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*David Dilworth* Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960):  
Cultural phenomenologist and ethician

With Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) and Tanabe Hajime (1885–1962), the reputation of Watsuji Tetsurō continues to command respect among academic philosophers of modern Japan.<sup>1</sup> Watsuji and his friend, the Personalist philosopher Abe Jirō (1885–1959), gained attention in the Taishō period (1912–1926) as philosophical spokesmen of the idealistic aesthetics of the *Shirakabaha* writers and of the two greatest novelists of the period, Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) and Mori Ōgai (1862–1922).<sup>2</sup> The mature Watsuji went on to become professor of ethics at Kyoto University and then Tokyo Imperial University (Tokyo University), where he wielded considerable influence in academic circles until his death in 1960. His complete works in twenty volumes, published by Iwanami in 1963, are thus a mirror in which much of modern Japanese intellectual history is reflected.<sup>3</sup> A separate anthology of Watsuji's writings, edited by Karaki Junzō in 1963, has gone through seven printings to date.<sup>4</sup>

Regarded by his compatriots as an exceptional writer, Watsuji was also an independent thinker acclaimed for his elaboration of such concepts as the “stadial character” (*jūsōsei*<sup>a</sup>) of Japanese culture, the relation between “human climate” (*fūdo*<sup>b</sup>) and culture, and his original system of “ethics as the study of man” (*ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku*<sup>c</sup>). In this article I shall attempt to portray Watsuji both as a cultural phenomenologist and as an original ethician who is representative of the kind of East-West philosophical dialogue gen-

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<sup>1</sup> On Nishida and Tanabe, see Takeuchi Yoshinori, “Modern Japanese Philosophy,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, rev. ed., 1966, vol. 12, pp. 958J–962. Briefer, but separate entries on Nishida and Watsuji contributed by the same author appear in the 1967 edition, p. 532 and p. 309, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Okazaki Yoshie, ed., *Japanese Literature in the Meiji Era*, trans. and adapted by V. H. Viglielmo (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunkō, 1955), p. 583; Arima Tatsuo, *The Failure of Freedom: A Portrait of Modern Japanese Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 110–112. (The *Shirakabaha* [White Birch Society] literary journal was the focal point of a group of Neo-Idealist writers of the Taisho period including Arishima Takeo, Shiga Naoya, Mushakoji Saneatsu, Kojima Kikuo, Nagayo Yoshio, Yanagi Muneyoshi, and Satomi Ton.)

<sup>3</sup> *Watsuji Tetsurō zenshū* [The complete works of Watsuji Tetsurō], 20 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963) (hereafter cited as *Zenshū*). There are three brief studies of Watsuji available in English: G. K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862–1962: A Survey* (Tokyo: Enderle Bookstore, 1968), “The Ethical System of Watsuji Tetsurō,” pp. 131–145; Furukawa Tetsushi, “Watsuji Tetsurō: The Man and His Works,” in Watsuji Tetsurō, *Climate: A Philosophical Study*, Geoffrey Bownas, trans. (Tokyo: Japanese Government Printing Bureau, 1962), pp. 209–235; Robert Bellah, “Japan’s Cultural Identity: Some Reflections on the Work of Watsuji Tetsurō,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 24, no. 4 (Aug., 1965); 573–594. Bellah’s approach is polemical, deriving support from the Japanese ideological critiques of Watsuji and of the Kyoto school to which Watsuji was peripherally related, leveled by such writers as Maruyama Masao, Ienaga Saburō, Arima Tatsuo, and the Marxist philosopher Tōsaka Jun.

<sup>4</sup> Karaki Junzō, ed., Watsuji Tetsurō, vol. 28, *Gendai Nihon shisō taikai* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1963).

erated out of the modern Japanese context. To this end I shall briefly recapitulate the stages of Watsuji's literary career and trace the key influence of Natsume Sōseki during Watsuji's formative years, present Watsuji's central concepts of "human climate" (*fūdo*) and of "man" (*ningen*<sup>d</sup>), and finally outline the leading ideas of his ethical system.

#### I. AN OVERVIEW OF WATSUJI'S WRITINGS

Watsuji was born in the village of Nibuno, now a part of Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture, in 1889. His father was a retiring Confucian-style doctor of samurai ancestry, who took the phrase *i wa ninjutsu nari*<sup>e</sup> (medicine is the art of benevolence) as his professional motto. In his unfinished *Autobiography* Watsuji relates how he was increasingly indebted in his later years to the memory of his father, the essence of whose life had consisted in *chūjitsu*<sup>f</sup>, loyalty and devotion to his fellow villagers practiced in the relative obscurity of his calling.<sup>5</sup> After a youthful *sturm-und-drang* period, Watsuji went on to repossess the experience of village, family, and the Confucian relationships between persons in the form of his original ethical system. The concept of "human climate," that is, the concrete spatial-historical structures in which man's self-understanding and self-expression are primordially embodied in the cultural environment, and the concept of *ningen* interpreted as the concrete structure of "human," and accordingly, ethical relationships in the family, community, and nation, became the two pillars of Watsuji's mature thought. According to Karaki Junzō, it was Sōseki's creative art which bridged Watsuji's early family experiences and his later sensibility to spatial and historical intentionalities in the cultural-ethical sphere.<sup>6</sup>

I shall first give an overview of the phases of Watsuji's development before returning to Sōseki's influence. Watsuji was apparently a gifted youth who, as Robert Bellah observes, enjoyed the comparatively rare opportunity of exposure to the newly Westernized educational system being created by the Meiji government. In 1906 he was sent to the First Higher School in Tokyo where Sōseki, just returned from England and the already acclaimed author of *I Am a Cat*, *Botchan*, etc., was an instructor. Watsuji majored in English literature and became especially absorbed in Byron and the other Romantic poets. During these years he wrote two novels, one play, and several essays for the school magazine. A year after entering the philosophy department of Tokyo Imperial University at the age of twenty-one, he copublished a literary magazine with his classmates, Tanizaki Junichirō and Osanai Kaoru, in 1910. Watsuji wrote two plays and several essays on dramatic criticism and participated in

<sup>5</sup> *Watsuji Tetsurō zenshū*, vol. 18. This testimony to his father's influence is also found in Watsuji's "Watakushi no shinjō" in Karaki, *Gendai Nihon shisō taikai*, pp. 424-434.

<sup>6</sup> Karaki, *Gendai Nihon shisō taikai*, p. 14.

the “Free Theater” movement initiated by Osanai Kaoru. Then, in 1912, under the inspiration of Koeber *sensei* and his teacher Nitobe Inazo, Watsuji wrote a graduation thesis on Nietzsche. Nietzsche had been introduced into Japan about a decade before by Takayama Chōgyū (1871–1902) and had been absorbed as one moment in Sōseki’s aesthetic of the creative individual. But the Tokyo University philosophy faculty, under the leadership of Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944), was inimical to the poetic philosophy of Nietzsche’s kind; Watsuji had to substitute a thesis entitled “Schopenhauer’s Pessimism and Theory of Salvation” just in time for graduation.<sup>7</sup>

If these details give evidence of an auspicious beginning, the unfolding record of Watsuji’s literary and scholarly accomplishments is even more impressive. He published, at the age of twenty-four, his *Nietzschean Studies*<sup>8</sup> as an independent book in 1913; two years later he published a study of Kierkegaard. The twenty-six-year-old Watsuji’s *Søren Kierkegaard*<sup>9</sup> (1915) is credited with having introduced Kierkegaard into Japan; Watsuji later studied under Heidegger, and virtually pioneered the interest in existentialism that came to have a major impact upon both prewar and postwar Japanese philosophy and literature. From this point of view he was already a representative figure of the early Taishō period.

