

UTOPIAS IN RELIGION, MYTHOLOGY AND LITERATURE

Qiyu Chen

School of Physics

Lead-in

In many cultures, societies, and religions, there is some myth or memory of a distant past when humankind lived in a primitive and simple state but at the same time one of perfect happiness and fulfillment. In those days, the various myths tell us, there was an instinctive harmony between humanity and nature. People's needs were few and their desires limited. Both were easily satisfied by the abundance provided by nature. Accordingly, there were no motives whatsoever for war or oppression. Nor was there any need for hard and painful work. According to one anthropological theory, hunter-gatherers were the original affluent society.

Scheria

Scheria([/'skɪəriə/](#)) or Scherie also known as Phaeacia([/fi:'eɪə/](#)) was a region in Greek mythology, first mentioned in Homer's Odyssey as the home of the Phaeacians and the last destination of Odysseus in his 10-year journey before returning home to Ithaca([/'iθəke/](#)). It is one of the earliest descriptions of a utopia, where Odysseus was washed ashore after 10 years of storm-tossed wandering and escorted to the King's palace by his daughter Nausicaa ([/no:'sɪkiə/](#)). With stout walls, a stone temple and good harbours, it is perhaps the 'ideal' Greek colony, a model for those founded from the middle of the 8th C onward. A land of plenty, home to expert mariners (with the self-navigating ships), and skilled craftswomen who live in peace under their king's rule and fear no

strangers.

Arcadia

Arcadia(/ɑːˈkeɪ.di.ə/) is a Greek province which dates to antiquity; the province's mountainous topography and sparse population of pastoralists later caused the word Arcadia to develop into a poetic byword for an idyllic vision of unspoiled wilderness referring to a vision of pastoralism and harmony with nature. Arcadia is a poetic term associated with bountiful natural splendor and harmony. The 'Garden' is often inhabited by shepherds. The concept also figures in Renaissance mythology.

The land of cockaigne

The Land of Cockaigne ([/kɒˈkeɪn/](#)) (also Cockayne, Cokayne), was an imaginary land of idleness and luxury, famous in medieval stories and the subject of several poems, one of which, an early translation of a 13th-century French work, is given in George Ellis' *Specimens of Early English Poets*. In this, "the houses were made of barley sugar and cakes, the streets were paved with pastry and the shops supplied goods for nothing." London has been so called but Boileau applies the same to Paris. Schlaraffenland is an analogous German tradition. All these myths also express some hope that the idyllic state of affairs they describe is not irretrievably and irrevocably lost to mankind, that it can be regained in some way or other.

The peach blossom spring

The Peach Blossom Spring , a prose piece written by the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming, describes a utopian place.

林尽水源，便得一山，山有小口，仿佛若有光。便舍船，从口入。初极狭，才通人。复行数十步，豁然开朗。土地平旷，屋舍俨然，有良田、美池、桑竹之属。阡陌交通，鸡犬相闻。其中往来种作，男女衣着，悉如外人。黄发垂髫，并怡然自乐。

见渔人，乃大惊，问所从来。具答之。便要还家，设酒杀鸡作食。村中闻有此人，咸来问讯。自云先世避秦时乱，率妻子邑人来此绝境，不复出焉，遂与外人间隔。问今是何世，乃不知有汉，无论魏晋。此人一一为具言所闻，皆叹惋。余人各复延至其家，皆出酒食。停数日，辞去。此中人语云：“不足为外人道也。”

Datong

Datong is a traditional Chinese Utopia.

大道之行也,天下为公。选贤与能,讲信修睦,故人不独亲其亲,不独某其某,使老有所终,壮有所用,幼有所长,矜寡孤独废疾者,皆有所养。男有分,女有归。货,恶其弃于地也,不必藏于己;力,恶其不出于身也,不必为己。是故,谋闭而不兴,盗窃乱贼而不作,故外户而不闭,是谓大同。

Later, Datong and its ideal of 'The World Belongs to Everyone' 'Tianxia weigong' 'influenced modern Chinese reformers and revolutionaries, such as Kang Youwei.

Ketumati

Ketumati (Ch'ih-t'ou) is a legendary place in some Buddhist traditions viewed as the earthly paradise of the prophesied([/ˈprɒf.ə.saɪ/](#)) figure called Maitreya, who is the future Buddha.

Ketumati is described as being a kingdom better than any cities of the gods. It will be seven yojanas wide and twelve yojanas long. Brilliant gardens full of trees will make the city radiant, and they, together with lakes and ponds, will be enough to keep its citizens happy. It will be

encompassed by seven strong walls. One of them will be constructed from seven types of gems that will be so bright, people won't be able to tell if it is day or night....

The city of the Caesars

The City of the Caesars (Spanish Ciudad de los Césares), also variously known as City of Patagonia, the Wandering City, Trapalanda or Trapananda, Lin Lin or Elelín, is a mythical city of South America. It was supposedly located somewhere in Patagonia, in a valley of the Andes between Chile and Argentina. The city is described as prosperous and rich, plenty of gold, silver and diamonds. At least one description says it was located in between two mountains, somewhere in the Andes mountains, one of gold and another of diamonds.