

## Japanese Philosophers Go West: The Effect of Maritime Trips on Philosophy in Japan with Special Reference to the Case of Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960)<sup>1</sup>

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From 1860 up until 1960 Japanese intellectuals habitually travelled to Europe to absorb the latest Western scholarship. Philosophers were no exception. Going to the West was an intellectual and institutional duty to legitimize one's position in the Ivory Tower of the imperial universities. *Fūdo* by Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) merits consideration as the outcome of his stay in the West (1927–28). Chronologically, the book was inspired by Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927) and Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften* (1927). Watsuji modifies Heidegger's thinking on *Zeitlichkeit*, replacing his *Sein zum Tode* with *Sein zum Leben* in the footsteps of Dilthey. The author also contrasts Japanese and Western culture (monsoon and meadow), while separating East and West by the arid desert area located in between. Watsuji's reflection on humans' relationship with nature (*Fūdo*) was also his reply to Karl Marx. He confronted Marx's theory on *Entfremdung* with Heidegger's idea of *Zuhandensein* and rehabilitated *Mitsein* so as to elaborate his own idea of *Sittlichkeit*, or the ethics of an idealized *Gemeinschaft*. This paper seeks to elucidate the extent to which his trip to the West affected his ideas. The sightseeing on his way to Europe stimulated his intuitive observations. Numerous letters sent to his wife and children in Japan served as the germinating core of *Fūdo*. Instead of analyzing Watsuji's *Fūdo* as a stereotypical and outdated example of climatic determinism, this paper elucidates historical as well as spatial conditions by which Japanese Philosophy established itself as an academic discipline in pre-war Japan.

**Keywords:** Watsuji Tetsurō, *Fūdo*, climate, philosophy, Martin Heidegger, Wilhelm Dilthey, Ernst Cassirer, Kuki Shūzō, *Zeitlichkeit*, *Raumlichkeit*

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was first read at the international conference “Japanese Philosophy as an Academic Discipline: Research and Teaching,” held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 10–11 December 2011. This paper is not intended as a philosophical study. Rather, the author merely aims to shed some light on the cultural background surrounding the making of Watsuji's *Fūdo* by placing him within the history of maritime trips in the modern period. The author wishes to express his gratitude to the two anonymous referees for their constructive and highly detailed philological comments, as well as to Anton Luis Sevilla, who edited the language and style of the draft.

Philosophy has always come from abroad. And Japan was alien to it.<sup>2</sup> From 1860 up until 1960, Japanese intellectuals adopted the habit of travelling to Europe to absorb the latest Western scholarship. Philosophers were no exception. In order to make an academic career in Japan, going to the West was a *sine qua non*. It was an intellectual as well as an institutional imperative, essential to legitimizing one's position in the ivory tower of the imperial universities. In this context, let us consider the case of Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960) and *Fūdo* 風土, one of Watsuji's most popular books, which is regarded as a classic to this day. Being the outcome of his maritime trip to the West and his stay there from 1927–28, the book is important both in its chronology and in its treatment of human climates. Chronologically, the book was inspired by the publication of Martin Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927), as well as Wilhelm Dilthey's posthumous *Gesammelte Schriften* (1927). While modifying Heidegger's thinking on *Zeitlichkeit* (temporality) into an anthropology of *Raumlichkeit* (spatiality), Watsuji replaces Heidegger's *Sein zum Tode* (Being-toward-death) with his idea of *Sein zum Leben* (Being-toward-life) in the footsteps of Dilthey. By way of climatic typology, the Japanese philosopher at the same time tries to contrast Japanese culture (monsoon) with Western culture (meadow), while separating the West from the East by the arid desert area located in between. His ideas were to be criticized as stereotypical and outdated by Umesao Tadao 梅棹忠夫 (1920–2010) who proposed, instead, an ecological approach of dynamic succession in his *Bunmei no seitai shikan* 文明の生態史観 (1957).

Watsuji's reflection on humankind's relationship (*Verhältniss*) with nature, which he calls *fūdo* (by definition an interface between humankind and nature) was also his reply to Karl Marx's *Deutsche Ideologie* which had recently become accessible in 1926. He confronted Marx's theory of *Entfremdung* or alienation (the German original was well-known in pre-war Japan) with Heidegger's idea of *Zeug* (tool) (or, for Watsuji, *dōgu* 道具), from which the German philosopher derives the idea of *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand), and he rehabilitated *Mitsein* (Being-with) so as to elaborate his own idea of the ethics of an idealized *Gemeinschaft* (for which he employs the term *Sittlichkeit*). In so doing, Watsuji refers to Hegel's work *Grundlinien der Philosophie der Rechts* (1821).<sup>3</sup>

This paper tries to elucidate the extent to which Watsuji's trip to the West by steamship affected his ideas. This will be done through a comparative and interdisciplinary, but not philosophical, approach toward intellectual history. Sightseeing on his way to Europe stimulated Watsuji's intuitive observations. Numerous letters he sent to his wife and children back in Japan served as the germinating core of the publication. Instead of analyzing Watsuji's *Fūdo* as a stereotypical and outdated example of climatic determinism (for which it has been often criticized), this paper explores the historical as well as geographic and climatic conditions (as Watsuji himself intended in the book), in which Japanese philosophy established itself as an academic discipline during the prewar period.

2 This statement is made cautiously, knowing that it may cause interminable controversies. The present author shall not repeat those controversies here, as he has already published an essay tracking a critical outline of the issue, encompassing Japan, China and Korea. See Inaga 2011.

3 This paragraph summarizes the general schema, which will be examined in detail below. As is already evident, there is a huge discrepancy between the Japanese translation and the English translation of the same German philosophical terms. We lose sight of the divergence between the two, and we risk annulling the transcultural migration of the signification, if we replace the Japanese translation automatically with its English equivalent. The same applies to the use of Chinese characters for original German terms. In this paper, I therefore retain the original German and Japanese alongside the English. On the gap between the German original and its English replacement, see Didi-Huberman 2002, pp. 433–51.

## 1. Travel to the West in Modernizing Japan: An Overview

Shibusawa Ei'ichi 渋澤栄一 (1840–1931) was one of the first Japanese to witness the Suez Canal under construction. Shibusawa crossed the Isthmus in 1867 when he accompanied Tokugawa Akitake 徳川昭武 (1853–1910), representative of the Tokugawa shogunate, on his mission to Europe on the occasion of the *Exposition universelle* in Paris. Shibusawa observed that the opening of the canal would enable a direct passage between the East and the West, and that it would accelerate commercial transactions, multiplying economic profits.<sup>4</sup> Five years earlier, Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1835–1901) had seen the port town of Baletta in Malta. Located between Sicily and Tunisia, the island of Malta had been taken over by the British following its victory against France in 1801. Summarizing these geopolitical facts and enumerating statistical data, Fukuzawa accounted for its strategic importance. This Japanese samurai's meticulous observations detailed the abundance of military hardware in the naval base. Touching upon military secrets, he concluded that Malta must be the most important fortress in the Mediterranean Sea, and reported that the food supply there was enough to nourish four thousand soldiers for seven years.<sup>5</sup>

While Shibusawa was captivated by the efficiency in transportation and took interest in commercial profitability, Fukuzawa cast a watchful eye on the British command over the sea. By taking a route westward to Europe via Singapore, Ceylon, Suez and Malta, the Japanese could not help observe the plain fact that the entire itinerary to Europe was under British control. The more one advanced to the West, the stronger one felt the glory of the British empire. Both Fukuzawa and Shibusawa testified to this. The impression left on travellers by the eastward course was quite different. Crossing the Pacific Ocean to the American West coast, and disembarking in San Francisco, one confronted the American Western frontier, as was witnessed by participants in the Kanrin maru 咸臨丸 voyage in 1860 and the Iwakura 岩倉 mission in 1871.<sup>6</sup>

It was almost forty years later in 1900 that Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867–1916) set sail for London. On his way to Europe, the future novelist crossed paths with another Japanese sailing the Indian Ocean in the opposite direction, without either noticing the other. Minakata Kumagusu 南方熊楠 (1867–1941) happened to be on his way back to Japan. Minakata had arrived in North America in 1886 at the age of eighteen, and had spent more than ten years in London. One might not be able to explain the difference in behavior of the two Japanese only by their itinerary, of course; other factors have to be considered. While Kumagusu was young enough to adapt himself to Anglo-Saxon society, Sōseki was already too old to feel at ease in London. Yet one may be surprised to see the contrast. Kumagusu was proud of the friendships he was able to establish among Western scholars and naturalists at the British Library, but Sōseki suffered from mental depression in his self-imposed isolation.

Sōseki's inferiority complex is often explained by his excessive sense of duty as a government sponsored scholar from Japan. Yet one of his letters written on board the German ship *Preußen* and sent to his friend Takahama Kyoshi 高濱虚子 (1874–1954) from Hong Kong clearly shows that his lack of adaptability was there from the beginning. "The presence of the Chinese people, the Western bath and toilet are unbearable. I wish I

<sup>4</sup> Shibusawa 1967, pp. 31–33.

<sup>5</sup> Fukuzawa 1958, pp. 17–18. See also Haga 1968.

<sup>6</sup> For a general overview of the establishment of the route to Europe, see Sonoda 2003. Also, for the transformation of westward journeys in Japanese modernity, Ōkubo 2008 is accurate and accessible.

could sip a cup of tea with rice (*ochazuke*) and take a bowl of soba noodles again as soon as possible, getting rid of this infernal confinement.”<sup>7</sup> One may wonder if Sōseki’s uneasiness may have been alleviated by a stay in North America before coming to London. He arrived in the capital during the second Boer War, and this coincidence was traumatic for him.

## 2. Watsuji Tetsurō or “A Stay in the West is No Longer Necessary”

It was sixty five years after Fukuzawa and sixty years after Shibusawa, that Watsuji set sail to Europe in 1927 (Figures 1 and 2). A quarter century had already passed since Kumagusu and Sōseki had been in London. Watsuji, then aged thirty eight, took the NYK vessel *Hakusan maru* 白山丸. On their way to Marseille, the passengers on board were able to enjoy the same Japanese lifestyle as they had back home.<sup>8</sup> Watsuji was thus spared the kind of alienation Natsume Sōseki had to suffer on board an unfamiliar German ship. Watsuji also participated in scheduled sightseeing trips at almost each port of call.

Since the end of World War I, the safety of navigation across the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea had improved, and passage to Europe had become fashionable among wealthy, high-ranking people. Such concerns for nation-state building and alarmed comments on the military dominance of the British Empire (as we observed in Shibusawa’s and Fukuzawa’s writings) were no longer conspicuous in post war travel writings.<sup>9</sup> Hyperinflation in postwar Europe, and especially in defeated Germany, made it relatively easy for upper-middle class Japanese to make a prolonged stay in the West.

However, the time of peace between the two world wars was short-lived. The Great Kantō Earthquake 関東大震災 in 1923 had devastated the capital area. The stagnating economic depression finally resulted in the Wall Street financial Crisis of 1929. In the 1930s, the world system established by the Versailles Treaties rapidly lost its stability. The second decade of the Shōwa 昭和 era (1926–1989), the Japanese incursion into the Chinese continent in the Manchuria Incident of 1931 and the “China Incident” in 1937 heightened international tensions. Ultra-nationalistic discourse prevailed across the world, and spread hand in hand with soaring economic protectionism. In Japan, apprehension about British maritime hegemony reasserted itself, and the sense of threat also intensified before strong American influence, as it expanded throughout the Pacific Ocean.

