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Climate and Ethics

Ethical Implications of Watsuji Tetsuro's Concepts: "Climate" and "Climaticity"

### **Introduction**

We sometimes speak of "nature" (自然) to mean "climate" (風土). In the case of Watsuji Tetsuro (1889-1960), we find this meaning typically used in the field of philosophy. By beginning the first chapter of his famous work *Fudo* 『風土』 (*Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study* by Watsuji Tetsuro, translated by Geoffrey Bownas, 1961), Watsuji states:

I use our word Fu-do [climate], which means literally, "Wind and Earth", as a general term for the natural environment of a given land, its climate, its weather, the geological and productive nature of the soil, its topographic and scenic features. [...] It is not without reason that I wish to treat this natural environment of man not as "nature" but as "climate" in the above sense. (Watsuji, *op.cit.*, p.1)

Ideas of "nature", when subject to cultures and their traditions, may be relative ones, as they are derived from variable views of nature. But philosopher treats the only Nature before nature as an environment, that is, so to speak, a metaphysical concept. In fact, the "climate" in Watsuji's sense must be understood as the same kind. However, why does he dare to discuss "climate" rather than "nature"? To answer this question briefly, we can say, for the moment, that it is because he places ethics in the position of the first philosophy.

Watsuji tried to distinguish "climate" from "nature". It is not because he conceives the "climate" as a modification of "nature". It is true that in the ordinary use of our language the word "climate" can be used as a general term to mean indiscriminately some specific aspects of "nature", such as "its weather, the geological and productive nature or the soil, its topographic and scenic features" (*Ibid.*). We can generally consider these, apart from "topographic and scenic features", as natural phenomena. But the subject Watsuji wants to treat in his work is not something that can be confused with natural phenomena. It is an ontological condition that underlies all the representations, including "nature" itself. And, at the same time, it makes them possible, when it serves a condition proper to the human being and its existence. Every phenomenon of "climate" should be understood as a manifestation of this ontological condition, which is invisible as such, but essential to human existence. Accordingly, the "climate" itself

must be conceived as something that assumes the function of making real all the climatic representations.

"*Fudo-sei*" (風土性: function of climate, climaticity; See the notes below) is the word which appears for the first time in the first line of the Preface of his work *Climate and Culture* published in 1935. There we can see his philosophical definition of the term. We can indeed focus on this work to discuss the climate and its function. But we know that he treats them again in his later work *Rinrigaku* 『倫理学』 (*Ethics*) (cf. *Watsuji Tetsuro's Rinrigaku*, translated by Yamamoto Seisaku and Robert E. Carter, 1996). When we read this later work, we notice that he gives to the word "climate" a new value (or the one which was potentially implied in the earlier work). Then, if we want to take into view the whole system of his ethics called *Watsuji-Rinrigaku*, isn't it necessary to flash back the earlier work *Climate and Culture* from the standpoint of the later work *Ethics*, so that we can rightly reconsider the meaning of "climate" ?

### ***1 - "Fudo" and "fudo-sei" in Climate and Culture***

Let us begin by referring to the concepts of "*fudo*" and "*fudo-sei*" proposed in the 1935 work. This work, *Climate and Culture*, was planned out by Watsuji on the occasion of his travel to Germany for study. After describing his theory concerning climate and its function, the author distinguishes three types of climate, namely, (1) Monsoon, (2) Desert, and (3) Meadow (See *op.cit.*, Chap.2). And then, following this distinction, he discusses the specific characteristics of the different peoples who live under the different climates, and finally tries to bring out the specific peculiarity of the Japanese in depth. This work has been reputed as "such an excellent piece of writing in the field of Japanese cultural studies, that it can not be neglected" (Inoue Mitsusada, the Explanatory notes of *Fudo*, Iwanami-Bunko, Tokyo, 1979, p.292). Indeed, it is true that this kind of evaluation is not so irrelevant. But, to the readers of nowadays, the description about the specific characteristics of peoples in chapter 2 appears so subjective and flawed by present standards, and such a rough typology and a fargoing generalisation would never be accepted. For example, descriptions like "it is the rainy season, brought by the monsoon, that has done most to create the resignation of the Indian" (*Ibid.*, p.25), or like "Europe's natural science was clearly the true product of Europe's meadow climate" (*Ibid.*, p.74) give us an impression that the author's analysis is a typical example of the environmental determinism which is out of date. In fact, Berque gives us interesting reminiscence of the days when he came to Japan and was recommended by a professor to read the English translation of this work: "I read it, but the book which should have lead me to comprehension of the climate of Japan, was unbearably disappointing for me then, because I could not see in it but a stale determinism which

