆ In the mountainous areas in Central Japan, Yellow Jacket, a kind of wasps, has long been savored as delicacies. Some people may react negatively to this habit, thinking that it is disgusting to eat bugs. Others may get scared and wonder how they catch such dangerous wasps. In these areas, however, the bugs are considered very tasty and relished. Besides collecting wild wasps, people bring a small nest back home to put it in a box in the garden and carefully rear the bugs. Moreover, some people even mate the next-generation queen wasp to breed them in their own house.
- ◆ Their enthusiasm provides the basis on which their relations with the wasp are sustained. It is well expressed by the words of an old man who cherish wasps. He said, “To me, the queen wasp is like my lover”. Among his family members, however, there are differences in the way of treating wasps.
- ◆ What is important in integrating sociological aspects to give comprehensive consideration to humans and the environment is to understand subtle differences in the interest in and treatment of wasps even among the community members according to age and sex.

At dinner table

Cap of a society of wasp lovers

Calendar bearing a picture of wasps copulating

Landscape characteristics to these areas, which stretches outside the window

Other family members have less interest in wasps.

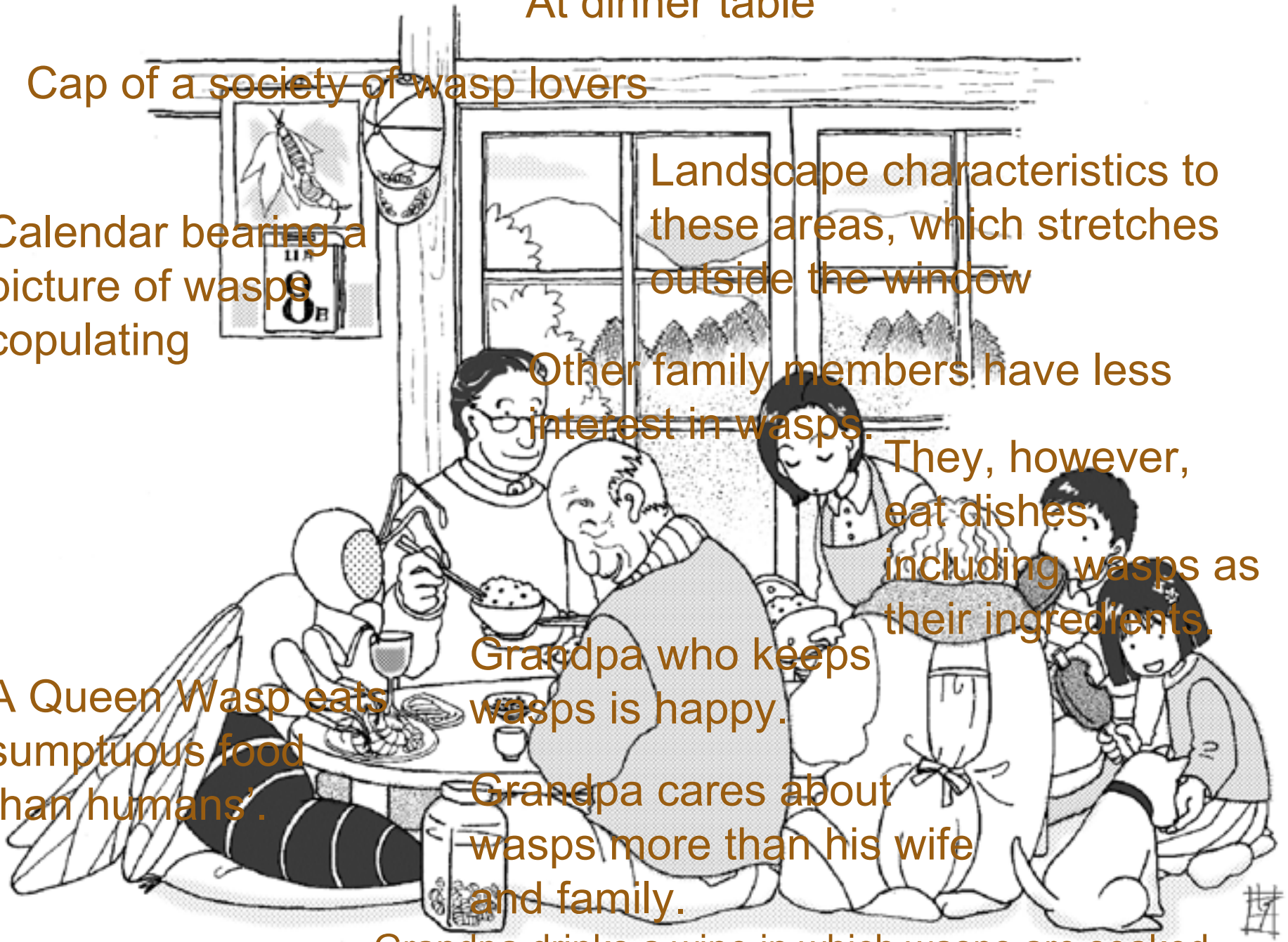
They, however, eat dishes including wasps as their ingredients.