Then, under the impact of Sōseki in his mid-twenties, Watsuji wrote *Gūzō saikō* [Revival of idols] in 1918,<sup>10</sup> a work advocating the revival of the spirit of antiquity. In the spirit of Nietzsche, he attacked the modern bourgeois spirit and called for a revival of the cultural sensibilities of the Japanese past. *Gūzō saikō* also contained Watsuji’s reminiscence of Sōseki, written eight days after the novelist’s death in 1916, as we shall see later. In 1919 Watsuji wrote *Koji junrei* [Pilgrimage to ancient shrines],<sup>11</sup> a narrative of what turned out to be an aesthetic pilgrimage to the temples and art treasures of the Nara region. In 1920 at the age of thirty-one, he wrote *Nihon kodai bunka* [Ancient Japanese culture],<sup>12</sup> which was an attempt to reanimate the ancient Japanese spirit through a comparative literary study of the *Kojiki*, *Nihongi*, *Manyōshū*, and archaeological evidence of classical Japanese antiquity.<sup>13</sup>

By this point Watsuji was on the way to becoming one of the great comparative cultural historians of modern times. Influenced by Neo-Kantian historiography, by Husserl’s phenomenology, and Scheler’s value-philosophy, as well as by the theoretical ground in these areas being explored by Nishida Kitarō at

<sup>7</sup> Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Thought*, p. 132; Furukawa, “Watsuji Tetsurō . . .,” pp. 218–219; Bellah “Japan’s Cultural Identity,” p. 578.

<sup>8</sup> *Nietzsche kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1913); *Zenshū*, vol. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Søren Kierkegaard* (Tokyo, 1915); *Zenshū*, vol. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Gūzō saikō* (Tokyo, 1918); *Zenshū*, vol. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Koji junrei* (Tokyo, 1919); *Zenshū*, vol. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Nihon kodai bunka* (Tokyo, 1920); *Zenshū*, vol. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Furukawa, “Watsuji Tetsurō . . .,” pp. 219–224.

Kyoto University,<sup>14</sup> Watsuji went on to explore various cultural-historical intentionalities of the East and the West in a series of influential works. His *Nihon seishinshi kenkyū* [Research into the history of the Japanese spirit] came out in successive volumes in the mid-twenties and mid-thirties.<sup>15</sup> During this time he also published *The Significance of Primitive Christianity in the History of World Culture* in 1926,<sup>16</sup> and *The Practical Philosophy of Primitive Buddhism* in 1927.<sup>17</sup> His *Critique of Homer*,<sup>18</sup> although published in 1946, was written at this time. Watsuji also wrote his *Porisuteki ningen no rinrigaku* [The ethics of the man of the Greek polis], in 1932 (which was later published in 1948),<sup>19</sup> and this was followed by a study entitled *Confucius* in 1936.<sup>20</sup> One of his most popular works, *Fūdo* [Climate: a philosophical consideration] dates back in manuscript form to 1929, and was published in 1935.<sup>21</sup> In this category of cultural history, Watsuji went on to publish *Sakoku: Nihon no higeiki* [National seclusion: Japan's tragedy] in 1950;<sup>22</sup> and his major work in this category, the two-volume *Nihon rinri shisōshi* [History of Japanese ethical thought] came out in 1952.<sup>23</sup> These were followed by a study of *Katsura rikkyū*

<sup>14</sup> Watsuji was called to Kyoto University by Nishida Kitarō in 1925. Concerning Nishida's interest in Watsuji and the former's influence on him, see Kōsaka Masaaki, *Nishida Kitarō to Watsuji Tetsurō*, (Tokyo: Shin-Chōsha, 1964), pp. 16–18, 106–111, and Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought*, p. 143.

<sup>15</sup> *Nihon seishinshi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1926) ; *Zoku Nihon seishinshi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1935) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 4. These volumes contained Watsuji's pioneer work on Dōgen, entitled *Shamon Dōgen*; Watsuji also published a critical edition and the standard modern translation of the *Shōbō genzō zuimonki* in 1929. (The volumes also contain such studies as "The Transplanting of Buddhist Ideas in Japan," "Japanese Literature and Buddhist Thought," "Political Ideals in the Asuka and Nara Eras," "The Adoption of Buddhism in the Suiko Era," "Fine Arts in the Suiko and Tempyō Eras," and studies on *The Tale of Taketori*, *The Pillow Book*, *The Tale of Genji*, on "mono no aware," etc.)

The Zen master Dōgen (1200–1253) has been generally acknowledged in a good part of this century as one of the foremost religious geniuses of Japanese tradition. Except within the Sōtō school, he was buried in oblivion for nearly seven centuries. According to Tamaki Koshirō, it was Watsuji Tetsurō's treatise, *Shamon Dōgen*, that brought Dōgen out of this long period of oblivion. It was first written for two journals in 1919 and 1921 between Watsuji's thirtieth and thirty-second years. Cf. Tamaki Koshirō, "Dōgen no sekai," a colloquium between Tamaki Koshirō and Terai Toru, p. 2. *Pamphlet* accompanying Tamaki Koshirō, ed., *Dōgen shū* [Collected writings of Dōgen] (Chikuma Shobo, 1969). Tanabe Hajime also attests to his discovery of Dōgen through reading Watsuji's study.

<sup>16</sup> *Genshi Kurisutokyō no bunkashiteki igi* (Tokyo, 1926) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Genshi Bukkyō no jissen tetsugaku* (Tokyo, 1927), *Zenshū*, vol. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Homerus hihan* (Tokyo, 1936) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Porisuteki ningen no rinrigaku* (Tokyo, 1948) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Koshi* (Tokyo, 1936) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Fūdo* (Tokyo, 1935) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Sakoku: Nihon no higeiki* (Tokyo, 1950) ; *Zenshū*, vol. 15. A brief account of this work by Furukawa Tetsushi is contained in G. Bownas, trans., *Climate*, pp. 232–234.

<sup>23</sup> *Nihon rinri shisōshi*, 2 vols., 1952 ; *Zenshū*, vols. 12–13. On the evolution of Watsuji's studies in this area from his original series of lectures in the *Iwanami Lecture Course on Ethics*, revised in book form in 1943 under the title *Sonnō shisō to sono dentō* [Venera-

[The Katsura imperial villa],<sup>24</sup> and *Nihon geijutsu kenkyū* [A study of Japanese arts] in 1955.<sup>25</sup>

Still, this partial listing of Watsuji's historical works can be said to represent only the outer surface of his philosophical sensibilities.<sup>26</sup> They were the application and concrete exemplification of his fundamental ethical position. Watsuji's original cultural-ethical system, based on the two pillars of *fūdo* and *ningen*, was evolved only after he was called to Kyoto University as an assistant professor of ethics in 1925, at the age of thirty-six. After becoming professor of ethics at Tokyo University in 1931, he published his formal ethical system under the title of *Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku* [Ethics as the study of man] in 1935,<sup>27</sup> and then elaborated this standpoint into his three-volume *Rinrigaku* [Ethics] in successive volumes in 1937, 1942, and 1949.<sup>28</sup> Watsuji's *Rinrigaku*, as an original ethical system, has been called unprecedented in the history of Japan. He retired from Tokyo University in 1949. (Nishida died in 1945; Watsuji, in 1960; and Tanabe Hajime, in 1962. Hence Watsuji and Tanabe were the philosophers *emeriti* of Japan during the immediate postwar years.)