derives the psychology of peoples from characters of the physical climate" (Berque, *Médiance: de milieux en paysages*, Edition Reclus, Montpellier, 1990, p.25. Translated from French by us). It is certainly true that, disappointed with the poverty of descriptions continued from chapter 2, readers nowadays will scarcely judge the true worth of this work.

The true worth of this work consists, first of all, in its originality that it sets the "*fudo-sei*" (function of climate, climaticity) as its main theme for the first time. When readers reread carefully the basic theory treated in its preface and chapter 1 to go on with its theoretical elements in mind, and then they will surely understand, despite numerous defects of descriptions continued from chapter 2, that Watsuji would never explain the determinism. On the contrary, he vividly describes the human beings who live off the given land from the viewpoint of function of climate. He writes:

[...] But this [the characteristics of man of the desert, i.e. willful realism] is not simply the nature of those who inhabit the desert, for they do not live isolated from the desert nor does the desert exist as a natural phenomenon independent of man. Desert man is fundamentally of the desert; the desert is a socio-historical phenomenon. And the nature or the character of a people is, after all, its historically and climatically distinctive way of life. (Watsuji, *op.cit.*, p.58)

People and climate coincide in their essence. Watsuji sees that they manifest themselves as being coincided in a socio-historical reality of human existence which can never realise itself apart from land. In climatic phenomenon, being of a people appears distinctively with its historical background.



The word "*fudo-sei*" appears in the first line of the Preface of the book. From the very beginning, confusion of climate with natural environment is decisively excluded.

My purpose in this study is to clarify the *function of climate* [*fudo-sei*] as a factor within the structure of human existence. So my problem is not the ordering of man's life by his natural environment. (Watsuji, *op.cit.*, p.v. The keywords are italicised by us.)

One of the reasons why Watsuji wrote this book was, as he confessed, to criticise Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, which he had read when he stayed in Berlin. "I found myself, said Watsuji frankly, intrigued by the attempt to treat the structure of man's existence in terms of time but I found it hard to see, why time had thus been made to play a part in the structure of subjective existence, at the same juncture space also was not postulated as part of the basic structure of existence. Indeed it would be a mistake to allege that space is never taken into account in Heidegger's

thinking, [...] yet even so it tended to be almost obscured in the face of the strong glare to which time was exposed. I perceived that herein lay the limitations of Heidegger's work [...]" (*Ibid.*). We can't judge if his criticism should be right or not, but here we see certainly that, what he aimed at when he treated climate and its function was to make clear the fundamental structure of human existence, and that his motivation was so philosophical, as to utilise the method of criticism of phenomenology. So finally, his work *Climate and Culture* can not be a kind of Japanese cultural studies.

In chapter 1, he clarified what the *phenomena of climate* were, through an examination of the concept of *intentionality*. "How can we know, he asks to himself, the independent existence of the cold before we feel cold? It is impossible. It is by feeling cold, that we discover the cold. It is simply by mistaking the intentional relationship that we consider that the cold is pressing in on us from outside [...]" (*Ibid.*, p.2). Thus he opens the argument by employing the phenomenological notion of intentionality. Think of an experience of the cold, and then you will see that your feeling of cold precedes the cold itself. Seen from the other side, however, this kind of experience realises the self of consciousness defined as an intentional relationship. "Therefore, he said, in feeling the cold, we discover ourselves in the cold itself" (*Ibid.*, p.3). But, at this juncture, the self-consciousness here realised in this way, has already comprehended the community, and this is the point that Watsuji affirms. As we will read in the following paragraph: "[...] it is "we", not "I" alone that experience the cold. We feel the same cold in common" (*Ibid.*, p.4); That is, according to him, "I" as "we" and "we" as "I" are given in this kind of intentional experience of consciousness. And he affirms that, under the climate which is naturally a concrete space where such an emotional experience of the cold is placed, realises the self who is primarily "we" in this "mutual relationship" (*Ibid.*). Let us cite a statement of the author who is an excellent rhetorician:

When we enter a warm room after walking in the cold wind, when we stroll in the mild spring breeze after a cold winter is over, or when we are caught in a torrential shower on a boiling hot summer day, we first of all apprehend ourselves within such meteorological phenomena, which are other than ourselves. Again, in changes in the weather, we first of all apprehend changes in ourselves. This weather, too, is not experienced in isolation. It is experienced only in relation to the soil, the topographic and scenic features and so on of a given land. A cold wind may be experienced as a mountain blast or the cold, dry wind that sweeps through Tokyo at the end of the winter. The spring breeze may be one which blows off cherry blossoms or which caresses the waves. So, too, the heat of summer may be of the kind to wither rich verdure or to entice children to play merrily in the sea. As we find our gladdened or pained selves in a wind that scatters the cherry blossoms, so do we apprehend our wilting selves in the very heat of summer that scorches down on plants and trees in a spell of dry weather. In other words, we find ourselves—ourselves as an element in the "mutual relationship"—in "climate".

Such self-apprehension is not the recognition of the "I" as the subject that feels the cold and the heat or as the subject that is gladdened by the cherry blossoms. In these experiences we do not look towards the "subject". We stiffen, or we put on warm clothes, or we draw near the brazier when we feel cold. Or, we may feel more concern about putting clothes on our children or seeing that the old are near the brazier. Charcoal burners make charcoal in the mountains, and textile factories produce clothing materials. Thus, in our relationship with the cold, we come to engage ourselves, individually and socially, in various measures for protecting ourselves from the cold. [...] (Watsuji, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5)

The *climate* is, therefore, not only a physical space in which live human beings who are primarily "mutual relationship", but also a metaphysical space which conditions *a priori* the realisation of the self as such a "mutual relationship". The *phenomena of climate* are, therefore, nothing but a manifestation of the self as "we". And its *function* consists of the essence of us who appears as this self. The same essence appears in technical measures of our lives, which have their roots in the climate.

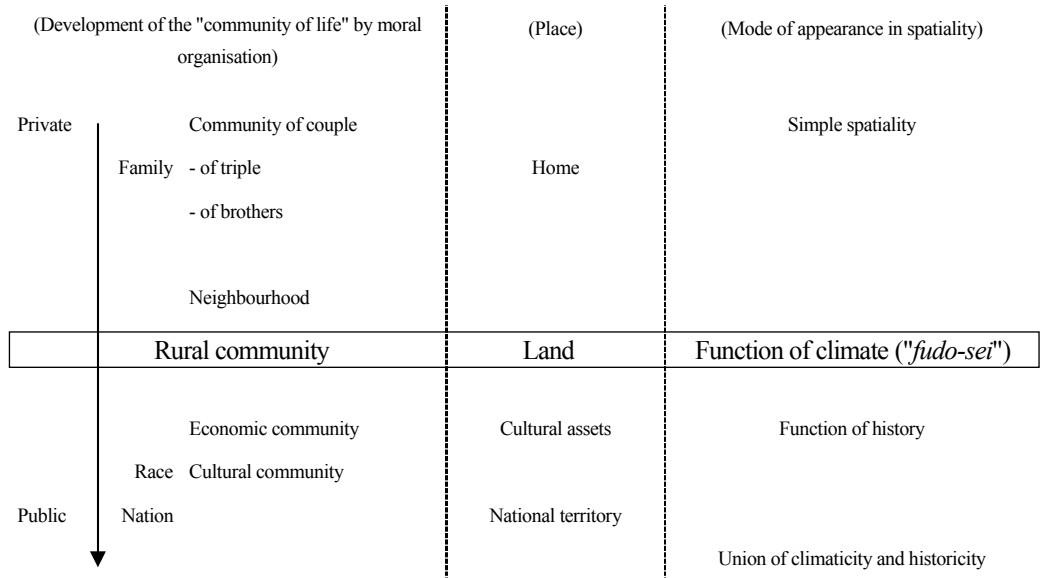
Or, we can say that the philosopher grasped the climate in the dimension of *corporeity*. Our bodily existence which coincides with the climate, comprehends in it the coexistence of the various "mutual relationships".