This outline of the world economic and political situations allows us to observe that Watsuji travelled to Europe in the last moments of interwar peace. Watsuji, whose early pioneering studies on Nietzsche and Kierkegaard had been well received by the academic world, was then associate professor at Kyoto Imperial University. He had already enjoyed considerable fame, thanks to the popular success of such bestsellers as *Koji junrei* 古寺巡礼 (1919) and academic works represented by *Nihon seishinshi kenkyū* 日本精神史研究 (1926). It was then a duty of imperial university associate professors to stay in Europe before their promotion to professorship. Watsuji had to fulfill this institutional requirement. He had failed to go abroad as a youngster, and was unwilling to do so at the age of thirty seven. He was too old to adapt himself to foreign soil with the maiden-like sensibility that Mori

7 Letter 199 (presumably 19 September 1900) in Natsume 1996, vol. 22, p. 189. Cf. Ōkubo 2008, p. 50 and Takeda 2001, pp. 141–43.

8 For the influence of World War I on maritime navigation and the development of commercial shipping during the period, see Ishidō 1975.

9 See Ōhashi 2001, p. 122.

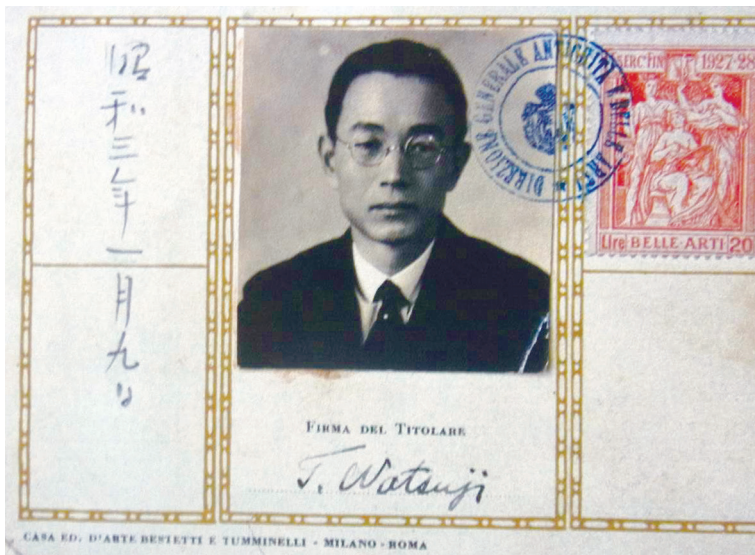


Figure 1. Watsuji Tetsurō's, pass for the museums in Rome, 1928.



Figure 2. Watsuji's itinerary in Europe.

Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922) had once proudly demonstrated. Indeed, Watsuji was fearful of his succumbing to the “neurosis” that had afflicted many of his predecessors (including Natsume Sōseki, who had by then gained a reputation as the nation’s novelist). Rather, Watsuji wished he could remain in Japan with his beloved wife and family, and hated the idea of being forced to live alone in a foreign country. From the outset, he thought it useless to go abroad and did not expect much to learn *Philosophie* from his stay in Germany.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after his arrival in Berlin, Watsuji reported to his superior colleague, Tanabe Hajime 田邊元 (1885–1962), that he was “quite disappointed with the lectures at the Berlin University” (3 June 1927).<sup>11</sup> He also confessed to the editor, Iwanami Shigeo 岩波茂雄 (1881–1946), that “comprehensible lectures are too simple and boring, while lectures I cannot understand, because they are too speedy, are by definition useless to listen to.”<sup>12</sup> Though he found his German speaking ability insufficient, he felt the academic lectures were not satisfactory as far as he could understand them, and he gave up listening to them within two weeks. This is a typical reaction of adult intellectuals who are highly cultured but remain too feeble in listening. As Plato formulated it in *Menon*, one cannot find what one searches for, because if one knows what one is searching for, the search is no longer necessary. At the same time, one cannot find what one does not know, simply because one cannot know what search is needed. Obviously Watsuji was caught in this paradox of *Menon*, as Michael Polanyi inventively paraphrased it in his discussion in *The Tacit Dimension*.<sup>13</sup>

As for aversion to conversation, Watsuji’s case reminds us of Natsume Sōseki’s complaint: “What I hate most is trying to be sociable by making use of my English, which is completely lacking in eloquence.”<sup>14</sup> Takeda Atsushi 竹田敦, who meticulously examined the lives and deeds of the teachers belonging to the so-called Kyoto School of Philosophy, finds Watsuji exceptional among them in that his writing in Europe has a genuine human touch (*ningenmi* 人間味) about it.<sup>15</sup> However, as Karube Tadashi 苅部直 judiciously remarks, this so-called exception makes particularly visible the other side of the same coin: Watsuji’s lack of contact with “native” people.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Watsuji leaves practically no substantial traces of companionship with German scholars. The Germans with whom he engaged were limited to only two people: the landlady of the house he was renting, and his language teacher.

Particularly revealing is his avoidance of Martin Heidegger. Watsuji sent a letter from Florence to Tanabe Hajime on 26 March 1928, excusing himself for not having made good use of the letter of introduction to Martin Heidegger prepared for him by Tanabe. This was the date on which he decided to cut short his stay in Europe from the promised two years to one year and a half. In the Greek Socratic tradition, *philosophieren* consisted of dialogue. And yet, Watsuji deliberately refrained from putting this into practice while he was in the genuine homeland of philosophy. He excused himself by stating that solitary reading in his

10 German terms have been retained here and below because they help evoke the fact that Watsuji himself took notes by inserting German terminology in Japanese syntax. On Watsuji’s opinion of the possibility of practicing philosophy in and with the Japanese language, see Susa 2009, pp. 154–61.

11 Takeda 2001, p. 141.

12 WTZ, vol. 25, p. 248.

13 Polanyi 1967, p. 22. *Menon* is evoked here because Watsuji himself, as a good student of the Greek classics, could not have been ignorant of the passage.

14 There are many studies of Sōseki’s stay in London. Here, I use Wada et al. 2009. (See Wada et al. 2009, p. 262.)

15 For the wording *ningenmi*, see Takeda 2001, p. 141.

16 Karube 2010, p. 173.



study was far more efficient. The enormous amount of letters and picture postcards he sent to his wife back in Japan reveals the real content of his stay in Europe. And it was out of these voluminous letters home that he constructed his *Fūdo*.

### 3. *Ningengaku* as a Variant of the Study of Nations

Not unexpectedly, what Watsuji discovered during his stay in Europe was not the West but rather the “national characteristics” (*kokuminsei* 国民性) of Japan. Indeed, he spent his time mainly conversing with fellow Japanese, while making frequent sightseeing trips through most of Europe. He kept his distance from native inhabitants, amongst whom he engaged in a kind of non-participant observation. It transpires that the outcome, *Fūdo* (1935), was a new type of study of Japanese national characteristics, presented in the guise of *ningengaku* 人間学. *Ningengaku* is a neologism distancing Watsuji’s position from Western as well as (neo-) Confucian human-centered ethics: it means “the study of *ningen*,” where *ningen* refers to the human, zooid as well as species, but its literal meaning is “inter-human,” the relation in between, preceding the establishment of individuality and personality in the sense of “persona.”

Discussions of the Japanese national character had become fashionable after Japan’s so-called victory over Russia in 1905. Take the case of Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1856–1944), first holder of the chair of philosophy in a Japanese imperial university after his seven year stay in Germany. Inoue published *Kokumin dōtokuron* 国民道德論 in 1912, aimed at propagating the ideals of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語). The last chapter included a “Criticism of Nationality.” As a student, Watsuji was famous for his rebellious attitude toward this founding father.<sup>17</sup> Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 (1867–1927), Professor in the Department of Japanese Language and Literature at the Tokyo Imperial University, is also known as the author of *Kokuminsei jūron* 国民性十論 (1908). One may detect repercussions of this trend for philosophical reflection on national character spreading in China, too. Among numerous publications, one may single out Dài Jitáo’s 戴季陶 (1891–1949) *Nihonron* 日本論 (1927). One may put side by side Dài’s observation of the Japanese and Watsuji’s *Fūdo* as contemporary reflections that complemented each other. Watsuji confesses in his article “Kokuminsei no kōsatsu” 国民性の考察 (1928) published immediately after his return from Europe, that he had not yet been conscious of the problem of “national mentality” at the moment of his departure from Japan. It was only having seen the countries in Asia and Europe before coming back to Japan that he “vividly felt for the

17 Katsube 1987, pp. 101–104. Also see Ejima 2009, pp. 15–29. For the position of *Kokumin dōtokuron* in the history of Japanese thought and its relationship with Watsuji, see Shimizu 1999, pp. 162–82. Karube 2010 (Chapter 3, n. 13) points out that three of Watsuji’s predecessors at Tokyo Imperial University and his predecessor in Kyoto, Fujii Kenjiō 藤井謙治郎, all wrote on something similar to a theory of national morality. In the supplementary materials *Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku gakujutsu taikan*, Bungakubu dai 11shō, “Rinri gakka” 『東京帝国大学学術大観』文学部 第11章「倫理学科」written by Watsuji and Kakeko Takezō 金子武蔵 (reproduced in Karube 2010, pp. 329–43), one can confirm that the *jinkaku shugi to kokumin dōtokuron* 人格主義と国民道德論, as formed by Nakajima Rikizō 中島力蔵 (1858–1918), Yoshida Seichi 吉田静致 (1872–1945), and Fukasaku Yasubumi 深作安文 (1874–1962) was transformed into “philosophical anthropology” (*tetsugakuteki ningengaku* 哲学の人間学) with Watsuji’s arrival. In other words, it was not merely the nation-state’s pressures that Watsuji’s *ningengaku* was shouldering, but also the academic tradition of national morality.

first time peculiarities of Japan and the Japanese, which were extremely interesting.”<sup>18</sup> As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe put it, reflection on one’s own nationality germinates in one’s experience in foreign lands and foreign speech.<sup>19</sup> Let us recall here that Dài’s *Nihonron* was translated into Japanese in 1934, one year earlier than Watsuji’s *Fūdo*. Both of them were bestsellers at that time.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Predecessors, Contemporaneity

In order to locate Watsuji in the genealogy of Japanese philosophers who stayed abroad in the West, let us briefly examine the case of one of his predecessors, Itō Kichinosuke 伊藤吉之助 (1885–1961). Disciple of Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎, Itō went to Germany in 1920 at the age of thirty five, and chose young Martin Heidegger as his *Repetitor* or privately hired tutor.<sup>21</sup> One of the key terms in Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (1926) is *in-der-Welt-sein* (Being-in-the-world). According to Imamichi Tomonobu 今道友信, the idea stems from Okakura Kakuzō’s 岡倉覚三 expression “being in the world” as it was formulated in his *The Book of Tea* (1906; translated into Japanese as *Cha no hon* 茶の本), and Okakura himself developed the idea from the Daoist Zhuangzi 莊子 (369–296 BC), who talked about “worldly existence” (*shosei* 处世). Imamichi recalls how Itō was frustrated by Heidegger’s borrowing, as it was Itō himself who had given Heidegger a copy of the German translation of Okakura’s *Das Buch vom Tee* by Steindorf (1908) in 1919.<sup>22</sup> One may inquire: Why should he have been frustrated?

