



Basho 場所 (Japanese).

Central philosophical term developed by Nishida Kitarô (1870-1945). Literally, *basho* means “place.” Nishida’s *basho* is a kind of “negative space” in which things do not simply “exist” but in which they are “local”, i.e. in which they “are” in a concrete way. The idea of *basho* came to Nishida when analyzing the notion of *chôra* as it appears in Plato’s *Timaeus*. Appearing as diametrically opposed to the Aristotelian substance (*ousia*), *basho* represents a new ontological category summarizing Nishida’s personal, Japanese version of the Western intuition. The notion appears first in the collection of essays *From the Acting to the Seeing* (1916). *Basho* is a place in which the objective world establishes itself. Through the notion of *basho* Nishida resolves the aporia of the co-existence of existence and essence. Reflecting all individuals and their mutually determining way-of-being within itself, *basho* is a place in which all living and non-living things come into being. It is a “place” of relational existence in which one perceives the idea of nothingness or emptiness. In his later work, Nishida sees *basho* also as a “place” of “history forming.” The “place” forms an historical world that is not biological or material, but cultural. Science can only “objectify” this world by discovering intellectual objects, i.e. by reducing the world to *noemata*. In *basho* the world self-determines itself as a socio-historical world, which always maintains an individual-general aspect. Nishida’s philosophy of *basho* suggests thus also a theory of culture. The notion of *basho* was adopted by some Western geographers as an alternative way of defining space, in particular by the French geographer Augustin Berque.

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Literature:

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