## 2 - "*Fudo*" and "*fudo-sei*" in *Rinrigaku*

It is necessary to place the concepts of "*fudo*" and "*fudo-sei*" into the system of *Rinrigaku* 『倫理学』 (*Ethics*), a monumental work of Watsuji, to reexamine them. What role do these concepts assume in the system, which is so unique as to be called *Watsuji-Rinrigaku* (和辻倫理学: Watsuji's original ethics), as a factor in the construction of itself?

"*Fudo*" (climate) is a modification of the "primordial space" of human beings, as well as "*fudo-sei*" (function of climate or climaticity) being a mode of appearance of the "subjective spatiality". These modifications and their appearance, which are actualised in the forms of realisation of the "moral organisation", can be accomplished gradually, according to the development of the "community of life" within the spatial determinations of human existence. Climate, as one step in the process of this development, assumes the role to bridge a hiatus between the private form and the public form of the "moral organisation": "The spatiality of human beings appears as a *function of climate*, by concretion of the community [in its development from the *family* to the *rural community*" (cf. Watsuji, *Rinrigaku*, in Complete Works (*Zenshū*) [= C.W.], Vol. XI, Iwanami-Shoten, Tokyo, 1962, p.95. Translated by us).

Let us schematise, as shown below, the steps of the development of the "community of life" by moral organisation, the concrete places corresponding to them, and the modes of appearance in spatiality.



Thus, we see that it is when the "community of life" exceeds home and uses the land as a basis for establishing itself that the function of climate appears.

By the way, in the system of Watsuji's ethics, "*ningen*" (human being) and "*ningen's sonzai*" (human existence) are the words which already have the proper meanings to his ethics. In the course from article 2 to article 4 in chapter 1 of *Ethics as the study of ningen* 『人間の学としての倫理学』, he defined them exactly. For him, the minimum unit of *ningen* is not an individual. It is a "betweenness" or a "mutual relationship" which implies in itself some spatial community. Why does it imply spatiality? Because the "betweenness" (間) of "*nin-gen*" (人間) supposes some space. Moreover, the "betweenness" isn't the space between two independent and individual human beings who are transcendent to each other, but the space of mutual relationship which is subjectively (or intersubjectively) unique exercises the relation between self and other. Therefore, the expansion of this original space equals the development of moral organisation.

Watsuji sees the essence of human existence (*ningen's sonzai*) in "double structure". The point of his logic consists in the argument that the constructive elements of this structure negate each other. Note that this is the starting point of his ethical thinking: "No matter which topic of everyday existence of *ningen* we take up, he says, we are inevitably enabled to probe this *double*

structure" (*Watsuji Tetsuro's Rinrigaku*, p.22. Italicised by us). Certainly, we always assume some double existence in everyday life. For example, we are simply a man or a woman in a couple, but a father or a mother as a member of a family at the same time. And sometimes this kind of doubleness entails a dilemma. For, the position as an individual and the position in the totality contradict each other. But Watsuji grasps this contradictory existence of *ningen* as a single "movement of negation".

A detailed grasp of this double structure will reveal that it is precisely a *movement of negation*. On the one hand, the standpoint of an acting "individual" comes to be established only in some way as a negation of the totality of *ningen*. An individual who does not imply the meaning of negation, that is, an essentially self-sufficient individual, is nothing but an imaginative construction. On the other hand, the totality of *ningen* comes to be established as the negation of individuality. A totality that does not include the individual negatively is also nothing but a product of the imagination. These two negations constitute the dual character of a human being. And what is more, they constitute a single movement. (*Ibid.* The keywords are italicised by us.)

Without totality as an object of negation, there cannot be any individual; in the same manner, without an individual as an object of negation, there cannot be totality. And we cannot tell whether totality precedes or an individual does.

[...] both individuals and the whole subsist not in themselves, but only in the relationship of each with the other.

The relationship with the other that is now under consideration is a negative relationship in both cases. The essential feature characteristic of the independence of an individual lies in its rebelling against the whole, and the essential feature characteristic of the wholeness of the whole lies in its negating the independence of an individual. Hence, an individual is one whose individuality should be negated for the sake of the whole that is to be established, and the whole is that ground against which an individual rebels to establish itself. That the one exists in relation to the other means that it exists by negating the other and by being negated by it as well.