## II. THE INFLUENCE OF NATSUME SŌSEKI

Against the background of this bibliographical overview of Watsuji's career as a whole, let us now retrace some of the phases of the formative influence of Sōseki on Watsuji's intellectual development and on the inner logic of his

tion of the Emperor and Its Tradition], *Zenshū*, vol. 14, and its postwar revision into *A History of Japanese Ethical Thought* in two volumes, see Furukawa, "Watsuji Tetsurō," pp. 230–231. A brief sample of Watsuji's work is translated by the writer in "Watsuji Tetsurō: Japanese Ethical Thought in the Noh Plays of the Muromachi Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 17, No. 4 (1969): 467–498.

<sup>24</sup> *Katsura rikkyū* (Tokyo, 1955); *Zenshū*, vol. 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Nihon geijutsu kenkyū*, vol. 1, *Kabuki to ayatsuri jōrūri* (Tokyo, 1955); *Zenshū*, vol. 16.

<sup>26</sup> Other works in this category include *Men to Persona* [Mask and Persona] (1937); *Jinkaku to jinruisei* [Personality and Humanity] (1938); *Nihon no shindō* [The way of the subject in Japan] (1944); *Amerika no kokuminsei* [America's national character] (1944); *Kokumin togo no shochō* [Symbols of national unity] (1948); *Kindai rekishi tetsugaku no senkusha* [Precursors of modern Japanese philosophy] (1950); *Itaria koji junrei* [Pilgrimage to the ancient shrines of Italy] (1950); *Uzumoreta Nihon* [The Japan that has been Buried] (1951). His unfinished autobiography, *Jijoden no kokoromi*, *Zenshū*, vol. 18, appeared in 1961. Bellah's article contains a detailed analysis of the two works of 1944, *Nihon no shindō* and *Amerika no kokuminsei*, offered in support of his interpretation of Watsuji. But Bellah himself points out that the former may have been a veiled critique of the military at that time, and goes on to demonstrate that all of the theses of these war-time pieces were already contained in Watsuji's earlier cultural and philosophical writings.

<sup>27</sup> *Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku* (Tokyo, 1935); *Zenshū*, vol. 9. He also published *Kanto shissen risei hihan* [Kant's Critique of practical reason] in the same year, *Zenshū*, vol. 9.

<sup>28</sup> *Rinrigaku*, now collected in two volumes in *Zenshū*, vols. 10 and 11.

philosophical ideas and cultural studies. As a merely schematic model, I would propose that Watsuji's logic of ideas and historical methodology involved the two parameters—of Nietzsche, Heidegger, et al., on the one hand, and of Sōseki, Nishida, et al., on the other. Like so many creative Japanese thinkers, this concrete fusion of East and West achieved by Watsuji would seem to illustrate the theme of “the self-identity of contradictions” which Nishida, Watsuji, and others have found at the basis of Japanese culture. (Contrary to Bellah's approach, I would suggest that this kind of identity of contradictories has produced, not “cultural particularism” and “national narcissism,” but a meaningful variety of cultural universalism at each significant stage of Japanese civilization, including the modern period.)

After his youthful absorption in the English Romantic poets, Watsuji's studies of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in his early twenties assumed a highly individualistic stance. He was attracted by Sōseki's ideas, and was a close friend of the young philosopher Abe Jirō (1893–1959), whose philosophy of personalism was also popular in the Taishō period. Abe Jirō's *Santarō no nikki* [Diary of Santarō] was an existentialistic record of his own spiritual life from 1908–1914. According to Karaki Junzō, it indirectly reflected the shared world of the conversations and Weltanschauungs of Abe and Watsuji at that time.<sup>29</sup> Watsuji's *Søren Kierkegaard*, the preface to which contains a testimony of gratitude to Abe, is a work that identifies with the personal psychology of Kierkegaard. Its themes of spiritual depression, inner doubts and tensions, and Kierkegaardian individualism may be thought to be a continuation of the self-confession of *Santarō no nikki*. Against the wider background of the “I” novels of the same period, the two books may be read as at least partially representative of the psychology of the younger philosophical generation that was emerging in the post-Russo-Japanese-War years.

Sōseki's formative influence on Watsuji came precisely at this point. Passing over Ōgai, whose historical novels (*rekishi shōsetsu*<sup>30</sup>) were now in circulation as a conscious rejection of the same trends of individualism and naturalism,<sup>30</sup> we can note that Watsuji was introduced to Sōseki in 1913, the year in which Sōseki published *Kōjin* [The wayfarer], the second novel of the novelist's second trilogy that also included *Kokoro* and *After the Spring Equinox*. This meeting with his boyhood idol therefore took place precisely at the time that Sōseki was turning in his own art from the “creative individualism” of his earlier period to the more idealistic critiques of cultural modernism and individualism in his late novels. Sōseki died three years later, on December

<sup>29</sup> Karaki, *Gendai Nihon shisō taikēi*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>30</sup> The *rekishi shōsetsu* were born in part out of Ōgai's conscious rejection of the individualism and naturalism of the prevailing *shishōsetsu* (“I” novels) of that time, to which he formerly contributed and against which trend he now took up the task of writing about the *shizen* (nature) of *rekishi* (history). See Ōgai's *Rekishi sono mama to rekishi-banare*, published in 1915.

9, 1916, when Watsuji was twenty-seven. Watsuji began to write a long reminiscence of the novelist entitled *Sōseki sensei no tsumioku* only eight days later. Published in 1918 in his *Gūzō saikō*,<sup>31</sup> it is an important autobiographical testimony to the influence of Sōseki in the Taishō-period transition from Western individualism and cosmopolitanism to inner cultivation and a repossessed Japanese cultural self-consciousness. Ōgai exerted a similar influence in his own way.

For our purposes, Watsuji's reminiscence of Sōseki is also important as a document containing the seeds of Watsuji's later ethics. The reminiscence analyzes Sōseki's intellectual transition from his earlier period, which stressed individual ethical integrity and creative individuality in the face of the bureaucratization of Meiji life, to his later phase, where he broke with "individualism" (*kojinshugi*<sup>32</sup>) altogether in favor of the Way, or *michi*, of *sokuten kyoshi*<sup>3</sup> [follow heaven and eliminate the self]. Watsuji cites *Kōjin* as the turning point in this breakthrough in Sōseki's art. He tells us that Sōseki's *Kōjin* and other late novels explore the bankruptcy of the philosophy of the isolated individual in the most naked, agonizing terms. The hero of *Kōjin*, for example, is a type of modern egocentric individual; he is psychologically cut off from his modern egocentric wife, from his friends, from his brothers. As in *Kokoro*, the more attempts are made to bridge the gap, the greater the gap becomes. Sōseki has the hero of *Kōjin* say at one crucial point: "*hito to hito to no aida o tsunagu hashi wa nai*" [there is no bridge between individuals]. And there is no apparent road out of this radical *Einsamkeit* except to go mad, or to commit suicide, or to believe in God. Sōseki seems to reject all three as *individualistic* solutions.<sup>32</sup>

In two lectures the following year, Sōseki spoke of the need to transcend the horizon of *kojinshugi* altogether. Literature, he said, must repossess that something which organically binds individuals together and makes them truly human (*ningen*); it must make problematic the essential *aidagara*<sup>k</sup> or "betweenness" between persons. While dealing with the fundamental relationships between man and woman, brother and brother, friend and friend in these late novels, Sōseki's Way of *sokuten kyoshi* was increasingly exemplified in the

<sup>31</sup> *Sōseki sensei no tsumioku, Zenshū*, vol. 17, pp. 85–99; this essay is contained in full in Karaki, *Watsuji Tetsurō*, pp. 412–423.

