

Paradise in Japanese Literature

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I. No *Utopia* in Japan

It is often said that in the West the tradition of Utopian literature began with Plato's *Republic* (ca. 393 B.C). Before that were the Millennium and the Golden Age. In those days there was no clear distinction between paradise and Utopia. The latter was included in the former. It may be said that this was the state of paradise and Utopia also in Japan, as in China. In Japan Utopia had generally been considered in terms of paradise, especially before the introduction of Western civilization, when people began to consciously distinguish the two concepts.

This does not mean that there is no actual Utopia in Japan. We have, for instance, the New Village launched in the Prefecture of Miyazaki on the island of Kyushu under the patronage and direction of Saneatsu Mushakoji and the Communal Farm established in Hokkaido by Takeo Arishima in competition with, and criticism of, the former. But those and a few other enterprises often mentioned as examples of Japanese Utopia are not original, but strongly motivated and influenced by Western literature and ideology.

One wonders why there should have been no Utopia in Japan, before Western culture was introduced. In Japan there is a tacit understanding among the people that self-perfection is the goal of life for which they should strive. This idea comes from Buddhism, especially in the form of the teaching of self-extinction, which is the highest attainment in the Pure Land School, the major sect of Buddhism. In Japan, of

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course, Buddhism is a major religion. Because of this teaching, people in Japan came to have an ardent interest in the betterment of themselves, but not of the world in which they lived. In addition, as the undercurrent in many cultural accomplishments such as tea ceremony, calligraphy, *noh* plays, etc., Taoism also encouraged this trend in people and led them to live not against, but rather in harmony with, nature and the world around them. It is not before the introduction of Western culture in modern times, therefore, that the Japanese had fostered any idea of improvement of society. Rather such was, and still more or less is, against their way of life. No wonder the Japanese had been able to make up few Utopias, until they came to produce some under the influence of Western culture.

To assert that Japan has had no Utopia in the real sense of the term does not mean that Japan had produced no Utopia of any kind, but simply that she has no Utopia of her own. As will be noted below, Japan has had Utopias of certain kinds, but they cannot properly be called Japanese Utopias for one reason or another.

One of the reasons why Japan has had no authentically Japanese utopia is that in Japan the notion of paradise has long taken the place of utopia. Not that in Japan paradise and utopia have been confused with one another and each becomes indistinguishable from the other but simply that paradise has long been an alternative to utopia. This complement, if not the substitution, of paradise for utopia originated from the widespread belief among the Japanese that nothing is perfect, if made by man. Utopia is a perfect state which must, for the Japanese, be created by the Deity. It is stupid as well as arrogant for any human being to dream of establishing a utopia. It is profane or sometimes even sinful. For the Japanese it is much more appropriate to think of how they could be saved in the end and led to heaven. Otherwise they shall even fail to be admitted on their death to a paradise, a world for gods and the blessed dead.

Another reason, perhaps the most important one, why Japan has no utopia of her own is that it is a Buddhist country long awaiting the final salvation by the Bodhisattva Maitreya or Miroku in Japanese. This does not necessarily mean that the majority of the Japanese are Buddhists, but that the majority opinion often follows Buddhist teachings or, at least, the Buddhistic way of thinking. In Japan it has been widely accepted that the Bodhisattva Maitreya will presently come down to earth to take the place of Buddha and save us. According to an old Buddhist legend, the fortunes of the Buddhist religion after Buddha's death are divided into three periods. The first thousand years is the period of the "Perfect Law," the second that of the "Copied Law," and the third that of the "Latter Law," which is the age of

degeneration. As Chinese and Japanese Buddhists usually put Buddha's death in 949 B.C, the last period, that of the "Latter Law," must have started in the year A.D. 1052.¹ This means that the Japanese have spiritually been anticipating the final salvation by the Bodhisattva Maitreya since the eleventh century. Such a state of waiting for the Savior or salvation by him, though comparable with the millennialism of the West, has prevented the Japanese from planning or establishing Utopias.