Watsuji was born in the same year as Heidegger, and upon his return from Berlin, he began constructing his *ningengaku* by putting emphasis on the relationship, i.e. “in-between-ness” (*Beziehung* or *aidagara* 間柄) that defines and composes the human persona and individuality that is condemned to “Being-in-the-world.” Itō Kichinosuke’s presence as a person-in-between, bridging Heidegger and Watsuji, partly accounts for Watsuji’s strong affinity as well as deliberate opposition to his “rival,” Martin Heidegger.

18 The lecture notes are from the archives of the National Diet Library (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan 国立国会図書館). Cited in Karube 2010, p. 172. They were revised and included in *Fūdo*.

19 *Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. E. Trunz, vol. XII, p. 508. Note that Japanese high school students from the pre-war period until the end of the 1970s learned by heart Goethe’s original German “*Wer fremde Sprachen nicht kennt, weiß nichts von seiner eigenen*” (One who knows nothing of foreign languages knows nothing of one’s own).

20 Tō 2003, pp. 16–33. Furthermore, Lin Yutang’s (Lin Godō 林語堂, 1895–1976) *My Country, My People* was translated into Japanese as *Waga kokudo, waga kokumin* 我国土・我国民 (1938), becoming available to a Japanese readership three years later than Watsuji’s *Fūdo*. The English original version, *My Country, My People* made quite a splash in the international scene. While its anti-Japanese stance is obvious, Japanese intellectuals like Abe Tomoji 阿部知二 (1903–1973) and others introduced it in an attempt to convey a sense of concern. Watsuji’s writing must be examined in the context of contemporary literature on nationality and national characteristics. It must also be emphasized that Watsuji’s own *ningengaku* was an elaboration of, and a modification from, the previous scholarship in the lineage of Chinese ethics conducted at the Imperial University by Watsuji’s predecessors.

21 Takeda 2001, p. 20. See also Abe 1966. For an interesting reflection on Itō Kichinosuke’s seminar on Hegel, see Imamichi 1983, pp. 82–87. The present author’s point here is to inform the uninitiated reader of the relationship between Itō, Heidegger and Watsuji through a relevant anecdote on “Being-in-the-world;” and to show, at the same time, the psychological frustration—a sign of insular mentality—that these Asians manifested in their relationships with German philosophy students. Though “dubious” in its accuracy, Imamichi’s testimony should not be dismissed, as he was the only surviving eyewitness (Imamichi passed away on 13 October 2012). The present author has examined the aesthetic and philosophical implications of this anecdote elsewhere. (See Inaga 2007.)

22 Imamichi 1999.



As Watsuji's contemporary, Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造 (1888–1941) cannot be overlooked either. Son of Baron Kuki Ryūichi 九鬼隆一 (1850–1931), Shūzō went to Europe as early as 1921 and studied with Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) in Heidelberg. Under the hyperinflation after the war, the wealthy Baron Kuki junior did not hesitate to ask Professor Rickert to come to his house to lecture him personally. Unsatisfied with his mentor, Kuki then moved to Paris to make the acquaintance of Henri Bergson (1859–1941) and Léon Brunschwig (1869–1944), and took part in the philosophy seminar in Pontigny as the sole Asian participant. He had the young Normalian, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) as his *répétiteur*. Moving again to Marburg, he befriended Martin Heidegger.<sup>23</sup> Watsuji met Kuki in Paris on 6 April 1927, after more than ten years. We do not know how Watsuji felt before the Europeanized Kuki. Still, it was clear that Watsuji had to find his own way, since it was obviously already too late for him to catch up with his former eminent colleague, only one year senior to him.

After the war, Heidegger engaged in a conversation with “a Japanese,” i.e. Tezuka Tomio 手塚富雄 (1903–1983), and referred therein to the late Baron Kuki. The German philosopher was of the opinion that Kuki had made such an exemplary elucidation of the notion of *iki* 粋 in a European language that the door to the heart of Japanese language was all the more tightly closed.<sup>24</sup> Here is a paradox of verbal communication. After “*Iki*” no *kōzō* 「いき」の構造 (1930), Kuki published in Japanese *Gūzensei no mondai* 偶然性の問題 (1935), referring to Leibniz's notion of *mondes possibles*.<sup>25</sup> And yet Kuki's abstract and somehow insipid phrasing cruelly demonstrates, stylistically as well as on the level of vocabulary, his difficulty in practicing philosophy in the Japanese language.<sup>26</sup> Kuki could not help feeling ill at ease at the faculty meetings in Kyoto University. He is said to have asked himself from time to time why he had to be there, instead of in Paris. His not being in the European world of philosophers, his alienation from the Western Republic of Letters, and the consequent impossibility of access to another “possible world” may well have motivated Kuki to ponder the problem of contingency, reflecting his own existential destiny as an Asian.<sup>27</sup> Watsuji was to become Kuki's colleague at the Faculty of Letters in Kyoto Imperial University.

The contrast between Kuki and Watsuji is notable. While Kuki's *Gūzensei no mondai* (1935) was the fruit of his stay in Europe for no less than seven years, Watsuji's *Fūdo*, published in the same year, was nothing but a quickly written book, almost instantaneously composed from fragmentary and intuitive reflections the author made during his shorter stay in Europe of only a year and a half.<sup>28</sup> One may wonder whether or not Watsuji, with his *Fūdo*, successfully responded to the danger Heidegger felt *vis a vis* Kuki's Westernized

23 Ōhashi 2009, p. 120.

24 Ōhashi 2009, pp. 137–41. The corresponding passage is in Heidegger 1985, S. 85.

25 On this notion of *mondes possibles* or *compossibles* and its recent applications, see, among others, Miura 1997.

26 Omodaka Hisayuki 澤瀉久敬 (1904–1995) made a French translation of Kuki's book as *Problème de la contingence*, which is far more readable than the Japanese original. Furthermore, while Watsuji asserts that “Japanese is not an inappropriate language for philosophical thinking,” he also says that “as far as thinking is concerned, it is still a virginal language.” See Watsuji 1935 and Kumano 2009.

27 This observation of mine helps to explain existential reasons for Kuki choosing to talk about the “Cyclical Structure of Time.” Here, Kuki referred to the logical possibility of returning to Athena of the epoch of Socrates, thus annihilating his distance from his ideal place. See Kuki, “La notion du temps et la reprise sur le temps en Orient” which was to be published with another essay in *Propos sur le temps*, 1928 (Kuki 1980, vol. 1). This essay may have inspired not only Jean-Paul Sartre but also Albert Camus in his *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942).

28 For Kuki's *Gūzensei no mondai*, see Kuki 1980, vol. 2.

pieces of philosophy. Before coming back to this delicate question, however, we have to cast a glance at one other student in aesthetics, Ōnishi Yoshinori 大西克禮 (1888–1959), who took the same steamer to Europe as Watsuji.

Ōnishi completed his Ph.D. on Kant after his return from Germany. As Professor at the Imperial University of Tokyo, he successively published studies in Japanese poetics and aesthetics, such as *Yūgen to aware* 幽玄とあはれ (1939), *Fūgaron: “sabi” no kenkyū* 風雅論: 「さび」の研究 (1940) and *Manyōshū no shizen kanjō* 万葉集の自然感情 (1943). In his methodology, Ōnishi proposed a parallel between Western and Japanese traditions. According to Ōnishi, the “*Kunstästhetisch* (Art-Aesthetic) Moment” was predominant in the West, while “in the East, and in particular in Japan” in contrast, the “*Naturästhetisch* (Nature-Aesthetic) Moment” prevailed “in relation with its weather and climate.”<sup>29</sup>

One may suppose that “weather and climate” echoes not only Watsuji’s approach in *Fūdo*, but also the intellectual climate of the period itself. Keeping this basic dichotomy between the East and the West in mind, Ōnishi stages within it the triptych elements of “Beauty, Sublimity and Humor” as universal categories. He then argues that the three categories are articulated respectively as “Gracefulness, Tragedy and Ridiculousness” in the West, whereas “in the East or in Japan,” he maintains, “the three elements are differentiated into *aware*, *yūgen* and *sabi*” respectively.<sup>30</sup>

Generally speaking, Ōnishi’s approach consists of associating Japanese notions to the Western and universal category. Firstly, he qualifies Japanese-ness or Oriental-ness as an auxiliary supplement to Western scholarship. Secondly, he emphasizes Japanese/Oriental characteristics as irreducible to their Western counterparts. Oriental aesthetics in general, and Japanese aesthetics in particular, are defined here as derivative, deviating from the Western standard. Thirdly, his emphasis on *Tiefe* (profundity) or *Dunkelheit* (darkness/obscurity) in the Oriental medieval tradition suggests his search for mystical elements, which would escape Western scholarly elucidations.<sup>31</sup> This obscurantism partakes of Heidegger’s terminology of “*verborgenheit*” or “*aletheia*” (that is, truth as something hidden and forgotten).

While searching for Oriental originality, Ōnishi did not hesitate to subordinate himself to the Western academic tradition, which appeared then as universally valid. And yet one cannot help detecting in his writing a mixture of retreat and self-aggrandizement. While he refrained from writing and publishing these pieces in the German language, which he was capable of doing, he at the same time treated Japanese poetics as representative of the whole Orient, beyond the confines of Japan.<sup>32</sup>

The previous generation, epitomized by Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862–1933), author of *Bushidō: the Soul of Japan* (1900), or Okakura with his *The Book of Tea*, published their main books in English, but the following generation of Watsuji and Ōnishi mainly wrote and published in Japanese. Avoidance of communicating directly with the West and unconscious arrogance toward other Asian nations—in their substituting Japan for the whole Orient—constituted a kind of “lion at home and a mouse abroad” type duplicity, which crept into the mentality of Japanese intellectuals born in the second decade of the Meiji era.

29 Ōnishi 1939, pp. 5–6.

30 Ōnishi 1943, pp. 49–51.

31 Ōnishi 1939, pp. 94 and 100.

32 The case of Tsuzumi Tsuneyoshi 鼓常良 (1887–1981) might also be introduced in this context, and compared with contemporary scholars in esthetics.

This change in mentality may be understood as a secondary side effect of the shift in the means of transportation. Going abroad on board a foreign steamer was replaced now by the use of one's own nation's flag-bearing passenger ship. The vogue of research into "Oriental aesthetics" meant not only the rediscovery of one's own culture after a pilgrimage in foreign lands; Japan's own pride and prestige also played a role here. With the enhancement of national dignity, going abroad was losing its significance and becoming a mere ritual, devoid of substantial *raison d'être*. The "expiry date," so to speak, of studying in the West seemed to be fast approaching by the end of 1930s.<sup>33</sup>

### 5. From *Sein und Zeit* to *Fūdo*: *Zeitlichkeit* in a Contemporary Context

This brings us to the problem of the timeliness (if not *Zeitlichkeit* in Heidegger's sense) of Watsuji's trip to Europe. If one is to believe Watsuji's preface to *Fūdo*, it was in the early summer of 1927, while he was reading Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* in Berlin, that the problem of climate came to his mind. "If '*Zeitlichkeit*' is so fundamental for the structure of a subject-existence, why was '*Raumlichkeit*' (sic) not as important as the former," was the problem as he recalled it. And yet we must notice that the preface was not written in 1927 in Berlin; rather, it was dated August 1935, eight years after his return to Japan. A text written by Kuki Shūzō between the two dates, namely in March 1933, merits our attention. In his unpublished notes on "Philosophie Heideggers" (1933, included in Kuki 1982), Kuki raises a question. Heidegger considers *Fürsorgende-Zeit* (time of concern) or *Welt-Zeit* (world-time) as inauthentic, although he recognizes their *Offentlichkeit* (publicness/openness). Does this not mean that Heidegger, despite his thesis on *Mit-einander-Sein* (Being-with-one-another) inadequately develops the existential perspective inherent in the *Raum* (space)?<sup>34</sup> One may presume that Kuki's "existential perspective of space" may have been recast by Watsuji as *Raumlichkeit* for the preface of *Fūdo*. It was as antithesis to Heidegger's *Zeitlichkeit* that Watsuji ambitiously put forward the notion of *Raumlichkeit*. Yet his idea of *Sein und Raum* (Being and Space) remained rhetorical and appeared only in the preface. It is difficult to identify any sophisticated logical or theoretical coherence between the *Raumlichkeit* in the preface and the notion of *fūdo* in the following chapters, which had been written earlier.