What I have described as a human being's existence as betweenness is that which renders individuals and societies capable of occurring in their reciprocal negations. (*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102)

Individuals and the whole are united as one in their reciprocal negations. Thus, they come to exist simultaneously. Moreover, their existence isn't static, but dynamic. It is because Watsuji wanted to point out this aspect of human existence that he states that "this double structure [...] is precisely a movement of negation" and "constitute[s] a single movement" (*Ibid.*).

He describes vividly the way of this movement, according to the process of development of familial community.



A community of three members cannot be formed by adding a member to a community of two members. It is properly and essentially a community of three members, and structurally different from that of two members. A community of two members requires a radical extinction of the self of each in itself, but, at the same time, it is defined, to the outside world, as an strictly private and exclusive entity. Public recognition sublates[denies and sets off] the private character of this kind of community by recognising this private entity as it is. However, in the case of a community of three members, the private existence can never be admitted. If admitted, the community will not be established. Even if two of three members form an exclusively private entity, this private entity must be abolished when the three come together to make a community. In this scene, the "self" of the two in their private existence must be negated. This negation may be demonstrated by phenomenon of the third person. Establishment of a community of two members is characterized by excluding the third person, because he renders it impossible. But, to establish a community of three members, an intervention of the third person is essential. Consequently, the private entity of the only two cannot be formed in the middle of a community of three members. (cf. Watsuji, *Rinrigaku*, in C.W., Vol. X, *op. cit.*, p. 387. Translated by us.)

The private character of a community of two members is sublated[denied and set off] in a community of three members. The three members must assist reciprocally and fully. There the "self" is negated in a wider sense than in a community of two members, and so their coexistence shall be realised in a wider sense. Moreover, this expansion is not only a change of quantity, but also a transformation of quality. In a community of a man and a woman, their coexistence right away makes an exclusive and private entity. However, in a community of a father, a mother and a child, their coexistence no longer needs to be concealed. (*Ibid.*, pp.391-392. Translated by us.)

However, where does this movement of negation which "sublates [denies and sets off] the private character" of preceding community go? At what goal will it arrive? To this question, Watsuji answers decisively.

The *sonzai* of *ningen* [human existence] is not only the movement of negation between the individual and the whole. It must also consist in the restoration of totality through indefinite numbers of individuals opposing each other in their disruption into self and other. (*Watsuji Tetsuro's Rinrigaku*, p.24)

But, why should "the restoration of totality" be aimed at? Why should the totality be realised finally?

Watsuji reduces the reason why "the restoration of totality" should be aimed at, to the fact that the essence of human existence, which consists in its "double structure", is characterized by negating each other. He wrote:

Now, that *ningen's sonzai* is, fundamentally speaking, a movement of negation makes it clear that the basis of *ningen's sonzai* is negation as such, that is, absolute negation. The

true reality of an individual, as well as of totality, is "emptiness" (空), and this emptiness is the absolute totality. Out of this ground, from the fact that this emptiness is emptied, emerges *ningen's sonzai* as a movement of negation. The negation of negation is the self-returning and self-realising movement of the absolute totality that is precisely social ethics (i.e. *Sittlichkeit* in German). Therefore, the basic principle of social ethics is the realisation of totality (as the negation of negation) through the individual, (that is, the negation of totality). This is, after all, the movement of the realisation of absolute totality. (*Ibid.*, p. 23. )

The reason why totality is fundamental lies in the fact that the essence of human existence (*ningen's sonzai*), which means nothing but a "mutual relationship" (or "betweenness"), consists in its "emptiness". Because the movement of negation doesn't begin with a finite being such as an individual or the whole, but with an infinite "emptiness" (which is not a "nothingness", for it really exists as a movement of negation), therefore the restoration of this "emptiness" (which is another name for the "absolute totality", lacking the selfness as such in itself), should be proclaimed.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, we have seen the basic construction of Watsuji's ethical system. Now, if we place the concepts of "*fudo*" (climate) and "*fudo-sei*" (function of climate or climaticity) into this system to reexamine them, and we will confirm, firstly, not only the ontological character of these concepts, but, secondly, the political character of them. Before we conclude, let us go back again to what Watsuji wrote:

The space fully liberated [to our eyes, that is, to the public] is so objective that there scarcely remains any trace of subjectivity. But it was primordially a space [i.e., "betweenness"] in which an subjective "mutual relationship" was realised. We may regard this primordial space as a kind of place where practical understanding should be attained. It is in this kind of place that things manifest by themselves. It is also the origin of our understanding, by which all the discoveries of natural objects should be made. (cf. Watsuji, *Rinrigaku*, in C.W., Vol. XI, *op. cit.*, pp.93-94. Translated by us.)