Grandpa who keeps wasps is happy.

Grandpa cares about wasps more than his wife and family.

Grandpa drinks a wine in which wasps are soaked.

A Queen Wasp eats sumptuous food than humans'.



17

Environment and humans that are interrelated by humans 'to sense'
To depict something that cannot be seen but does exist
To show the traffic between the internal world and the reality of the external world

Fishing and human memories in the tideland in the Okinawa Islands, Japan



- ◆ We pick up women's activities of collecting in the island of Okinawa located in the south of the Japanese archipelago.
- ◆ Fishing in the tideland is carried out during the ebb tide. Women go out to the tideland to collect fish and shellfish that are left in the low tide with bare hands or by using simple fishing tools. Though they are not visible, women identify them with the movement, smell, and touch. All the fish and shellfish they caught is uniquely delicious.
- ◆ These resources naturally have economic values, but at the same time they are considered important as delicacies for the family as well as gifts to relatives far away.
- ◆ In the historical process of such resource use being formed, memories have been retained by local people. The memories and the circumstances of the tideland are combined to identify the existence of fish. This happens certainly in the world of senses. Accumulated memories and thoughts of the people who engaged in fishing in the tideland are recollected together with illusory feelings evoked during the activities that they diligently carry out while sensing the smell and signs of fish in the night sea.

Night fishing in the tideland

Midnight sky in Okinawa
on the New Year in the
lunar calendar

Signs that Grandma senses and the
environment consisting of the signs

Memory of eating the
shellfish collected by
Grandma in Osaka

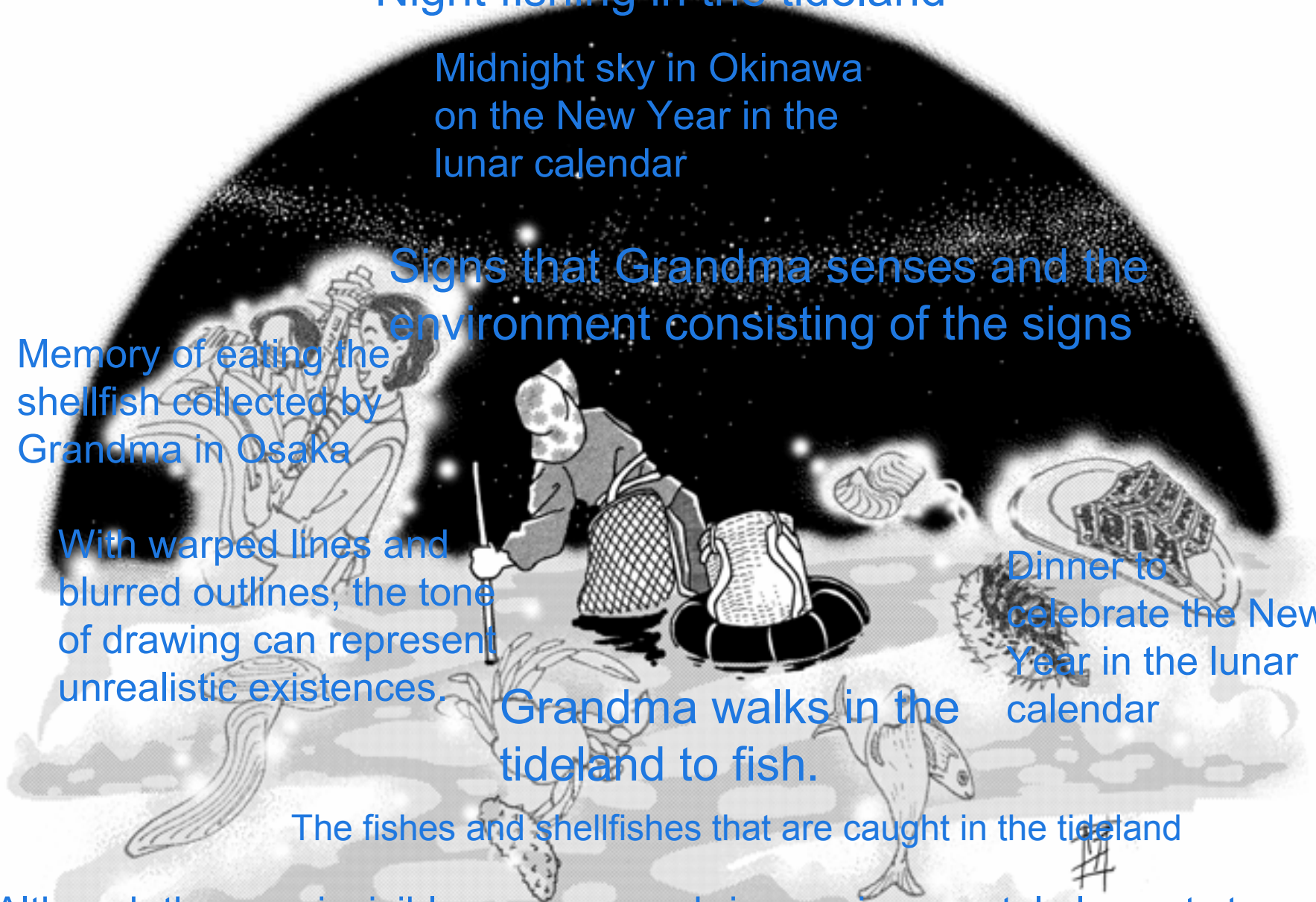
With warped lines and
blurred outlines, the tone
of drawing can represent
unrealistic existences.