<sup>32</sup> Karaki, *Watsuji Tetsurō*, p. 12; *Sōseki sensei no tsumioku*, p. 420. On this theme, see especially Edwin McClellan's "The Implications of Sōseki's *Kokoro*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 14 (1958–1959): 356–370, and *Two Japanese Novelists: Sōseki and Toson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); V. H. Viglielmo, "An Introduction to the Later Novels of Natsume Sōseki," *Monumenta Nipponica* 19 (1964): 1–36; Beongcheon Yu, "A Tragedy of Character: Sōseki's *Kokoro*," *Orient-West* 9, No. 2 (1964): 73–80, and *Natsume Sōseki* (New York: Twayne Press, 1969); Etō Jun, "Natsume Sōseki: A Japanese Meiji Intellectual," *The American Scholar* (Autumn, 1965), 603–619; Howard Hibbett, "Natsume Sōseki and the Psychological Novel," in Donald Shively, ed., *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 305–346.



point that love and sincerity can only live when *watakushi or shi*<sup>33</sup> (egocentrism) is radically eliminated.<sup>33</sup> On a different but more positive course in his historical novels written after 1912, Mori Ōgai sought to repossess that same kind of humanistic *aidagara* between persons in his own way. Even the immense success of Nishida's *A Study of Good* (1911) at this time seems to have derived, according to contemporary accounts, from its central thesis that pure experience (*junsui keiken*<sup>m</sup>) precedes the individual. Scholars have pointed out that there is a profound similarity between Sōseki's *sokuten kyoshi* and the opening words of Nishida's *Zen no kenkyū*.<sup>34</sup>

Watsuji's reminiscence stresses the fact that Sōseki loved *ningen*, what is truly human, but repudiated immorality, insincerity, and impurity with all his creative strength. He thus rejected egoism (*rikoshugi*<sup>m</sup>) in all its modern bourgeois forms. In other words, Sōseki's *kojinshugi* had evolved into the position of *jiko hitei*<sup>o</sup> (negation of the individual). Only those who have eliminated egocentrism truly can be *ningen*, and only accordingly can there be *aidagara* (interpresence) and *rin*<sup>p</sup> (ethics). Sōseki's unfinished novel *Meian* was the last position he attained before his death in 1916.<sup>35</sup>

Earlier in stressing that the two pillars of Watsuji's mature thought were the concepts of human climate (*fūdo*) and man (*ningen*), I have already implied how Sōseki's final view was at the heart of Watsuji's own philosophical position. The concept of *ningen*, which to Watsuji already presupposed the former notion of human climate, was later explored in his ethics in a philosophical dialogue with Heidegger in terms of the cognate Japanese terms of *yo no naka*<sup>q</sup> and *seken*<sup>r</sup> interpreted as *In-der-Welt-Sein* [Being-in-the-World], and accordingly in terms of *hito to hito to no aidagara*<sup>s</sup> [the "between-ness" between man and man]—Watsuji's terms literally come right out of Sōseki. When Watsuji later took the position in his *Rinrigaku* that *rinri*<sup>t</sup> (ethics) had lost its original meaning in the modern world and had degenerated into *kojin dōtoku*<sup>u</sup>, the ethics of isolated individuals, he was simply repossessing Sōseki's view in philosophical language. Watsuji's own critique of utilitarianism and egocentrism flooding modern bourgeois society in the forms of the struggle for existence, of equality on the basis of struggle, of free competition as the mechanism of profit for profit's sake, and of the egalitarian forms of so-called democracy which level all qualitative distinctions and refinements, seem to Bellah to be symptomatic of cultural particularism and national narcissism. But Watsuji's position was well grounded in Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sōseki—to say

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>34</sup> Bellah, "Japan's Cultural Identity," 587. Cf., Kuyama Yasushi, "On Modernization and Tradition in Japan," *Modernization and Tradition in Japan*, Special Publication Series, no. 1 (Nishinomiya: International Institute for Japan Studies, 1969): 48–49, and Kōsaka Masaaki, *Japanese Thought in the Meiji Era*, trans. and adapted by David Abosch (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunkō, 1958), pp. 484–493.

<sup>35</sup> Karaki, *Watsuji Tetsurō*, pp. 13–14; Watsuji, *Sōseki sensei no tsuio*, pp. 416–422.

nothing of in German philosophy generally and in Nishida's philosophy—and may thus bid fair to be a defensible *philosophical*, as opposed to ideological, position.

In some of his writings, Watsuji seems also to have absorbed some of the essential points of the Japanese-Marxist critique of bourgeois society in the Taishō period, but his later position was ultimately closer to the purely humanistic tradition of Sōseki and the Kyoto school. Sōseki's and Ōgai's influence may have also helped unlock a deeper level of understanding of Nietzsche as worked out in *Gūzō saikō*, *Koji junrei*, *Nihon kodai bunka*, etc. In these transitional works Nietzsche's philosophy seems to have functioned for Watsuji not as the symbol of romantic individualism but as profound *classicism*—Nietzsche's love of the beauty of the ancient ideals and idols.<sup>36</sup> In *Gūzō saikō*, the twenty-nine-year-old Watsuji already spoke of the “modern destroyers of idols” who have killed God. Their God is dead, he tells us, but there is need to resurrect the ancient and profounder gods and idols of the past. The “Oriental” elements in *Fūdo* and *Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku*, which Watsuji sometimes defended over against the claims of superiority of corresponding Western values, derived from this new fusion of Nietzsche et al. and Sōseki et al. into the concrete universality of Watsuji's philosophical and cultural writings.<sup>37</sup>

### III. THE TWO PILLARS OF WATSUJI'S THOUGHT: FŪDO AND NINGEN

Let us now consider the two pillars of Watsuji's position—*fūdo* and *ningen*—on their own merits. It will be impossible to do so here in an exhaustive way, since as already indicated these concepts were the guiding ideas of both his systematic and cultural writings. But consideration of the essential content of these ideas should help to bring out their philosophical quality in the humanistic context of Japanese modernization as outlined earlier.

Kōsaka Masaaki, Furukawa Tetsushi, and Karaki Junzō have each drawn attention to the fact that Watsuji's style of philosophizing stemmed from his own impressions and observations to a marked degree. It is no wonder, then, that Watsuji found the Husserlian concept of *intentionality*, and Heidegger's elaboration of that notion in terms of his existential analytic of *Dasein*, as congenial to himself. Watsuji's stylistic ability lent itself to this methodological “uncovering of essences” in the cultural-ethical sphere. His popular work

<sup>36</sup> Bellah, “Japanese Cultural Identity,” p. 588.

<sup>37</sup> More accurately in reference to Watsuji's later period, we should perhaps speak of the fusion of Heidegger (after 1927) and Sōseki in Watsuji's thought. The profounder critique of bourgeois values and technological modernization is to be found in Heidegger's works, which call for a return to a pristine sense of reality prior to the ontologies of Plato and Aristotle.

*Fūdo* was perhaps chosen as a representative work of modern Japanese philosophy by the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO in 1960 precisely because it was an expression of Watsuji's creative art and philosophical methodology in that sense. According to Kōsaka, Watsuji was basically this kind of cultural phenomenologist;<sup>38</sup> I would simply underline the *philosophical* quality itself of Watsuji's phenomenology.

