



Fudo, 風土 (Japanese)

In his book *Fudo* (1935), Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro provided an account of cultural uniqueness based on the concept of *fudosei* (climaticity). (Within the word *fudo*, Watsuji attempted to coin a spatial equivalent to the temporal concept of historicity (*rekishisei*). More broadly, he wanted to use *fusosei* as the basis for a phenomenological theory of humankind – the subtitle of his book is “An Essay in the Study of Man” (Ningengaku-teki-kosatsu) – which would complement Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. (From: A. Berque, “The Identification of the Self in Relation to the Environment”).

Fudo as “cultural climate” conceptualizes an “in-between” of civilization and nature. Human civilization cannot be seen as being opposed to nature as much as the soul cannot be seen as being opposed and separate from the body. A familiar “in-between” is seen as a standard of humans and culture. The subject is always linked to space. (TBB)

Fudo also exemplifies the difference between the Japanese and Western conceptions of the self. Whereas in the modern Western view self and environment are opposing terms, in Japan they are seen as interactive; the self melts with the environment by identifying with patterns of nature which are, nonetheless, culturally constructed. At the same time, however, Watsuji's account of self-environment interaction has significant shortcomings. His phenomenology of environment deals only with physical environment. Although he presents human existence as both individual and social, he makes no allowance for the social conditioning of collective representations (in the Durkheimian sense), instead relating them directly to nature. This is all the more intriguing since Watsuji devotes several sections of *Fudo* to human relationships (*aidagara*). The lack of phenomenology of social environment in *Fudo* leads to geographical determinism, obscuring the ways in which the self-environment relation is culturally mediated. (A. Berque). Kimura Bin has

developed Watsuji's thoughts by integrating them into his observations as a psychologist using also insights from **Nishida Kitaro** and from Edmund Husserl.

See also [mesologics](#).

Literature:

Augustin Berque: "The Identification of the Self in Relation to the Environment" in Nancy Ross Rosenberger *Japanese Sense of Self* (Cambridge UP, 1994).

William LaFleur. 1978. 'Buddhist Emptiness in Watsuji Tetsuro' in *Religious Studies* 14(2).

Watsuji, Tetsuro. 1935. 風土 : 人間学的考察 (Fudô: Ningengakuteki kôsansu; Climate: A Study in Humanities). Tokyo: Chuokoronsha. Engl. trans.: *Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study*. Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1971.