Grandma walks in the
tideland to fish.

Dinner to
celebrate the New
Year in the lunar
calendar

The fishes and shellfishes that are caught in the tideland

Although they are invisible, senses can bring environmental elements to the surface.



To describe the diversity and comprehensiveness of relations between humans and the environment as well as the significance of studying it

Concept of Wakuwaku Biogeography



- ◆ Topologies and climatological environment vary according to land, season, and age. We propose that we should pay attention to the fact that there are a variety of actions towards creatures inhabiting a place.
- ◆ What is important when considering each case is human attitudes toward creatures and nature as their subjects and the social, cultural, and historical qualities of human practices, and the natural environment which provides the basis for a traditional practice. All these elements relate to one another to make up the practice and habits.
- ◆ The use of illustration will give an understanding of the above intuitively at a glance. With a closer look at the details or by raising questions and considering reasons, you will have a comprehensive sense and experience the relationship between nature and humans.

A colorful illustration of a person with large eyes and ears, surrounded by nature and animals. The person is depicted with large, dark eyes and large, prominent ears. They are wearing a blue shirt and are looking towards the right. The background is filled with various elements: a green tree, a blue sky with a white bird, a brown animal (possibly a bear or dog) on the left, and a landscape with a river, a building, and a forest on the right. The overall style is a mix of line art and halftone shading.

Here is a person with wide opened eyes to look at creatures with great interest.

The person is first of all looking at living things.

The person has abnormally big ears.

The person's features indicate that the first thing to do to develop relations with the environment is looking at and listening to it.

The person act on and cherish creatures with his/her hands. And he/she is even attacked by the environment. He/she, however, does not lose his/her interest in watching the environment ,which is nothing but the attitude of the characters that appeared in the serial of Exciting Biogeography.

The land, soil and climate spreading are observed by the person through many layers of living things.

Into this picture, we put our point that what we have advocated in “Exciting Biogeography” is to depict the relation of human feelings to the environment.

Merits of the use of geographical illustration

- An act of reading a description about human-environment relations can be replaced with the observation of a picture.
- The relation between humans and the environment, which extends and is connected complicatedly in space and time can be confined into two-dimensional representation.
- To express feelings and emotions to arouse empathy, thus providing the basis on which people share the values and discuss the subject.
- To express feelings and emotions to arouse empathy, thus providing the basis on which people share the values and discuss the subject.
- As the medium is pictures which are more popular than written sentences (pictures makes an intuitional understanding possible), the subject can attract great attention among public other than specialists and be understood more easily.

To pursue universal techniques

Geographical illustration represents a space where human-environment relations take place as the form of art.

We consider how to develop geographical illustration into universal techniques.



This illustration was attached to a story about the relation between dogs and local people in a part of Asia. In this place, dogs are not managed by people and maintain good relations with them.

... How do you interpret this illustration?