*Fūdo*, at any rate, has enjoyed great popularity among Japanese readers to this day. Since Furukawa's study, appended to the UNESCO translation by Geoffrey Bownas, traces some of the background and preparation for the sensibility that went into the writing of *Fūdo* in Watsuji's earlier works and travel experiences during 1927–1928,<sup>39</sup> I should like to probe directly into the philosophical structure of the idea of human climate (*fūdo*) that Watsuji elaborated in that work, and thereby point up that the concept of *fūdo* itself can be reduced to ideological terms only by a distortion of its primarily philosophical quality.

It can first be noted that Watsuji's consideration of what he calls the three basic types of climate—the Monsoon, Desert, and Meadow—and of the “distinctive nature of monsoon climate,” within this framework, was part of the architectonic structure of the work as a whole. While Watsuji's selection of details in this framework was necessarily impressionistic, his thesis as a whole unfolded in a deductive manner from the opening theoretical chapter, “The Basic Principles of Climate.”<sup>40</sup> This theoretical part, which was first drafted in 1929, redrafted in 1931, and revised again for publication in 1935, will occupy our attention here.

A careful reading of Watsuji's theoretical elaboration itself will suffice to demonstrate its philosophical quality. The piece is a creative response to Heidegger, worked out on the ground of the central phenomenological concept of intentionality, a concept which to this day has proved to be one of the most fruitful and enduring contributions of twentieth-century Western philosophy.<sup>41</sup> We should recall that *Sein und Zeit*, which established Heidegger as perhaps the leading European philosopher of our times, was published only in 1927. Watsuji read *Sein und Zeit* immediately after its publication, during his sojourn in Berlin in 1927, and began elaborating his own dialogue with Heidegger's categories upon his return to professorial duties in Kyoto in 1928. At the same time, Nishida Kitarō was exploring the Husserlian *noesis-noema* struc-

<sup>38</sup> Kōsaka, *Nishida Kitarō to Watsuji Tetsurō* (Tokyo: Shinchō Shinsha, 1961), pp. 108–109.

<sup>39</sup> Furukawa, “Watsuji Tetsurō,” pp. 209–217.

<sup>40</sup> Watsuji, *Climate*, pp. 1–17.

<sup>41</sup> On the phenomenological concept of “intentionality,” cf. Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, II, v, secs. 9–11; *Ideas*, sec. 90; Aron Gurwitsch, “On the Intentionality of Consciousness” in Martin Farber, ed., *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), pp. 65–83.

ture of cognitive intentionality in a series of difficult epistemological works which he wrote in 1927, 1930, 1932, and 1934.<sup>42</sup>

The concrete universality of Watsuji's thought can be properly grasped only in this context of ideas and influences. As a critique of the limitations of Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*, as connoting human existence in a one-sidedly individualistic and temporal mode, Watsuji's concept of *fūdo* translates *Dasein*'s "there-Being" in the mode of "*ex-sistere*" into the concrete spatial-historicity of cultural existence.<sup>43</sup> Stated negatively in his own words in the Preface to *Fūdo*:

My purpose in this study is to clarify the function of climate as a factor within the structure of human existence. So my problem is not that of the ordering of man's life by his natural environment. Natural environment is usually understood as an objective extension of "human climate" regarded as a concrete basis. But when we come to consider the relationship between this and human life, the latter is already objectified, with the result that we find ourselves examining the relation between object and object, and there is no link with subjective human existence. It is the latter that is my concern here, for it is essential to my position that the phenomena of climate are treated as expressions of subjective existence and not of natural environment. I should like at the outset to register my protest against this confusion.<sup>44</sup>

In positive terms, Watsuji's task was to articulate "the intentional or directional relationships" that the "climatic" (*fūdoteki*) structure of *Dasein*'s subjectivity fundamentally and primordially exhibit.

To bring out Watsuji's use of the phenomenological category of intentionality, let me quote again from the very beginning of the text under consideration. Watsuji writes by way of illustration:

It is simply by mistaking the *intentional relationship* that we consider that the cold is pressing in on us from outside. It is not true that the *intentional rela-*

<sup>42</sup> Nishida Kitarō, *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* [From the acting to the seeing] (1927); *Ippansha no jikaku teki taikai* [The self-conscious system of the universal] (1930); *Mu no jikaku teki gentei* [The self-conscious determination of nothingness], (1932); and *Tetsugaku no kompon mondai* [Fundamental problems of philosophy], 2 vols., (1933–1934); *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, 2d ed., (1965) vols. 4, 5, 6, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Karaki, *Watsuji Tetsurō*, p. 38; Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Thought*, p. 138. On Watsuji's critique of Heidegger, Kōsaka, *Nishida Kitarō to Watsuji Tetsurō*, pp. 19–20, argues that Watsuji's *Fūdo* was influenced by Tōsaka Jun's concept of spatiality. Concerning this possible relation between Tōsaka, Watsuji, and Nishida's own concept of *basho*, particularly as it became the "world as dialectical universal" in *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 2 vols., in 1933–1934, cf. Miyakawa Tōru, *Nishida, Miki, Tōsaka no tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1967), pp. 136–140. And Kōsaka dates the third period of Tanabe Hajime's career when he worked out his original "logic of the species," from 1934. Cf. Kōsaka, "Nishida tetsugaku to Tanabe tetsugaku," in *Kōsaka Masaaki sakushū* (Tokyo, 1965), vol. 8, p. 308. Therefore it cannot be stressed enough that Watsuji's concept of *fūdo* grew out of an extremely complicated "climate" or context of ideas in the mid-thirties in Japan.

<sup>44</sup> *Climate*, p. v.

relationship is set up only when an object presses from outside. As far as individual consciousness is concerned, the subject possesses the *intentional structure within itself* and itself “directs itself towards something.” The “feeling” of “feeling the cold” is not a “point” which establishes a relationship directed at the cold, but it is in itself a relationship in virtue of its “feeling” and it is in this relationship that we discover cold. The *intentionality of such a relational structure* is thus a structure of the subject in relation with the cold. The fact that “we feel the cold” is, first and foremost, an “intentional experience” of this kind.<sup>45</sup>

Or again:

When we feel cold, we ourselves are already in the coldness of the outside air. That we come into relation with the cold means that we are outside in the cold. In this sense, our state is characterized by “*ex-sistere*” as Heidegger emphasizes, or, in our terms, by “intentionality.”<sup>46</sup>

Or again:

Therefore, in feeling the cold, we discover ourselves in the cold itself. This does not mean that we transfer ourselves into the cold and there discover our selves thus transferred. The instant that the cold is discovered, we are already outside in the cold. Therefore, the basic essence of what is “present outside” is not a thing or object such as the cold, but we ourselves. “*Ex-sistere*” is the fundamental principle of the structure of our selves, and it is on this principle that *intentionality* depends. That we feel the cold is an *intentional experience*, in which we discover our selves in the state of “*ex-sistere*” or our selves already outside in the cold.<sup>47</sup>

In this same context, Watsuji goes on to introduce the dialectical concept of *ningen* (man) interpreted as the intentional structure of *aidagara* (betweenness, interpresence, or mutual relationship) that became basis to his *Ethics*.

Here the *aidagara* intentionality of *Dasein*'s climatic existence is deduced, to continue the same illustration, on the grounds that it is “I as We and We as I that are outside in the cold.” That is, the structure of *ex-sistence* confirms Heidegger's description of *In-der-Welt-Sein* as *Mit-Sein* in that the very intentionality or directional relationship explored earlier is primarily and irreducibly intersubjective—a “we” or “mutual” relation in which we discover *ourselves* and *each other* in the particular season. Nishida's dialectical notion of *basho*<sup>2</sup>, the “place” or *topos* of the *noesis-noema* relationship and of I-Thou intersubjectivity worked out between 1927–1934, would seem to have exerted some influence upon Watsuji's concept of “human climate” as the existential-ontological mode of human existence at this time.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 2. The Japanese terms for intentional relationship and intentionality respectively, are *shikōteki kankei*<sup>w</sup> and *shikōsei*<sup>x</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 5. Watsuji renders Heidegger's *ex-sistere* as *soto ni dete iru*<sup>w</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. especially Nishida's *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* (1932), chap. 8 “I and Thou,” and chap. 9, “Concerning Life-Philosophy”; *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, vol. 6, pp. 351–427, 428–452.