One may presume that it was during the process of his writing *Fūdo* that Watsuji came to recognize the importance of Kuki's idea of an "existential perspective of space," which Watsuji only later translated into *fūdosei* or "climaticity." As we shall see, this is a problematic translation of *Raumlichkeit*. This circumstantial evidence allows us to circumscribe the making of *Fūdo*: without Watsuji's reading of *Sein und Zeit* in Berlin—a mere coincidence and a work of contingency in *Zeitlichkeit*—conjugated with his voyage to Europe by passenger ship—a determining factor of *Raumlichkeit*—he could not have conceived his *Fūdo*, as we know it today.

33 Obviously this tendency toward an introverted mentality contributed to the isolation of the *monde de philosophes* in Japan from the rest of the world. Although Watsuji was not directly involved in right wing ultra-nationalism, he (and his generation) was largely responsible for Japanese intellectual isolation. It is an irony that Watsuji in the post-war period tried to compensate by his condemnation of Tokugawa isolation politics, epitomized in his *Sakoku: Nihon no bigeki* 鎖国: 日本の悲劇 (1950). This observation should lead to a modified view of the late Watsuji as a "progressive intellectual."

34 Kuki 1982, vol. 10, p. 174 sq. For bibliographical detail, see Karube 2009. Watsuji, Kuki's colleague at the Department of Philosophy in the Imperial University of Kyoto, would not have missed the chance to talk about Kuki's interpretation of Heidegger.

Another coincidence for the factor of *Zeitlichkeit* was the posthumous publication of Wilhelm Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften* Bd. 7 (1927) as *Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*. The reading of this newly published volume of *Lebensphilosophie* (life philosophy) encouraged Watsuji to orient himself toward the idea of *Sein zum Leben* (Being-toward-life) instead of the Heideggerian *Sein zum Tode* (Being-toward-death). Dilthey grasped the totality of the empirical reality composed of human activities, or *Erlebnis* (experience), as an expression of *ursprüngliches Leben* (fundamental experience).<sup>35</sup> According to Frithjof Rodi, however, this thinking of the late Dilthey was not taken into account by Heidegger while he was preparing *Sein und Zeit*.<sup>36</sup> It follows that Watsuji's philosophical ambition consisted in synthesizing Heidegger and Dilthey under the notion of *Raumlichkeit*. Yet it must be asked how *Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt* comes together with the notion of "human climate," as it was elaborated in Watsuji's *Fūdo*.

A key to this question may lie in a passage Watsuji wrote in his *Rinrigaku* 倫理学 (1931) after his return from Europe, namely "the extreme limit of Heidegger's *Dasein* analysis consists in his thinking that only through the understanding of *Sein* can the Other appear."<sup>37</sup> Karube Tadashi expounds the *Sein* in this context as "negotiations with *zu-handen-Welt* (the world at hand)." This interpretation shows, as Karube himself notices, that Watsuji approached Heidegger from his understanding of *ningengaku*.<sup>38</sup> Ōhashi Ryōsuke 大橋良介 also judiciously points out that "Watsuji thereby failed to recognize the metaphysical dimension in Heidegger."<sup>39</sup> Obviously these two approaches make for a vicious circle. In fact, Watsuji's "misunderstanding" was a necessary tactic to draw Heidegger's (meta-physical) *Dasein* into Watsuji's own field of inter-human ethics (*ningengaku*). Indeed, Ōhashi does not fail to mention that *Dasein* for Watsuji emerged only between individual human beings, i.e. the field Watsuji defines as belonging to his "*ningengaku*." This *Inzwischenheit* (or "between-human-ness," which for Heidegger includes *Das Man*) demanded to be treated in *Raumlichkeit*, which Watsuji renamed as *fūdosei*, an abstraction of *fūdo*.<sup>40</sup>

In his initial chapter, "Fūdo no genshō" 風土の現象, Watsuji deliberately confronts Heidegger. *Dasein*, which Watsuji redefines as *Sein zum Leben*, is forced to *ex-ist* in the world, as Heidegger stresses. When we feel it is cold we are *ex-posed* into the coldness, says Watsuji, paraphrasing the German thinker, and supposes this exposure as the initial

35 For a very sharply written summary of the circumstances of these publications and Watsuji's reading of them, see Karube 2010, pp. 178–82. For details of Watsuji's reading of Dilthey, see *ibid*, Chapter 3, n. 35 and 36. For Watsuji's criticism of Heidegger, see Mine 2002. For a comparison of Heidegger's and Watsuji's view of *Dasein*, see Liederbach 2006, Chapter 3. Due to space limitations, I do not touch here on the similarities and differences of these references.

36 Rodi 1986, p. 11.

37 WTZ, vol. 9, p. 162.

38 Watsuji, "Rinrigaku," pp. 103–104. (WTZ, vol. 9, p. 162.) Cited in Karube 2010, p. 181. Karube adds that "Heidegger himself would probably see this as a misreading." (Karube 2010, p. 179). The paraphrase should be regarded as Watsuji's own understanding, supplemented with Heidegger's terminology.

39 Ōhashi 2009, pp. 154–57. Ōhashi deploys the term "metaphysical" in order to distinguish it from Watsuji's inter-human ethics. Needless to say, *Hito to hito to no aida* 人と人との間 is the title of an influential book by Kimura Bin 木村敏, who refers to Watsuji. As written in the subtitle and another annotation, the notion of *aida* or "in-Zwischen-heit" is closely related to Ludwig Binzwanger's notion of *Daseinsanalytik*.

40 Let it suffice to indicate here that both Karube and Ōhashi point out the same chiasm which occurred in Watsuji's (forced) interpretation of Heidegger, and give explanations from their own fields: Karube from his standpoint as political scientist, and Ōhashi from his standpoint as a scholar of German philosophy.

form of *aidagara* or Watsuji's translation of the German *Verhältnisses*.<sup>41</sup> Though excessively philosophical and almost incomprehensible for the ordinary Japanese readership, this part was a *tour de force* for Watsuji in his face-to-face confrontation (which we could call his "*Miteinander Sitzung*") with Heidegger.<sup>42</sup> We have to detect the extent to which the Heideggerian notion *das Man* (the they) was reformulated and modified into *seken* 世間 (the world/the public) by Watsuji.

Hence, the notion of *Mitwelt* (with-world) and the *modus vivendi* of the *Mitdasein* (which is more crucial than *Mitsein* for Watsuji's ethical thought) interested this Japanese philosopher. The analysis also requires "we" as the subject-predicate, as "we" are destined to be born into preexisting modes of relationships. Take the example of language. We are not capable of weaving language as an individual subject-predicate, but we are born and exposed in the preexisting with-world, namely language, and we begin to make an utterance in our exposure in this world and gradually form our own *Dasein* by weaving, as it were, our utterances in it. It is only *a posteriori* that we find ourselves there (*sich finden*). From this reflection on *sich finden*, Heidegger develops the idea of *Befindlichkeit* (attunement) in correlation with the idea of *Geworfenheit* (thrownness), to which Watsuji refers.

In Watsuji's discussion, *Mitwelt* (with-world) must be differentiated from *Umwelt*. Usually *Umwelt* is the equivalent of English "environment," and Jakob von Uexküll's (1864–1944) influence on Heidegger is already well known.<sup>43</sup> However, such an ordinary understanding of environment as opposed to human existence is, according to Watsuji, the common deficiency in Western thinking from which not even Heidegger was immune. The insufficiency of the notion of *Umwelt* for Watsuji consisted in the fact that *Dasein* perceives things there merely as *Zeug* (tool), i.e. an entity at one's disposal. In other words, the Western perception of grasping the natural environment as something at the disposal of human beings remains in the notion of *Umwelt*.<sup>44</sup> To this idea of *Umwelt* as accessible environment, Watsuji opposed the idea of *Mitwelt* and recognized it as an important contribution by Heidegger, for it was in the *Mitwelt* that one (*Dasein*) could encounter others, and appear as *Mitdasein*.<sup>45</sup> And yet Watsuji

41 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), p. 12.

42 Watsuji 2011, pp. 11–29. Augustin Berque regrets that Watsuji's philosophical endeavor here has not been recognized. Most English and German translations of *Fūdo* completely overlook the distinction which Watsuji tried to establish between *fūdo* and *fūdōsei*. In contrast, Berque translates *Fūdo* not as "climate" but as "milieu" in accordance with Watsuji's own definition. Furthermore, Berque argues that *milieuité* does not work as a rendition of *fūdōsei* so he coined a new word, *médiance*, instead. The present author's thoughts on the issue are developed in Inaga 2008–2009, pp. 189–204.

43 On Heidegger's reference to Jakob von Uexküll, see Karube 2010.

44 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), pp. 23–24. WTZ *hoi*, vol. 1, pp. 390–93. Obviously Watsuji's reading of Heidegger on this point is unacceptable to scholars of Heidegger today. However, it should be understood that Watsuji here is struggling with the Heidegger at the time of *Sein und Zeit*, and trying to think *with* him. It would be preposterous to point out Watsuji's lack of understanding in the late Heidegger's reflection on *physis*, for example, which lies beyond the perspective of Watsuji at the period of 1927–28, which the present paper is treating. It is not the intention of the author to take the late Heidegger into account here. I quote from the original Japanese as it is a crucial point: *shizen o Zeug to shite kangaeru to iu Yōroppajin no tokusei ga ichijirushiku arawarete iru mono to omowareru* 自然をZeugとして考へるといふヨーロッパ人の特性が著しく現はれてゐるものと思はれる (The characteristic feature of Europeans in regarding nature as a tool is strikingly apparent here) (WTZ *hoi*, vol. 1, p. 390). Watsuji evidently here reduces Heidegger's analysis of *Zuhandenheit* into a general tendency of European thinking.