As he wrote, the space of a subjective (or an intersubjective) "mutual relationship" ("betweenness") comes first. And it is not only the "place where practical understanding should be attained", but also the "origin of our understanding", which makes "things manifest by themselves". But it is "accessible only by *expression*, and cannot be an object of observation in itself" (*Ibid.*).

By the way, among the various forms of this kind of "expression", the only way to access this intersubjective space which is to determine itself in land, is "phenomena of climate [...] as expressions of subjective human existence" (Watsuji, *Climate and culture*, p.v).



Here we conclude:

1<sup>o</sup> - The logic that the invisible (the primordial space or place) functioning as a subject manifests itself by determining itself in some concrete spaces and place—home, land, cultural assets and national territory—, corresponds to what is called *logic of place*, which Watsuji owes to Nishida. While Nishida emphasised the aspect of the *cause* of recognition ("place of nothingness"), Watsuji seems to stress the aspect of the *effect* of movement of the principle of being ("movement of negation" by which "emptiness is emptied"). And the *effect* appears always through act of expression.

A thing *is*; things *are*. But Watsuji says, "that things *are* means that things *are possessed* by human beings, so that the determination of *being* equals the determination of the manner of *possessing* things and ideas of human beings" (cf. Watsuji, *Ethics as the study of ningen*, in C.W., Vol. IX, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149. Translated by us). Therefore, we can admit to the following proposition : "the wind *is possessed* by human beings, so the wind *is*" (*Ibid.*). The simple fact that "the wind *is*" cannot be understood without referring to the life of human beings who possess the wind, because the expression of *ningen's sonzai* (human existence) is involved in this, and the phenomena of climate intervene necessarily there. For Watsuji, who considers that the foundation of all the beings consist in human existence, ontology is nothing but anthropology. Consequently, his ethics as the study of *ningen* (human beings) gets the place of the first philosophy.

2<sup>o</sup> - The first philosophy corresponds with a political philosophy (or nationalism). Let's point out the problems which are the necessary conclusions of the first philosophy.

In the first place, *nation* which is the most public form of the moral organisation, is placed at the end of the continuation of the less public forms like *family*, *neighbourhood*, *rural community*, *economic community* and *cultural community* (see the diagram shown before). Then a *land* becomes nothing but a *national territory* and a race or a *people* in the national sense. Watsuji philosopher argues that in a nation state the extension of land and the history of people should be united. And here, he affirms, the "movement of realisation of absolute totality" will show its true character. We see, however, that he emphasises only the aspect of self-determination of the moral organisation in space and place, and doesn't care for the margin. The strong will for unity rules his ethical thinking. To him who believes that "the national unity is more important than anything else" and that "people who lost their unity remains no longer a people"(cf. Watsuji,

*Rinrigaku*, in C.W., Vol. XI, *op. cit.*, p. 393. Translated by us), the problem of *public* seems to be identified with that of *unity*. And emphasising the historical fact that "[...] it [i.e. Japanese people's unity] has been grasped since ancient days as the *public* (「おおやけ(公)」)", he affirms that "now this *public* must be raised up to plain awareness, and therefore the service to the *Emperor* should be understood again as a service to the "public"(*Ibid.*). In addition, this kind of tendency in Watsuji may have something to do with the tendency to emphasise the *effect* of the self-determination movement (that is, the principle of being), though he started from the standpoint of the *logic of place* (Nishida), a tendency which seems to be characteristic of him.