Watsuji's impressionistic and stylistic sensibilities served him well when he came to elaborating this intentional structure in terms of *styles* of architecture, *styles* of clothing, *styles* of food, etc., of the East and the West—indeed, of “all the expressions of human activity, such as literature, art, religion, and manners and customs”—as *human-climatic* phenomena in his sense. In fact, it may be said that Watsuji's many brilliant cultural studies can be understood only as *hermeneutical-philosophical* works that ground this central notion of cultural-historical intentionality.<sup>49</sup> In this light, his concept of the “stadial character” or “stadiality” (*jūsōsei*) of Japanese culture takes on profound significance as a cultural-philosophical articulation of the *synchronicity* of various cultural intentionalities in modern Japan.<sup>50</sup>

In the second subdivision of this theoretical part of *Fūdo*, Watsuji then takes up the theme of the “climatic determination of human existence” in terms that continue his critique of Heidegger. The passage stands in essential continuity with the notion of *ningen* as *yo no naka* worked out in *Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku*, which was published in 1935, the same year *Fūdo* was being revised for publication. We have therefore already moved to the second pillar of Watsuji's mature philosophical position.

I would again like to emphasize that the essential core of Watsuji's ethics of *ningen* should be placed in the context of the ideas of Sōseki and Ōgai, as outlined earlier. But at the same time Watsuji developed his position in a purely academic manner in the framework of the ideas of such philosophers as Husserl, Heidegger, and Nishida. For my purposes I shall simply trace the continuity between his notion of *ningen* outlined in *Fūdo* and in *Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku* in 1935, and Watsuji's final rendering of that notion in his *Rinrigaku* elaborated in successive volumes in 1937, 1942, and 1949.

In *Fūdo*, Watsuji wrote that by “man” (*ningen*) he does not mean the “abstract individual,” but man concretely existing as the dialectical unity of the individual and the universal, or society. He calls this dual characteristic of *ningen* the essential nature of man.<sup>51</sup> For a true and full understanding of man, the analysis of human existence involves both the temporal individual and the spatial-social whole in this kind of “dialectic of absolute negation.” The “space-and-time-structure” of human existence revealed as “climatic history and historical climate” grounds this essential *In-der-Welt-Sein* which Heidegger had explored. But according to Watsuji, Heidegger ultimately lost sight of this

<sup>49</sup> The concept of *hermeneutics* is here employed in Heidegger's sense of existential “interpretation” (in Japanese, *kaishakugaku*), which attempts a philosophical *repossession* of the primordial dimensions of existence.

<sup>50</sup> As early as 1918 at the age of 29, Watsuji was working out this concept, which runs throughout many of his cultural and systematic writings. Cf. *Nihon bunka no jūsōsei* [The stadial character of Japanese culture] in *Gūzō saikō, Zenshū*, vol. 17, reproduced in Karaki, *Watsuji Tetsurō*, pp. 377–386.

<sup>51</sup> *Climate*, p. 8.

insight in the second half of *Sein und Zeit* when he stressed the radical temporality of *Dasein's* "Being-towards-death." In the individual's experience, *Sein* is existence for death; but from the perspective of the whole or society, while individuals die, mankind lives and man's world continues. Therefore from the standpoint of the whole or society *Sein* is simultaneously existence for life. *Dasein* is thus both individual and social for the ultimate dialectical reason that in the dual structure of man, who discovers himself in these spatial-climatic and temporal-historical modes of existence, "history is climatic history and climate is historical climate."<sup>52</sup>

In like manner, concrete *intersubjectivity* (Sōseki's *hito to hito to no aida*) presupposes a horizon (intentionality context), which has already transcended the plane of abstract individuals. "The basis for the discovery of self and other must already be essentially on a plane which 'stands outside' (*ex-sistere*)."<sup>53</sup> Since this transcendence must already be comprised of historical and climatic parameters we must again say that "we" discover our selves and each other as ethical beings in the human climate. Watsuji also takes up Heidegger's theme of concern as *Dasein's* intentionality (purpose-relation) toward tools and toward the world as "present-to-hand" in this same context of the primordially of human climate.<sup>54</sup>

*Ningen no gaku to shite no rinrigaku* (1935) and the first volume of *Rinrigaku* (1937) continued this philosophical dialogue with Heidegger. To illustrate the variables involved, I shall summarize the content of the latter as the later rendering of Watsuji's idea, from the recapitulation of his ethical position in the opening sections of the third (1967) printing of the revised edition of *Rinrigaku*.

#### IV. RINRIGAKU

We have seen that the *human* and simultaneously *ethical* a priorities of man's existence are grounded by Watsuji in the *aidagara* intentionality itself which the concept of *fūdo* "uncover." This "disclosure" of *Dasein's* fundamental being, to continue Heidegger's terminology, imports that man's nature is essentially *social* in a primordially *dialectical* sense. This existential-ontological structure was explored by both Nishida and Watsuji in their mature writings; in Watsuji's *Rinrigaku*, the concrete *aidagara* intentionality of human existence became the basis of a coherent, systematic critique of the lack of an adequate concept of intrinsic, dialectical relationship in such authors as Aristotle, Kant, Cohen, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx.<sup>55</sup> As noted above, Watsuji's *aidagara*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Thought*, p. 142.

concept, which stresses a “place” of dialectical *immediacy* prior to the subject-object distinction, is also in resonance with Nishida’s concept of the “world as dialectical universal” elaborated in his *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy* (1933–1934) and with Tanabe’s “Dialectical Logic of the *Species*,” which dates from the same period.

This “Oriental” quality of the Watsuji’s *aidagara* intentionality has not been overlooked by scholars.<sup>56</sup> I would stress, however, that it was by virtue of Watsuji’s clear grasp of the phenomenological concept of intentionality that he could explore the horizon of intersubjectivity as climatically, historically crystallized in Eastern traditions, while also discovering it as *stadially* present in modern Japanese culture. Thus the *aidagara* intentionality historically crystallized in Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism could be *philosophically* repossessed by Watsuji. For example, the moral sphere of Confucian ethics (*rin*) becomes grounded by Watsuji in an existential or religious sphere of what he called “the absolute negativity of the subject” (*shutai no zettaiteki hiteisei*<sup>aa</sup>) in which the concrete whole is realized. Watsuji’s dialectic of absolute negation ending with explicit reference to the ground of *Emptiness* (*kū*<sup>ab</sup>, *śūnyatā*) and what he called the “selfless emotion” of the Japanese spirit, indeed, remind us of central Buddhist ideas. But at the same time it should be stressed that Watsuji’s position was not essentially a Buddhistic or religious one such as worked out in the Kyoto school. It was primarily his own original ethical position phenomenologically and existentially grounded in the *aidagara* intentionality of climatic-historical intersubjectivity. Watsuji, like Sōseki in his Way of *sokuten kyoshi*, seems to have refused, at least philosophically and methodologically, to embrace the solution of religion. His stress on such essentially Confucian values as the five relationships (*rin*), on trust (*shinrai*<sup>ac</sup>) and truth or sincerity (*shinjitsu*<sup>ad</sup>)—as well as on the unselfish love of the “heavenly true heart” (*tenshin na magokoro*<sup>ae</sup>) of Motoori Norinaga, on the Japanese emperor system, on the value system of *bushidō*<sup>af</sup>, on the ethical intentionalities embodied in the Japanese household (family) and house and garden complex itself, and so forth—bear witness to this point. My own inclination is to interpret such syncretic tendencies bridging the spiritual traditions of the East in the broad multivariate framework of Neo-Confucianism rather than Buddhism, but I shall not pursue the thought here.