45 Heidegger 1927, pp. 120–21, 137.

was not fully satisfied with Heidegger's analysis of the *Mitsein*. According to Watsuji, the encounter with the Other is mediated in Heidegger by things perceived as *Zeug*; and therefore the *Mitwelt* is inevitably subordinated to the *Umwelt*.<sup>46</sup> So as to fully develop the analysis of the structure of Being-in-the-World, one should turn one's attention away from the ontological character of the *Sein zum Tode* in *Zeitlichkeit*, as Heidegger proposes, and rather look into the living expressions of *Sein zum Leben* in *Raumlichkeit*. For this purpose, Watsuji deduces an abstract meta-notion of *fūdosei*. *Fūdosei* or *fūdo-heit* designates each *fūdo* as a particular type of *In-zwischen-Raum* or a Space-in-between, where the interactions (including inter-human transactions) take place between what is regarded as "Nature" and "Human Culture" in their mutual relationships. *Dasein*, in the final analysis, cannot be the causal agent, and is nothing but the resulting product in these mutual relationships.<sup>47</sup>

## 6. From *Fūdosei* to "National Ethics"

Watsuji's attention to *fūdosei* (*fūdo* being the combination of natural climate and ethnic characteristics) is closely connected to his *zeitliche Erlebnis* or (un)timely experience which he had by accident (contingency, *gūzensei* 偶然性) in Shanghai on his way to Europe. Watsuji was an unexpected eyewitness of the general labor strike when his ship Hakusan maru called at Shanghai between 21–22 February 1927. The vivid impression of this incident is reflected in his essay "Shinajin no tokusei" 支那人の特性 (first published in *Shisō* 思想, July 1929) which would be integrated into the first section of Chapter 3, "Shina" 支那. (The description here includes several expressions which are now considered politically incorrect.)<sup>48</sup> When their ship approached Shanghai, Chang Kaishek's 蒋介石 army was advancing north to the city. The workers in the Shanghai Labor Union organized a general strike in opposition both to the militia government and the *Guomintang* 国民党. The incident delayed the ship's navigation schedule by one day. History tells us that the confrontation was to be followed shortly by Chang's Coup d'État of 12 April 1927, marking the beginning of the massive repression of the Communist Party.

It was under this extreme urgency, with the imminent threat of the army's intrusion into and sacking of the city, that Watsuji witnessed Chinese behavior which astonished him. The residents in foreign concessions were desperately searching for security. They asked their governments to provide protection. In contrast, the Chinese populace, who were constantly living "a life of anarchism, without government," naturally "did not expect any protection whatsoever by the state power." "Although they had no place to

<sup>46</sup> I follow here the interpretation proposed by Karube 2010, pp. 178–82.

<sup>47</sup> Watsuji's confrontation with Heidegger's German text leaves its vivid traces in the notes on "Kokuminsei no kōsatsu" (WTZ *hoi*, vol. 2, pp. 380–92). For a more detailed analysis of this section from a geographic philosophical point of view, see Kioka 2001, Chapter 1. *Fūdosei* designates each *fūdo* as a particular type of *In-zwischen-Raum* or a Space-in-between, which Augustin Berque proposes to rename *médiance* (see above n. 42). Here the interactions take place between what has been supposed to be Nature and Human Culture in their mutual relationships (*Miteinander Verhältnisse*), constituting *écoumène* in Augustin Berque's terminology. (See Berque 2011.) But while Augustin Berque's effort of precisely designating "*fūdo*" in differentiation from "*fūdosei*" is sound, the present author does not think that the differentiation in question is consistently maintained throughout the book, *Fūdo/Climat*. See our argument, *infra*.

<sup>48</sup> WTZ, vol. 8, pp. 244–56.



escape to, they walked around nonchalantly and continued selling merchandise as usual, without showing any anxiety.”<sup>49</sup>

At this sight, Watsuji must have summoned up memories of the experience of the Kantō Great Earthquake in 1923, four years earlier. The inhabitants of Tokyo maintained their confidence in state power even in the face of this cataclysm, and manifested their spirit of mutual aid, whereas what he saw in Shanghai was a totally antipodal situation, a total lack of governability.<sup>50</sup> “People were busy doing their own business without paying any attention to the fate of their neighbors, and once the danger became imminent, they rushed to flight, each in pursuit of his own interest.” Such was the Chinese national character (or more precisely lack of national consciousness) as observed by Watsuji, who concluded: “If the Japanese lose solidarity as a nation and face the Chinese individually, the Japanese can hardly be capable of confronting the Chinese opponent.”<sup>51</sup>

It is in contrast with this Chinese mentality that Watsuji developed his discussion on “Japanese Spirit” (*Nihon seishin* 日本精神, 1934). Worth noting here is that he superimposes the contrast between the Chinese and the Japanese upon the contrast between Jews and Greeks. Shortly before the passage just cited, Watsuji made the audacious remark that “the Chinese are more Jewish than the Jews and the Japanese are more Greek than Greek people.”<sup>52</sup> The former are migrating groups who make commercial transactions without showing any confidence in the bonds of the nation. The latter represent an idea of the nation-state presiding over diverse local communities by way of common ancestor worship. Behind Watsuji’s rash identification of the Jews with the Chinese lurks his vague uneasiness with multinational profit-making activities freely crossing over national boundaries.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, one can anticipate in Watsuji’s Japan-Greek equation, his preference for the nation state as a self-conscious ethical entity (*die Selbstbewußte sittliche Substanz*), an idea directly quoted from Hegel, faithful to his German original phrasing, and one which Watsuji had just developed in his paper “Kokumin dōtokuron” 国民道徳論 (1932).<sup>54</sup>

The double image of the Chinese as Jews is a curious amalgam resulting from Watsuji’s experience in Shanghai and the stereotype of the Jews in Europe as a people lacking in a

49 WTZ, vol. 7, p. 244. Also see Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), pp. 150–60; WTZ, vol. 8. Ironically enough, Watsuji was not able to walk freely around to see Chinese society while he was in Shanghai. (See Katsube 1979, p. 47.) Watsuji reluctantly confessed that he could not closely observe Chinese society while he was in Shanghai for any more than two days. His extremely limited observation was still enough for him to develop a typology contrasting the two nations.

50 WTZ, vol. 23, pp. 44–45.

51 WTZ, vol. 8, p. 255. Karube 2010, pp. 193–95. Also, see Sakabe 1986, pp. 124–26, 226–32. While Sakabe’s work has an originality that surpasses other similar works, he avoids discussing this part of Watsuji’s *Fūdo*, thus betraying the conditions of his time and affecting Watsuji’s argumentation.

52 WTZ, vol. 8, p. 255.

53 It must be noted, however, that in the second volume of *Ethics*, Watsuji has a rather positive view of inter-tribal trade. He just thinks that the *way* in which commerce is conducted in the colonial period is problematic.

54 “Kokumin dōtokuron kōsō memo” 国民道徳論構想メモ and “Kokumin dōtokuron sōkō (shō)” 国民道徳論草稿 (抄) (circa 1927–1928) can be found in WTZ *hoi*, vol. 1. For the most direct criticism of this sort of argumentation in Watsuji, see Sakai 1997, pp. 72–116. One might suppose that his idea concerning economic transactions among tribes that was developed in the second volume of his *Rinrigaku* (1942, revised ed. 1946) in reference to Malinowski was initially germinated from this personal experience in Shanghai (WTZ, vol. 10, pp. 497–99). Sakai’s work is usually evaluated poorly by Japanese researchers on Watsuji, as it articulates a typical North American posture toward Japanese studies. However, we ought to pay attention to the reception given this paper in North America and in English speaking scholarly communities.

notion of state, wandering across frontiers for the sake of mercantile profit making. Watsuji was later to substantiate the analogy between Japanese and Greek societies by a reference to Fustel de Coulanges's (1830–1889) *La Cité antique* (1901). Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) had been amazed by the similarity between the two nations, as demonstrated by de Coulanges. Hermann von Keyserling (1880–1946) in his *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen* (1919) followed Hearn in describing Japan as a mirror of ancient Greece as in *La Cité antique*.

In his *Porisu teki ningen no rinrigaku* ポリスの人間の倫理学 in 1948, three years after Japan's defeat in the Second World War, Watsuji quotes de Coulanges from a Japanese translation by Tanabe Teinosuke 田邊貞之助 (1944).<sup>55</sup> Greek polises in antiquity were united under their common worship of the Goddess Athena. This image of a mother-goddess overlapped in Watsuji's view with that of ancient Japan. For Watsuji, a unified kingdom had been established in ancient Japan by integrating local ancestral worship under belief in the Sun Goddess Amaterasu (Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神). Watsuji in the postwar period made his position clear in a controversy in 1947–48.<sup>56</sup> He appeared as a defender of the emperor system and actively involved himself with its redefinition as the “symbol” (*shōchō* 象徴) of the nation state under the new constitution promulgated in 1949.

## 7. Watsuji and the Next Generation

In order to clarify Watsuji's political position, it will be profitable to take up two other Japanese philosophers, younger than Watsuji: Miki Kiyoshi 三木清 (1897–1945) and Yura Tetsuji 由良哲次 (1897–1979). One of the most prominent figures of the so-called Kyoto School under Nishida Kitarō's charismatic influence, Miki Kiyoshi went to Germany in 1923. Discouraged by the lectures of Rickert in Hiedelberg (as Miki had read Rickert in Japan before his departure), he moved to Marburg to study with Martin Heidegger to whom Rickert recommended him, calling his former German student “a very talented fellow.” There he also befriended Karl Löwith (1897–1973). Returning to Japan in 1927, Miki published *Pasukaru ni okeru ningen no kenkyū* パスカルにおける人間の研究 (1928), and began his extensive activities as a highly reputed journalist, while intensifying his Marxist tendencies. Watsuji moved to Kyoto around that time, as if to avoid any unnecessary concurrence with this younger and brilliantly talented philosophical writer.<sup>57</sup>

Close friend of Miki, Yura Tetsuji had to wait until 1928 for family reasons before going abroad. Yura took the trans-Siberian railway to study in Hamburg with Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), and returned home in 1931. During his stay in Germany he translated into German Nishida's *Eichi teki sekai* 叡智的世界, but Nishida did not permit its publication for fear of criticism.<sup>58</sup> The dissertation Yura completed in Germany was supposedly entitled *Geisteswissenschaft und das Gesetz der Wille* (*Seishin kagaku to ishi no hōsoku* 精神科学と意志の法則; we restore here the German original title from the Japanese one Yura gave). In the supplementary thesis, he compared *ālaya-vijñāna* consciousness in Mahayana Buddhism

55 WTZ, vol. 7, p. 172.

56 For this controversy, see Karube 2010, pp. 254–58.

57 I omit here reference to the criticisms of Watsuji's *Fūdo* by Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun 戸坂潤 since they have often been the subject of discussion.

58 Yomota 2007 (2009), p. 133. Furthermore, in 1938, *Eichiteki sekai* was translated into German by Robert Schinzinger and others. *Zettai mujun teki jiko dōitsu* 絶対矛盾の自己同一 was rendered through the German translation of Nicholas of Cusa as “*die Einheit der Gengensätze*.” See Schinzinger 1971, p. 236.

with the Kantian framework of *Bewußtsein* (consciousness). This subject reminds us of Watsuji's own Ph.D., just published in 1927.

As is well known, the Ph.D. dissertation Watsuji presented at the Imperial University of Tokyo was entitled *Genshi Bukkyō no jissen tetsugaku* 原始仏教の実践哲学 (1927). It attempted to understand the notion of the dharma nature in the *Chūkan* 中觀 (Madhyamika) and *Yuishiki* 唯識 (Consciousness-only) schools of Buddhism in conjunction with the Husserlian phenomenological notion of *kategoriale Anschauung* (*honshitsu chokkan* 本質直観) or *Reduktion* (*kangen* 還元). However, his dissertation was harshly criticized by the distinguished Buddhologist, Kimura Taiken 木村泰賢 (1881–1930), as an insincere and superficially fashionable shortcut. Another scholar Sakakibara Saburō 榊原三郎 of the Imperial University of Kyoto went so far as to refuse Watsuji the Ph.D. degree. It was on his way to Europe that Watsuji prepared his response to Professor Kimura's refutation in the South China Sea; he sent it from Hong Kong.<sup>59</sup>

This controversy shows that attempts at synthesizing Buddhism and Western philosophy in terms of *Erkenntnisstheorie* (theory of perception) were the order of the day. And Yura apparently followed a similar path to Watsuji's after an interval of two years. Tsuchida Kyōson 土田杏村 (1891–1934), a prolific literary critic, had also tried to elucidate Hua-yuan (*Kegon* 華嚴) thought through phenomenology. He may be regarded as their predecessor.