It is true that the public which doesn't root in any community is fictional, but should we agree to his affirmation that the public must be identified with the unity right away? Considering the basic construction of his ethics in which the unity of subject cannot be understood as anything else but the unity of the moral organisation, it may be impossible to imagine the plurality of subject. And we say that this is the necessary conclusion of his system and its fatal flaw as an ethical theory. The same problem arises concerning climate and function of climate. Because the land in and on which the phenomena of climate appear is identified with the national territory, the various ways of its function as such are neglected.

In the second place, we can point out the absence of the *ipseity* (authentic selfness). Watsuji's ethics which posits the "emptiness" as a principle of being cannot make clear the whereabouts of the responsibility. Because all is the result of the fact that the "emptiness is emptied", the responsibility is nowhere. Accordingly, his ethics may justify what is called *logic of the irresponsibility*. This flaw, we dare to say, must be an unconquerable obstacle, if we try to reconstruct an ethical system, basing it upon the works of this philosopher.

### Notes

Or *médiance* in French. The word *médiance* is a neologism by Augustin Berque (cf. *op. cit.* [see p. 3], p. 48). He defines it as *atmosphere / signification / direction of an environment; at the same time an objective tendency, sensation / perception / and signification of this environmental relation* [sens d'un milieu; la fois tendance objective, sensation / perception et signification de cette relation médiale (*Ibid.*)].

In addition to the case of Watsuji, we can cite that of Berque, who treats *médiance* recently. Reading Watsuji's work from his original point of view, he identifies the human existence in the *milieu* (which is for the "climate" in Berque's French translation)\* with its relationship to nature as *trajetction*.\*\* The *milieu* consists of the bilateral intercourse between man and nature. It is the social space of human life which extends over both spheres, physical and phenomenal, objective and subjective at the same time.

Berque learned from Watsuji about the "climate" ("*Fudo*" - *milieu* in his French translation) and its function ("*Fudo-sei*": 風土性 - function of climate or climaticity (cf. Watsuji, *op. cit.*, p. v.) - *médiance* in his French translation), but he conceives his original ethics, differently from Watsuji, from the viewpoint of *écoumène*.\*\*\* According to Berque, what we must and can maintain is above all our space of life where we live in some subjective manner, and it is never some wilderness which is isolated from human life. In other words, it is *écoumène* as a sphere of habitation.

*Écoumène* and ethics are united conceptually. In this living sphere, people act ethically. Or, it is better to say that, when people act ethically, then the function of climate (*médiance*) works naturally there. So it follows that, when the ethics of a given community collapses, its *milieu* lapses accordingly. This must be the natural conclusion of Berque's argument.

He is trying to open a way to "ethics of the *écoumène*" in place of environmental ethics. As we see in the case of Watsuji, the concept of "climate" has a necessary connection with ethics, if we are basing ourselves upon the concept of *écoumène*, it will be easier to construct an ethical system rather than basing ourselves upon that of the environment which isn't necessarily connected with ethics. In the following discussion, we aim to make the difficulties clear which may be supposed when we construct an ethical system of *écoumène*.

As for French translation of Watsuji's work and its explanatory notes, see Berque, "*La théorie du milieu de Watsuji Tetsuro*" and "*Préambule et premier chapitre de Fudo*", in *Philosophie*, No.51, Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1er septembre 1996, pp.3-8; 9-30.

\* *Relation of a society to space and nature. Synonyms : environmental or mesologic relation. This relation is at the same time physical and phenomenal [relation d'une société à l'espace et à la nature. Syn.: relation médiale ou mésologique. Cette relation est à la fois physique et phénoménale (Ibid.)].*

\*\* *Environmental and historic combination of the subjective and the objective, of the physical and the phenomenal, of the ecological and the symbolic, which produces a médiance [combinaison médiale et historique du subjectif et de l'objectif, du physique et du phénoménal, de l'écologique et du symbolique, produisant une médiance. D'où : trajectivité, trajectif, trajecter (Ibid.)].*

\*\*\* Cf. Berque, *Chikyu to Sonzai no Tetsugaku* 『地球と存在の哲学』: *Philosophy of Earth and Existence*, Chikuma-Shinsho, Tokyo, 1996, p. 9: "What is *écoumène*? The author asks himself. It is an old word. It is derived from the Greek word *oikos* which means 'habitation', and we recognise its stem *éco-* in those words: *ecology, economics*." (Translated from Japanese by us.)

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