The point of departure of Watsuji’s *Rinrigaku*, at any rate, is that of “interpresence,” or “between-ness between men” (*hito to hito to no aidagara*),<sup>57</sup> which is reminiscent of Sōseki’s phrase in *Kōjin*. He develops this structure of concrete ethical intersubjectivity by a phenomenological-linguistic explication

<sup>56</sup> For example, Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Thought*, pp. 142–143.

<sup>57</sup> Watsuji, *Rinrigaku* (1937), chap. 1, “Ningengaku to shite no rinrigaku no igi,” rev. ed., 3d prntg. (Iwanami Shoten, 1965), vol. 1, p. 12 *passim*. The writer’s translation of this chapter appears in *Monumenta Nipponica* 26, nos. 3, 4 (Fall, 1971): 395–413.



of three fundamental notions—*rinri*, *ningen*, and *sonzai*—whose interrelated meanings constitute the inner lattice of his system of ethics as the study of man.

Briefly, *rinri* is composed of the two characters—*rin* and *ri*. Watsuji explicates the former as signifying *nakama*<sup>58</sup> or “companionate association.” To Watsuji, therefore, the Japanese term *nakama* already exemplifies the dialectical nature of man, since it is “simultaneously a group as a relational structure among specific individuals, and the individuals determined by this group.” Classical Confucianism, Watsuji points out, crystallized the intentional structure involved in the *rin* or *nakama* relationships in its doctrine of the five basic relationships, father and son, lord and subject, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, friend and friend. They were called the great relationships of man because they were the most important *nakama*. Each of these *nakama* is a specific way (*shikata*<sup>59</sup>) of intersubjective relationship, and accordingly involves specific modes of behavioral intentionality. Each *rin* or *nakama* has its own structure (*kimari*<sup>60</sup>), pattern (*kata*<sup>61</sup>), or order (*chitsujo*<sup>62</sup>), that both collectively and individually comprise the “Way of man” (*ningen no michi*<sup>63</sup>).<sup>58</sup>

*Ri*, the second character of *rinri*, means reason (*kotowari*<sup>64</sup>, *sujimichi*<sup>65</sup>), or the inner principle which the Way of man embodies. Watsuji introduces the notion of the moral ought (*tōi*<sup>66</sup>) in this context. He writes: “As in the Confucian teaching, ‘between friends there is trust’ (*hōyū shin ari*<sup>67</sup>), in a given relationship of friendship, ‘trust’ as the way of behavioral intentionality already exists at the foundation of this relationship.” However, since each *nakama* intentionality exists dynamically in its own specific mode of behavioral association, the moral *ought* cannot be conceived in static terms. It involves a dynamic ethics based upon the structure of interpresence (*hito to hito to no aidagara*), which has already transcended the standpoint of the abstract individual.<sup>59</sup>

Watsuji now turns to a clarification of the term man (*ningen*) which has been implicit to this point. Finding Max Scheler’s attempt to articulate a *philosophische Anthropologie* in contrast to the methodology of the social sciences to be still lacking in a truly dialectical foundation, Watsuji contends that such Western terms as *anthropos*, *homo*, the English “man,” *Mensch* etc., primarily signify the individual (*hito*<sup>68</sup>), but do not adequately connote the dialectical meaning of *ningen*.<sup>60</sup> *Ningen* concretely disclosed reveals *Dasein*’s existential intentionality as *In-der-Welt-Sein*. For *ningen* signifies both individual men and the human world or society (*yo no naka, seken*), in which men exist and act. Watsuji writes:

*Ningen* is both *yo no naka* and, at the same time, the men who exist within it. Therefore, it is *not* merely “men,” and at the same time is *not* merely “society.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 12–13.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 13–15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 15–16.

Herein there appears the dialectical unity of the twofold character of man (*ningen*). As long as *ningen* are men, men as individuals differ to the last from society as a whole. Because they *are not* society as a whole, they *are* individual men. And hence one individual is not entirely the same as another individual; the self and the other are absolutely other to one another. And yet as long as man (*ningen*) is society (*yo no naka*), there is a communal situation; there is society and not merely isolated individuals. Precisely because there *are not* isolated individuals there *is* the human. Consequently self and other which exist in the structure of being absolutely other to one another are nevertheless one in communal existence. Individuals who fundamentally differ from society as a whole are yet immersed within society. Man (*ningen*) is this kind of relational unity of opposites. The essence of man cannot be understood without observing this dialectical structure.<sup>61</sup>

But Watsuji then contends that Heidegger's use of the Husserlian notion of intentionality, while in fact normative in disclosing the *subjective* significance of "within-the-world" in *Dasein's* purpose-relation (*Verhältnis*) with tools, still tends to keep the *aidagara* intentionality between man and man hidden in the shadow of the relationship in which man holds himself toward (*sich verhalten*) tools, the world as ready-at-hand.<sup>62</sup> Watsuji's critique of Heidegger here may seem at first sight to be somewhat forced, but we should recall that Heidegger's discussion of the *Mit-Sein* of *Dasein* in the first of *Sein und Zeit* focuses overwhelmingly upon *Dasein's* inauthentic fleeing into social relationships in the mode of *das Man*. Heidegger does not in fact give much attention to the intersubjective intentionality in the "authentic" mode, and the second half of *Sein und Zeit* then takes up *Dasein's* individuality-qua-temporality as revealed in the mode of "Being-towards-death."

At any rate, Watsuji here continues a critique of Heidegger, which we have already seen in the theoretical point of departure introduced in *Fūdo* in 1935. In *Rinrigaku* he points out that Heidegger's disciple Karl Löwith in fact attempted in 1928 to bring this allegedly overshadowed aspect of Heidegger's thought into the light by taking up the concept of "within-the-world" in general from the perspective of the intersubjective intentionality itself. According to Watsuji, Löwith succeeded in clarifying the *aidagara* structure between persons by virtue of a phenomenological analysis of the German word *Welt* as originally and fundamentally connotating a *human* meaning. This human meaning of *Welt*, in Watsuji's view, corresponds to the basic meaning of the Japanese terms *seken* and *yo no naka*. Heidegger's *In-der-Welt-Sein* is transformed in this way by Watsuji into the dialectical structure that he finds in the Japanese terms.<sup>63</sup>

Watsuji contends that what Löwith has tried to bring out in reference to the term *Welt* can be expressed even more clearly through the Japanese terms *yo no naka* and *seken*. To illustrate the variables in Watsuji's philosophical analysis:

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 17–18.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 19–21.