Yura Tetsuji merits our attention because of his political positioning. Among the jury members of Yura's *Doktorarbeit* (i.e. Ph.D. dissertation) was Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968).<sup>60</sup> Both Cassirer and Panofsky had to flee to the United States because of their Jewish background. After his return from Germany, Yura published his *Rekishi tetsugaku kenkyū* 歴史哲学研究 (1937) based on the Japanese translation of his own Ph.D., and dedicated it to his friend Miki Kiyoshi. However, Yura gradually made clear his pro-Nazi stance. It is well known that Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一 (1898–1947), who went to Europe in 1936, chose Yura Tetsuji as his model for Yashiro, the ultranationalist protagonist in his final and unfinished long novel, *Ryoshū* 旅愁 (1948). In his book *Minzoku kokka to sekaikan* 民族国家と世界観 (1943) published in Japanese during the Second World War, Yura Tetsuji warned of the scarcity of reflections on *Volk* and *Geschichte* in the writings of Jewish philosophers. This of course reflects a general tendency in this period of National Socialism. And yet the similarity between Yura's stance and Watsuji's view of the Jewish people cannot be overlooked.<sup>61</sup>

How should we differentiate Watsuji's approach from that of Yura? The crucial figure in this question is Yamada Yoshio 山田孝雄 (1875–1958), linguist and the last representative of the tradition of “national studies” (*kokugaku* 国学). Yura, on the one hand, came progressively closer to Yamada in his studies of the ancient Japanese language and mythology, partaking in the fanatic tendency of “imperial philosophy.” In contrast, Watsuji began to manifest his fundamental disagreement with Yamada. In his *Son'nō shisō to sono dentō* 尊皇

59 Karube 2010, pp. 166–70. Also see Chapter 3, note 15. For Watsuji's refutation, see “Kimura Taiken shi no hihyō ni kotau” (WTZ, vol. 5, pp. 569–80).

60 The hotbed for the thought of Cassirer and Panofsky, who supervised Yura Tetsuji's doctoral dissertation, was Abi Warburg, founder of a private library built in Hamburg. Ludwig Binswanger treated Abi Warburg for his mental disorder. Binswanger is known to have developed his idea of *Daseisanalyse* under the strong influence of Heidegger.

61 Indeed, Watsuji, in the third volume of his *Rinrigaku* (1949), takes pains to refute the idea that the Jewish people were the first to obtain historical awareness.

思想とその伝統, also published in 1943, Watsuji makes his position clear. While Yamada saw in Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) the genuine successor of Moto'ori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), Watsuji objected to this genealogy.<sup>62</sup>

The controversy dealt with two opposing views of Japanese mythical cosmology. Hirata preached the “Way of Ghosts” (*yūmei no michi* 幽冥の道) or the quest of the souls after death, by designating Ame-no-minaka-nushi-no-mikoto 天御中主神 as the presiding divinity. However, Norinaga, according to Watsuji, preached a diametrically opposite view of “the Way of Kami” as “the way of daylight” (*mahiru no michi* 真昼の道), “brightly lit and healthy” (*meirō kattatsu* 明朗闊達). One may presume that Watsuji rejected Yamada's idea of obscurity by opposing to it an Apollonian image of a Sun Goddess divinity, thereby escaping from the prevailing Dionysian tendency of Shinto fanaticism.<sup>63</sup>

Though Watsuji is not explicit on the following point, there is more to this opposition. Muraoka Tsunetsugu 村岡典嗣 (1884–1946) demonstrated as early as 1920 that Hirata had studied Catholicism through the writings of Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1552–1610) so as to consolidate his monotheistic cosmogony of Shintoism.<sup>64</sup> By making tactical use of Christian theology as ideological weaponry, Hirata establishes an extremely self-righteous and egocentric notion of Shinto divinity. Here is a curious paradox: Hirata, while showing much receptivity and a tendency to syncretism in his theoretical apparatus, presents his end product as a self-fulfilling and auto-genetic system that excludes any possible foreign imports. In contrast, Watsuji's basic idea of Japanese culture consolidated around this period was quite the opposite. Watsuji saw Japanese culture in its functionality of maintaining, in terms of spatial coexistence, historically stratified diverse elements that had been assimilated through foreign importation from one period to the next. Judging from such a historical conception of Japanese culture as a stratified accumulation of foreign elements, it was logical that Watsuji saw distortions in Hirata's mono-linear, isolationist, and self-assertive vision of Shinto cosmology.

Ironically, Hirata's vision of Shinto proves excessively monotheistic. In contrast, Watsuji's own view of Shinto was eclectic or syncretistic, if not pantheistic. Paradoxically, Yamada Yoshio's fanatic “imperial philosophy,” based on his interpretation of Hirata, partakes of Judeo-Christianity, despite, or precisely because of, Yamada's opposition to Judeo-Christianity. At the same time, Watsuji's understanding of Shinto as national worship was modeled after an idealized Greek antiquity. The Chinese general strike that Watsuji had witnessed in Shanghai undeniably worked as a catalyst here. It cast a lingering shadow of negative obsession upon his positive perception of Shinto. Indeed, it was as if to oppose Japan to China that Watsuji defined Shinto as a manifestation of the “*Wirklichkeit*” (reality) of the Japanese. Hence the claim of a “*Selbstbewußte sittliche Substanz*,” or a self-conscious ethical substance, a key term given in the German original in Watsuji's notes on ethics, particular to the *fūdosei* of the Japanese archipelago.<sup>65</sup>

62 Karube 2010, pp. 227–31.

63 WTZ, vol. 18, pp. 228–31, 289–90.

64 WTZ, vol. 13, pp. 33–39. Here I refer to Karube 2010, pp. 228–31. It has been known since Muraoka Tsunetsugu's study that Atsutane made use of the work of Matteo Ricci for his notion of Shinto gods. Furthermore, Watsuji developed his discussion of both spiritual bond (*jintai* 韌帯) which forms the state, and the problem of national character, in confrontation with Marxism.

65 Karube 2010, pp. 203, 234.

## 8. Yearning or Nostalgia: Watsuji and His Antiquity

How, then, did this overlapping of idealized Greece upon ancient Japan take form? And how might this imaginary Greco-Japanese likening be related with Watsuji's travel to the West? Interestingly enough, Watsuji did not go sightseeing in Greece. It seems as if he avoided field observation so as to keep intact his idyllic image of ancient and classical Greece. In *Fūdo*, Watsuji relies entirely upon the travel reports of his friend, Abe Yoshishige 安部能成 (1883–1961) as well as bookish statistics on climate in order to consider the *fūdo* of the ancient Aegean Sea. Watsuji selects his topics mainly from the deeds of antiquity, and shows practically no interest in medieval or modern Greece. Watsuji also grasped the contrast between Mediterranean Greek clarity and West European “shadow and melancholy” as local complements in Europe.<sup>66</sup>

It is well known that Watsuji based the *Fūdo* chapter “Makiba” (or “Bokujō”) 牧場—“meadow” in English—on a letter to his wife, Teruko 照子. The description starts from his impression of the spring in Sicily, which he saw from the steamer after passing through the Aegean Sea. In other words, Watsuji's remarks on Greece were not based on Greece at all. As for the difference between the small *polises* in ancient Greece and the vast Roman Empire, Watsuji relied once again upon the hypothesis presented by Kamei Takayoshi 亀井高孝 (1886–1977), as it was delivered to Watsuji “after Kamei's trip to Greece.” According to Kamei, the limit of water supply in ancient Greece was overcome by the Roman construction of the “*Aqua Appia*” (aqueducts of the Appian Way), demonstrating the triumph of human technology over Nature. And yet Watsuji adds, “‘*Civitas Romana*’ practically had nothing to do with the city-state in the Italian Renaissance.”<sup>67</sup>

Watsuji's reflection on “Makiba,” summarized here, was to be integrated into the third part of the third chapter of *Fūdo*, where Watsuji performed a double operation. While paying special attention to the “Light of Reason in the meadow climate,” Watsuji contrasts it with “Emotional Refinement in the Monsoon Climate.”<sup>68</sup> Though the two types formed a contrast, it should not be overlooked that Watsuji conceived the two as supplementing each other. We have already observed a similar pattern of typology operating in Ōnishi Katsunori's binary aesthetic scheme contrasting the West and the East.

However, the juxtaposition of the East by the West did not interest our philosopher. Watsuji instead talks here about the ideal combination of the two as a synthesis. In another article “Kokumin dōtoku ron” (composed in 1931 and published in 1932) written almost in parallel with *Fūdo*, he manifested his hope of realizing in Japan the Hegelian idea of *die selbstbewusste sittliche Substanz* (self-conscious ethical substance), as we have already mentioned.<sup>69</sup> Surprisingly enough, the realization of his hope meant for him “a great restoration and development of the Greek national morality” on Japanese soil.<sup>70</sup> The following question naturally comes to mind: how was it possible for Watsuji to consider Japan to be the legitimate successor of Greek antiquity?

66 WTZ, vol. 8, pp. 118–19.

67 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), p. 143. WTZ, vol. 8, p. 112.

68 WTZ, vol. 8, pp. 118–19.

69 WTZ, vol. 23, p. 101.

70 WTZ, vol. 23, pp. 166–67. “Kokumin dōtoku ron” can be found in *Iwanami kōza kyōiku kagaku* 岩波講座教育科学, vol. 7. Part 1 is partly repeated in *Fūdo*, Chapter 3, Section 2 “Taifu teki seikaku” 台風の性格 in Japan. See WTZ, vol. 23.

In his *Hōryūji e no seishinshi* 法隆寺への精神史 (1994), Inoue Shōichi 井上章一, the eminent scholar of the history of architecture, questions Watsuji's perceptions in *Koji junrei* on Yamato.<sup>71</sup> Looking at the columns of the Hōryūji temple, Watsuji perceived through its *entasis* the vision of pagan temples of ancient Greece. The philosopher also found in the mysterious smile of the Kudara Kan'on 百済観音 (*Avalokiteśvara*) a similarity with the "archaic smile" (*kosetsu no emi* 古拙の笑み) of the Greek *kuroi*. According to Professor Inoue, these discourses were already outdated from the standard of contemporary art historical research, and such a theory of migration of Hellenism to Japan had already been rejected as baseless in academic discussions. Inoue sees here a contradiction. While Watsuji has been regarded as a fashionable writer, in reality, he was old-fashioned. At the same time, Inoue observes a discontinuity in Watsuji. While in his *Koji junrei* our philosopher had emphasized continuity between Greece and Japan, the same Watsuji in *Fūdo* stressed the contrast between Greek "meadow" and Japanese "monsoon." According to Inoue, the shift or lack of integrity in Watsuji corresponds to more general shifts in scholarship.<sup>72</sup>

Interesting as they are, Inoue's interpretations contain in themselves another contradiction. While he refutes, on the one hand, the current stereotype of Watsuji as a writer going with the current, on the other hand, he explains Watsuji's writing as a reflection of the contemporary *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the times). Was Watsuji keeping up with the times or was he not? Was he *unzeitgemäß* or *zeitgemäß*?<sup>73</sup> In addition, I wonder if Inoue's interpretation that Watsuji in *Fūdo* denied parallels between Greece and Japan is not misleading, reflecting the fixed idea or prejudice of Inoue himself. Instead, it may be safely stated from the outset that Watsuji's utterances in *Koji junrei* can hardly meet the academic expectation of scientific rigor or originality, and that his writings cannot be properly located in the isometrics of the scholarly frontline in academic standards. The popular philosophy writer did not necessarily represent the latest scholarship of the day.