Just as the word *Welt* originally meant “a generation” and “group of men,” *yo*<sup>ar</sup> also means “generation” or “age” (*sedai*<sup>as</sup>) and “a society” (*shakai*<sup>at</sup>). In other words, *yo* is that which moves temporally, and at the same time somehow has the character of a place (*basho teki na mono*<sup>au</sup>) as in the case of a hermit “leaving the world” or someone being “a wanderer through life.” However, the Japanese terms *seken* and *yo no naka* are not merely *yo*, that is *Welt*; they are compounded with ideographs meaning “between” or “middle” (*ken* and *naka*<sup>av</sup>, respectively, in the Japanese terms *seken* and *yo no naka*). More literally, the terms signify *In-der-Welt*. And yet, differing from the German “in,” the *ken* and *naka* express, not merely a spatial meaning—and not merely a relationship of involvement with tools—but also clearly express human relationship. Such phrases as *danjo no naka*<sup>aw</sup> (relation between man and woman) *fūfu no naka*<sup>ax</sup> (relation between husband and wife), *naka o hedateru*<sup>ay</sup> (to break off a relationship), *naka tagai suru*<sup>az</sup> (to fall out with, be estranged from) illustrate this nuance. Indeed, such human relationships are not objective relationships which develop in the unity of subjects such as in the relationships between two spatial things. They are behavioral bonds of association, between persons such as expressed by the terms *kakawari*<sup>ba</sup> and *kōtsū*<sup>bb</sup> in the case of mutual relationship in *the mode of subjectivity*. Without behaving as subjects persons cannot exist in any *naka* at all, but at the same time they cannot behave or act except in some *naka*. Therefore *naka* refers to dynamic relationship which lives as subjective behavioral association. The terms *seken* and *yo no naka* are formed from the combination of this kind of *naka* with the character *yo* which has both temporal and spatial connotations (as “age” or “generation”).<sup>64</sup>

It may not be legitimate for Watsuji to claim superiority for the Japanese terms *yo no naka* and *seken* over the German *Welt*, but at any rate his point is clear. The more important point is his following contention in this context: “In the concept of *seken*, historical, climatic (*fūdoteki*), and societal parameters are already included. In other terms, *seken* and *yo no naka* are human existence which is historical, climatic, and societal.”<sup>65</sup>

This leads Watsuji to the third term fundamental of his notion of *Rinrigaku*. *Sonzai*<sup>bc</sup> is usually translated into English as “existence,” and is the usual Japanese translation of the German *Sein*; Watsuji takes a new tack by virtue of the exigences of his system to this point. He first contends that while *Sein*, like the Latin *est*, can express existence (*ga aru*<sup>bd</sup> in Japanese), it can also function as the copula (*de aru*<sup>be</sup> in Japanese). The Japanese *sonzai*, on the other hand, can never do so. *Sonzai* essentially expresses the fact of man (*ningen*) possessing its own self in the above *aidagara* intentionality of intersubjective behavioral relationship. In the strict sense, indeed, *sonzai* is only “human existence” (*ningen sonzai*<sup>bf</sup>), the existence of “things” being a personification derived from the fundamental being of human existence.<sup>66</sup>

Watsuji arrives at these conclusions by another philological-phenomenological analysis of terms. The *son*<sup>bg</sup>, connoting subjective self-maintenance or self-enduring, reveals man’s temporal character, while *zai*<sup>bh</sup> connoting “exis-

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 21–22.

<sup>65</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 23–24.

tence in some place,” reveals man’s equiprimordial spatial character. Out of this same disclosure of the subjective, practical, dynamic structure of *ningen*’s existential being, ethics (*rinrigaku*<sup>67</sup>) is systematically unfolded as the study of man (*ningen no gaku*<sup>67</sup>), that is, as the study of human *sonzai*. He claims that ethics so construed must be distinguished in essence from the study of Being (*Sein*), on the one hand, and the study of the moral Ought (*Sollen*), on the other.<sup>67</sup> In that sense, Watsuji attempted to ground his contention that various historically crystallized intentionalities of *Sein* and *Sollen* must be returned to the horizon of *rinrigaku* in his sense of the study of the climatic intentionality of human existence dialectically conceived. Watsuji’s mature philosophical position became *cultural* (human-climatic) *phenomenology* in that highly original sense.

The thematic and direction of “Ethics as the study of *ningen*” follows directly out of this context. The dialectical nature of man already revealed involves an essential movement of negation wherein, on the one hand, the standpoint of the behaving “individual” arises only as the negation of every whole (society), while on the other, the totality of man is established in the negation of such individuality. There must be this movement of negation because the radical source of human existence (*ningen sonzai*) is negation itself—that is, absolute negation as the negation of all negations. Watsuji therefore concludes: “Both the individual and the whole are, in their true reality, ‘empty’ (*kū*), and this ‘Emptiness’ or ‘Void’ is the *absolute whole*. From this radical source—that is, because Emptiness is empty—human existence develops as a movement of negations. The ‘negation of the negation is the real movement of the self-return of the absolute whole, and thus it is truly human relationship.’”<sup>68</sup> The fundamental spatiality and temporality of human existence is to be clarified in this same structure, and the intentionality of human behavior can only acquire its concrete definition in a Way which he called the Way of trust (*shinrai*) and truth or sincerity (*shinjitsu*), as already indicated earlier. In other terms, Watsuji, reminiscent of Sōseki, evolved the ethical position that the “truth” of human existence *arises* or *does not* arise in human behavior, and thus it is the “place” wherein trust and sincerity can alone exist. His treatment of the problem of good and evil, conscience, freedom, and justice also returns to this funda-

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. On this aspect of Watsuji’s thought, see Takeuchi Yoshinori, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1967, p. 309: “To obtain correct answers to ethical inquiry, Watsuji said, we must first understand the significance of man’s dual existence as an individual and as a social being. Showing the influence of Nishida Kitarō on his thought, he insists that we must have recourse to the Buddhist idea of ‘absolute Nothingness’ as the metaphysical foundation of this basic characteristic of human existence in order to realize it fully. He developed this view of life as it applies to mutual relations, from the simplest to the fully integrated—from the family to the state—and propounded original ideas on history and climate as the settings of human relations in their actuality.”

mental insight. The forms of communality (*kyōdōsei*<sup>bk</sup>) of existence which can be traced stadially (*jūsōteki ni*<sup>bl</sup>) from the intimate I-Thou relation up through the complicated form of national unity—as well as the dynamics of “trust, freedom in truth and sincerity, and justice,” which appear at each level of *aidagara* intentionality with special forms and names of their own—form the content of Watsuji’s system of *rinrigaku* derived from the same insight. He also returns to the questions of individualism (*kojinshugi*), of bourgeois ethics and “profit-societies” (*Gesellschaft*), and the separate question of the “climatic” concrete universality of national existence within this deductive framework.<sup>69</sup>

a 重層性	v 風土的	ar 世
b 風土	w 志向的關係	as 世代
c 人間の學としての倫理學	x 志向性	at 社會
d 人間	y 外に出ている	au 場所的のもの
e 醫は仁術なり	z 場所	av 間
f 忠實	aa 主体の絶對的否定性	aw 男女のなか
g 歴史小説	ab 空	ax 夫婦のなか
h 個人主義	ac 信賴	ay 間を距てる
i 則天去私	ad 眞實	az 仲違いする
j 人と人との間を繋ぐ 橋は無い	ae 天真な眞心	ba 交わり
k 間柄	af 武士道	bb 交通
l 私	ag 仲間	bc 存在
m 純粹經驗	ah 仕方	bd がある
n 利己主義	ai 定め	be である
o 自己否定	aj かた	bf 人間存在
p 倫	ak 秩序	bg 存
q 世の中	al 人間の道	bh 在
r 世間	am 理	bi 倫理學
s 人と人との間柄	an 筋道	bj 人間の學
t 倫理	ao 當爲	bk 共同性
u 個人道德	ap 朋友有信	bl 重層的に
	aq 人	

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–30. All these themes are developed in the subsequent chapters of *Rinrigaku*, vol. 1.