Behind Watsuji's "baseless" judgments, it is easy to detect his personal experiences and fortuitous encounters in *Raumlichkeit*, which the chronological contingencies allowed him in his lifetime. Watsuji's emotional attachment to the temple in Ikaruga 斑鳩 may be accounted for by his familiarity with another temple styled Ikarugaji 斑鳩寺, located in the west of Himeji 姫路, not far from where the Watsuji family originated. And one may also recall Watsuji evoking, in his autobiography, his memory of playing at the Taishidō 太子堂 hall, named after Prince Shōtoku 聖徳太子 (574–622), in the precinct of the Kakurinji 鶴林寺 in Kakogawa 加古川, where he spent his childhood. In Watsuji's case, the yearning for (Greek) antiquity fuses with his nostalgic return to his childhood, as if it were a work of *anamnesis*.<sup>74</sup>

71 "Geistesgeschichte" or "*seishinshi*" 精神史 has a special connotation for the contemporary Japanese intellectual, that is hardly reducible to the English "intellectual history." "History of the spirit" sounds strange, so we keep the original German term.

72 Inoue 1994, pp. 186–87, 221–22.

73 This is of course an ironic allusion to *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Either Watsuji was a "timely" observer or not, and the hypothesis developed by Inoue inevitably falls into a paradox on this point.

74 Watsuji 1961, pp. 60, 211.



## 9. Ajanta and Ikaruga

With this in mind, let us now return to the beginning of *Koji junrei*. Was Watsuji really lacking in coherence? The book begins with the description of the day when young students gathered at the Sankei'en 三溪園 villa in Yokohama to appreciate copies of the mural paintings of Ajanta. The copies had just been brought to Japan from India in 1918 by Arai Kanpō 荒井寛方 (1878–1945) and other members of the Japanese expedition. Arai had been invited to India by Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the Indian poet and Asia's first Nobel Laureate, on his visit to Japan 1916. Tagore had come at the invitation of Hara Tomitarō 原富太郎 (1868–1939), the silk tycoon, who had opened his villa and garden to the public. It was there that Tagore stayed. Watsuji's wife, Teru(ko) was a close friend of Haruko 春子, Hara's eldest daughter. This personal tie allowed Watsuji to frequent the villa so as to appreciate the distinguished pieces of art in Hara's collection.

In May 1918, Watsuji spent a day in the villa together with Mr. T. (Tanaka Ichimatsu 田中一松, 1895–1983) and Mr. F. (Fukui Rikichirō 福井利吉郎, 1886–1972) closely looking at the Ajanta copies. That very evening, Watsuji took the train to Kyoto with them. The next morning, on 6 May 1918, Watsuji proceeded to Nara with Mr. and Mrs. Z. (identified as Zen'ichirō, 1892–1937, Hara Tomitarō's son and his wife), and visited the Golden Pavilion of the Hōryūji temple, among other sites. One of his main purposes was to make a comparison between the Ajanta mural and fresco mural paintings with those fresco murals of the Hōryūji temple.<sup>75</sup>

Watsuji's description on this occasion reveals his preconceptions. "In terms of weather, climate and human mentality, the huge Indian subcontinent is totally different from the Greek peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea, but Japan is much closer to Greece." "Hence the voluptuous Indian painting is transformed into a transparent beauty when it is filtered through the Japanese climate," which he qualifies as "soft and serene with moisture (*shime-yaka*)." "And we find here (in Japan) a remote brother of the Greek's aesthetic consciousness." This observation, serving as a sort of *basso continuo*, was to be confirmed in *Fūdo* seventeen years later.<sup>76</sup>

Contrary to what Inoue claims, one should therefore recognize here a tenacious continuity in Watsuji's opinion concerning the similarity between Japan and Greece. One should also add that the adjectival phrase "soft and serene with moisture" would remain Watsuji's favorite qualification of the Japanese national character in his paper "Kokumin dōtoku ron." It is in this paper that Watsuji likens Japanese national character to that of the ancient Greeks in terms of democratic community.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Watsuji 1979, pp. 5, 15, 235–47.

<sup>76</sup> Watsuji 1919, p. 317. See also Inoue 1994, p. 221. In referring to this passage, Inoue claims that Watsuji's view of *Koji junrei*, where Greece was seen as similar to Japan, is incompatible with ideas Watsuji later developed in his *Fūdo*, where Greece is contrasted with Japan. In so doing, Inoue exaggerates discontinuity in Watsuji's thought.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. see also WTZ, vol. 21, p. 324.

### 10. Intuition in the Observation of Details

Finally, it is necessary to examine the peculiarity in Watsuji's methodological approach in *Fūdo*, both in terms of its *Raumlichkeit* and *Zeitlichkeit*. Watsuji's pilgrimage to Yamato in 1918 (*Koji junrei*, 1919) was to be complemented ten years later by his *Itaria koji junrei* イタリア古寺巡礼 during his stay in Europe (1928; published as a book in 1950). Watsuji visited Italy for three months shortly before returning to Japan. On 26 March 1928, he sent to his wife several picture postcards he had purchased at the Uffizi in Florence (Figure 3).<sup>78</sup> The image he mentioned there was from *La Primavera* by Sandro Botticelli (Figure 4). Curiously, the postcard did not show the entire painting but gave only enlarged details of the flowers in the meadow at the footsteps of the pagan goddesses. Why was Watsuji interested in these details, which a careless spectator would have easily overlooked? After observing that the drawings of the flowers showed similar tastes as the decorative paintings by the Rinpa 琳派 school in Japan (the comparison itself had been proposed by Yashiro), Watsuji added in the message to his wife: "I think that the picture cards must have been made as Yashiro proposed."<sup>79</sup>



Figure 3. Watsuji's portrait, taken in front of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, 1928.



Figure 4. Sandro Botticelli, *Primavera*, detail from a picture postcard.

Yashiro Yukio 矢代幸雄 (1890–1975) was a young graduate student of the English Department of the Imperial University of Tokyo, and he served as interpreter when Rabindranath Tagore came to Japan for the first time in 1916. Staying in Europe from 1921 to 1925, Yashiro had become an eminent art historian due to the successful publication of

<sup>78</sup> The letters Watsuji sent to his wife from Europe are included in WTZ, vol. 25, pp. 168–501.

<sup>79</sup> Watsuji 1977, p. 210. His comparisons between Botticelli and Rinpa 琳派 are also drawn from Yashiro Yukio. This passage reappears in revised form in Watsuji 1950 (1991), pp. 212–19. The fact is that the “well-mannered umbrella-shaped pine trees” appear at the end of the discussion on Florence (Watsuji 1977).

his *Sandro Botticelli* in three volumes from the prestigious Medici Society. Yashiro made his reputation by his extensive use of enlarged photographic detail in connoisseurship: his method allowed him to propose new attributions by identifying a hitherto overlooked Botticelli altarpiece. Similar pieces of photography with enlarged detail (such as those inserted in Yashiro's monumental book on Botticelli) seem to have been already on sale as picture postcards by the time Watsuji visited Florence in 1928.<sup>80</sup>

Yashiro's method was the outcome of a recent paradigm shift in scholarship. Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891) had proposed a new methodology by insisting that a typically personal touch of the master can be detected in their unconscious rendering of details. In the quite separate field of criminology, techniques of identifying criminals by examining the form of their earlobes in photos had also developed. According to Carlo Ginzburg, such microscopic attention to detail was a common trait even in psychoanalysis, which claimed to detect mental disorders through tiny symptoms.<sup>81</sup> To suggest this new tendency in scholarship, it will be adequate to mention Abi Warburg (1866–1929). Ernst Cassirer and Erwin Panofsky benefited enormously from the *Kulturwissenschaftlich Bibliothek* (the Library of Cultural Science) that Warburg had privately founded in Hamburg. The former—who taught Yura Kimiyoshi and later examined his Ph.D.—published the monumental *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (1923–29), later translated into English as *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1953–57); the latter would go on to establish iconology beyond the limits of iconography. As a leading scholar in Italian Renaissance art in search of cultural symptoms hidden in insignificant-looking details, Abi Warburg was competing with Bernard Berenson, Yashiro's mentor in Florence. Their scholarly concurrence partly hints at the contemporary intellectual milieu in Europe and accounts for the background of Yashiro's research method.

Warburg's favorite dictum was *Der liebe Gott bleibt im Detail* or “Dear God resides in the detail.” His personal conviction resided in the intuition of deducing the whole from seemingly meaningless details. Watsuji did not seem to be directly aware of such a methodological turn in *Kulturwissenschaften* (the equivalent of this term is lacking in English speaking countries). And Warburg's “Dionysian” inclination must be located in opposition to Watsuji's yearning for “Apollonian” clarity.<sup>82</sup> It is nonetheless true that both of them made full use of picture postcards to establish their “Mnemosyne diagram.”

To say the least, Watsuji's own method subscribed to Yashiro's approach, in that both of them tried to develop audacious hypotheses from tiny, inconspicuous but relevant details. Ide Takashi 出隆 (1891–1980), a specialist on Aristotle, and a close friend of Watsuji who often spent time with him during their stay in Berlin, recalls “with certain envy” Watsuji's

<sup>80</sup> Inaga 2013.

<sup>81</sup> Carlo Ginzburg advocated the idea of seeing signs and symptoms in minutiae within the framework of causation. But Warburg's study of symptoms was guided by the mechanism of over-determination of interdependence, which lay beyond the limit of narrow causation. Hence it is necessary to differentiate between the two, as did Georges Didi-Huberman in his criticism of Ginzburg. On this debate, see Tanaka 2010, pp. 166–70. Here, with a keen eye, Tanaka develops his argument through a comparison of Yashiro's and Warburg's understandings of Botticelli.

<sup>82</sup> WTZ, vol. 1, pp. 202–203; WTZ, vol. 17, p. 277. The dichotomy of “Dionysian” and “Apollonian” stemming from F. Nietzsche, in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), was very popular in Japan from 1910s, and Watsuji himself, together with Abe Jirō, was largely responsible for its diffusion. On Nietzsche reception in Japan, see Sugita 2010. Watsuji's *Studies in Nietzsche* (1913) is analyzed in Sugita 2010, pp. 209–248. As for Natsume Sōseki's intensive reading of *Zarathustra* through an English translation (circa 1905–06), see Hirakawa 2012. Watsuji was one young student who was later to frequent Sōseki's residence.

“straightforwardness in logical thinking.” Watsuji constantly demonstrated his swift ability to “draw a universally valid conclusion from a single fact, or rather his inclination to try and prove a particular conclusion from such a common and ordinary fact” (like the lack of wild weeds in European meadows, as we see now).<sup>83</sup>

The choice of the meadow in *Primavera* is by no means unintentional. In fact, Watsuji in *Fūdo* points out that in European meadows one practically cannot find any weeds, whereas eliminating weeds occupies “almost eighty percent” of all the manual labor in agriculture in East Asia. Watsuji notes that he obtained this suggestion from the aforementioned Professor Ōtsuki of the Faculty of Agriculture of Kyoto Imperial University.<sup>84</sup> And this observation also seems to concur with his detailed observations of the pictorial plane of Botticelli’s masterpiece (where we cannot discern any wild weeds). By the same token, Watsuji, in one of the picture postcards he sent to his wife, observed that the pine trees in Italy took geometrical, cone shapes, and the Italian cypress grew vertically without being tended by gardeners.<sup>85</sup>

These observations allowed him to draw a general conclusion as a dichotomy: he singles out the contrast between the European meadows caressed by mild breezes and the Japanese fields and mountains exposed to strong and violent monsoon winds. This contrast not only accounts for the “tortured trunk of trees depicted in the huge screens of the Azuchi Momoyama 安土桃山 period,” it also proves how artificial and how deeply dependent on human labor is the natural-looking regularity of the alignment of Japanese cypresses (*hinoki* 檜 or *hiba* ヒバ) in Japanese gardens. In contrast, Watsuji remarks that in a climate like that in Europe, “where nature does not manifest any ferocity, nature reveals itself in a rational form” (Figure 5).<sup>86</sup>



Figure 5. Pine tree in Appia Street, with a ruin of water bridge in the background. A picture postcard from the Former Watsuji Family Collection.

This leads Watsuji to infer, on the one hand, that Western natural science is founded in a discovery of *Regelmäßigkeit* (regularity) or rationality in Nature, which human beings are entitled to and summoned to conquer. Watsuji almost defines this *Beruf* (mission, in Max Weber’s terminology) as “the product of meadow climate.” On the other hand, however, the same remark induces Watsuji to deliver a complementary thesis that involves “grasping the human structure of the monsoon area as obedient and passive,” since the humidity in climate there manifests the ferocity of nature as rainstorms and typhoons, which lie

83 See Ide 1973, quoted in Wada et al. 2006, p. 263.

84 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), p. 76. Many Japanese travelers have noted the “absence of weeds” in Europe. Starting from this striking observation, Dennitza Grabakova tries to reexamine unexplored possibilities of Watsuji’s *Fūdo*. The author is indebted to Grabakova 2012.

85 Watsuji 1977, vol. 2, pp. 210–11.

86 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), p. 91. Cf. 1977, vol. 2, pp. 104–105 (Jan. 2, 1928). Cf. pp. 108–109 (Jan. 8, 1928), p. 121 (Jan. 15, 1928).

beyond human control.<sup>87</sup> This contrast, despite seeming to be a naïve climatic determinism, also brings into relief the fundamental difference between Heidegger and Watsuji in their philosophical conceptions.

Heidegger seeks to make necessary a distinction between *Zuhandensein* (readiness-to-hand) and *Vorhandensein* (presence-at-hand) so as to elucidate the relation that *Dasein* or human being/human kind has with its environment.<sup>88</sup> Watsuji saw nature in the West as an entity which may be controlled by human will and technology. In Heidegger's *Zuhandenheit*, a notion which calls to mind a disposable tool like a hammer, Watsuji detected the same attitude toward the natural environment still remaining in the meadow-type climate. In contrast, he perceived nature in the monsoon climate as something which defies human control. *Dasein* (*gensonzai* 現存在) here is implicitly redefined as the entity exposed (*ex-sistere*) to the uncontrollable forces of nature. At the same time, Watsuji gives priority to "in-between-ness" as precedent to each individual *persona*, and tries to found human *Sittlichkeit* (ethics, *jinrin* 人倫) on the state of *Mitsein* (*kyōsonzai* 共存在 or *seken* 世間) in human existence. Watsuji expounds: According to the Chinese expression, the human being is defined as *ningen* 人間, literally meaning "between-human" (to a certain degree similar to the Husserlian *Intersubjektivität*). The Chinese character for indicating the principle of ethics *ren* 仁 (usually translated as "benevolence" or "authoritative conduct") is composed of "human" and "two," suggesting the origin of *Sittlichkeit* as residing in, and originating from, the state of *Mitsein* between two *personae*.

However, as many have already pointed out, this approach to *Mitsein* inevitably drives Watsuji to the temptation of fusing the individual into an idealized community or *sittliche Gemeinschaft* (ethical community, in contrast to a *Gesellschaft* established by a social contract), as in Ferdinand Tönnies's classic work. Watsuji in his system of ethics intentionally discards individual resistance against the moral obligation of belonging to this imaginary community—as well as the question of alienation in Karl Marx.<sup>89</sup> The danger of unconditional fusing with imperial rule in the guise of a nation-state remained subordinated to Watsuji's ideological confrontation with other mainstream wartime ultranationalists. Such are the crucial problems in Watsuji's ethics, which Naoki Sakai, among others, severely criticized from his own Marxist viewpoint.<sup>90</sup>

Here, let me limit myself to pointing out that this contrast between *Zuhandensein* and *Mitsein* shows the basic gap which separates Watsuji from Heidegger. While Heidegger put emphasis on the *Zeitlichkeit* of the *Dasein*, Watsuji finds it more important to consider the *Raumlichkeit* of the climate. This methodological bifurcation of the two thinkers tautologically corresponds to their *fūdōsei*, to use Watsuji's own terminology. Indeed, it also accounts for the fundamental "climatico-mental" (*fūdoteki* 風土的) difference between Western

87 Watsuji 1935 (1943, 1967), p. 92.

88 The notion of "*Zuhandensein*" evokes human existence reduced to the state of a simple tool to be replaced at will by others. *Dasein* distinguishes itself from this degraded state of human existence. This leads to the discussion on *Eigentlichkeit* (authenticity) developed by Ernst Jünger in opposition to the degradation of *das Man* as *Verfallenheit*, and particularly by Theodor Adorno in his *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (1964). This is of course an evidently unfair interpretation that Heidegger tries to avoid and forbids the readers in philosophy to do. Pierre Bourdieu, however, detects in this interdiction the revelation of a forbidden truth. Bourdieu's reading of Heidegger understandably provoked hysteric reactions among scholars in Heidegger studies, precisely because it pointed out what should not be pointed out, and Bourdieu was highly aware of this strategy. See Bourdieu 1982, pp. 170–205.

89 Cf. WTZ, vol. 9, pp. 127, 162–64. WTZ *hoi*, vol. 1, pp. 378–79; vol. 2, pp. 91–105.

90 Sakai 1997, pp. 72–116; notes, pp. 201–205.



metaphysics (a fusion of Greek, Christian and Mediterranean traditions, which privilege *Dasein*) and Eastern *ningengaku* (as it appears as a Japanese-style amalgam of Confucianism and Buddhism, built on the hidden template of Shinto ideology, which pays more attention to *Mitsein*).<sup>91</sup> This gap is all the more crucial as Watsuji tried to overcome it—despite his deterministic description of the climatic conditioning of cultures—by deliberately associating Japanese sentiment with ancient Greek logic.

## Conclusion

The last question we may ask in this context has to do with the intuitive attention to detail which brought Watsuji Tetsurō's eye close to Yashiro Yukio's approach to Western art history. The question may be formulated as follows: Was this intuition regarding detail a manifestation of the monsoon type of climatic-and-mental *fūdosei* which they shared, or should it be interpreted rather as a "moment" of *Zeitlichkeit* accidentally revealed "in contingency" by those two intellectuals who were to confront Western scholarship? To what extent were their maritime travels to the West responsible for this parallel, of which Watsuji, at least, was not unaware?

The year following the publication of Watsuji's *Fūdo*, Takahama Kyoshi, master of haikai poetry, set sail to Europe by steamer together with the novelist Yokomitsu Riichi. On their way to Europe, passengers and crew tried to compose haikai poetry in a climate (tropical, arid, and meadow) where traditional Japanese "words for seasons" (*kigo* 季語) were completely irrelevant. It is commonly stated that haikai poetry instantaneously compresses the perception of the whole world within seventeen syllables. Poetic condensation cannot be achieved without picking up the most hidden details from the unexpectedly revealed aspect of Nature. And the poets share their poetic experience in the "*Mit-einander-sitzung*" or the mutual session of their gathering and competition. One can easily see there the Japanese aesthetic consciousness of *Mitsein* sublimated in conjunction with "seasonal words," thereby fusing climate and mental state in a particular *fūdosei*.<sup>92</sup> Yet one must be fully aware of the danger of such an easy association. The idea of connecting Watsuji's *Fūdo* with Yashiro Yukio's detail-enlarging-observation or Takahama Kyoshi's haikai poetry composed on his way to the West naturally runs the risk of uncritically duplicating Watsuji's swift overlapping way of thinking, which he put into practice in his *Fūdo*.

It may be wise, therefore, to conclude by refraining from making any concluding remark. To what extent is it relevant to apply the idea of *Zeitlichkeit* and *Raumlichkeit* to the making of Watsuji's *Fūdo* itself? The question should be left open, so as not to be snagged by the shaky paradigm Watsuji proposed.<sup>93</sup> However, the marginal reliability and the limited

91 Again, the author uses the term "metaphysics" as Ōhashi Ryōsuke has indicated (Ōhashi 2009, pp. 154–57).

92 For Yokomitsu's itinerary and the details of the waka poem composition during his maritime voyage, see Kojima 2009, pp. 69–82. Takahama Kyoshi, the famous haikai master, took the same ship to Europe, and made detailed observations. (See especially Takahama 1936, pp. 136–37.) On the poetical "topos" of their experience, see Haga 2010, pp. 355–96.

93 Umesao elaborated his ecological view of civilizations in stiff opposition to Watsuji. The vogue of photo-journalism represented by Natori Yōnosuke must be taken into account in this precise context. In fact, Natori's debut as a photo-journalist in Berlin coincided with Watsuji's stay in the same city, while Umesao's photo-documentaries of field-work in the post-War period (both in nomadic areas and in South East Asia) were published in the Asahi photo documentation series supervised by Natori. Lack of space, however, prevents the author from developing the details of the issue here.



relevance of Watsuji's paradigm should now be clear. In this paper the author has tried to test the validity of Watsuji's method in his *Fûdo*, by using it as a blueprint for the examination of his own writing, including *Fûdo* itself. In the final analysis, it turns out that the crucial extent of its validity has been made conspicuous through the application of the "homeopathic" (as against "allopathic") treatment that the present paper intentionally deployed.<sup>94</sup>

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94 For the pair "homeopathic" and "allopathic," see Inaga 1997, p. 336. While "allopathic" approaches use antidotes to the symptom to be treated, the "homeopathic" approach intentionally makes use of the disease-causing substances for analysis. If the former treatment rejects from the outset the *fûdo* type model in its own critical treatment dealing with Watsuji's *Fûdo*, and does not take it seriously, the latter dares to simulate the method inherent in the subject of its own treatment and makes the simulation at the risk of contamination. The present study intentionally takes the second approach so as to reveal the limit of Watsuji's methodology. The pair *humanitas* and *anthropos* was initially proposed by Naoki Sakai, which the present author reinterprets. See Sakai et al. 2001. For the methodological question here, see Inaga 1997, p. 336.

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