Moreover, as we have noted above, Confucianism and Taoism, not to mention Buddhism, have taught the Japanese to live in harmony with nature. This attitude toward life has urged the Japanese to resign themselves to, and be satisfied with, life as offered them. They have been taught to find consolation in themselves. This is a sort of life in search of "interior illumination." It is a style of life which aims at self-extinction, the highest virtue in Buddhism, a state which many Japanese, priests as well as laity, try to achieve. This virtue is often called *satori* in Japanese. The life in pursuit of salvation by means of disinterestedness has, on the other hand, prevented the Japanese from making loud complaints about the actualities, though many are conscious that the life they are living is unsatisfactory and that it has much room for improvement. What must be realized here is that, however well it may be expressed, the problem of social betterment is reduced to a personal, or even a private, matter. Such a private way of dealing with political and social problems is characteristically Japanese. This negative attitude toward life may be best illustrated in works written by monks such as "Hojoki" (1212), or "The Ten Foot Square Hut"² by Chomei Kamo and "Tsureszuregusa" (1330-33), or the "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest"³ by Kenko Yoshida.

The fourth reason why the Japanese have few Utopias is that they are neither so logical nor so rational as to be engaged in a long, steady improvement of society. Nor are they philosophical or analytical in their way of thinking. They are instead instinctive and emotional, as well as enthusiastic. This is why they tend to make attempts at revolution (and are often good at it) rather than the reformation of society. When they want a Utopia, therefore, they try to establish their

1. For further information about the fortunes of the Buddhist religion after Buddha's death, see Masaharu Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion*, reprinted from 1963 ed. (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1980), pp. 149-150.

2. "The Ten Foot Square Hut," trans. A. L. Sadler (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co.).

3. "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest," trans. William N. Porter (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co.).

ideal state in an instant, and will not trouble themselves to make a gradual and steady improvement of the present system. Little *do* they think of the aftereffects of their action or the harm it will cause. They are often so enthusiastic that their emotion seems to get the better of them. This disposition may be well exemplified by the radical Japanese Utopians known as the *Nihon Seki Gun* or the Japanese Red Army who often choose to be hijackers or terrorists rather than modest reformers. The fifth reason why the Japanese had rarely been driven by the urge for Utopia is that they lived in harmonious communes of their individual clans or the homogeneous society which can easily be characterized as an agglomerate of all those clannish communes. In such communes it was not necessary to long for a world where people help each other to attain a common life or common ends. But today, by contrast, there is a longing for common effort. So it is that today communes or Utopias in the shape of communes, have for the first time come to attract much public attention. Perhaps they compensate for the fact that traditional communes have disappeared with the modernization of society, and so-called "nuclear families" have emerged with the various problems that the traditional communes had long ago settled. Few persons would have thought that the communes we tried so hard to get rid of some time ago would come back so soon and be so seriously discussed again in Japan. It is therefore a little ironic to note in this connection that *Narayama Bushi Ko* (1956) by Shichiro Fukazawa, which is known in the West as *Etude a Propos des Chansons de Narayama*⁴ (there is surprisingly no English translation), was recently filmed and released again. As a film this novel, which deals with the problems of the aged, with euthanasia, and related matters, has gained a high reputation and has won many prizes in various places, even in the West.

So far we have examined why Japan has no indigenous Utopia. Now we turn to five types of Utopia the Japanese have had or have thought about, even though they may not be genuinely Japanese.

The first kind of Japanese Utopia I shall discuss is paradisal. This Utopia, if it may be so called, is paradisal by nature, but also functions as an alternative to Utopia. Japan is rich in this kind of literature, which is discussed below. If this kind of paradise may be called Utopian, it can be said that Japan has had quite a number of Utopias. To enumerate them for the sake of clarity, we have the lunar world of "Takatori

4. *Etude a Propos des Chansons de Narayama*, trans. Barnard Frank (Paris: Gallimard, 1959). German version, trans. Klaudia Rheinhold (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1964).

Monogatari/" or "The Bamboo Cutter and Moon-Child";⁵ the submarine palace of the dragon king of the sea in "Urashima Taro," or "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad";⁶ a women's island in *Koshoku Ichidai Otoko* (1682), or *The Life of an Amorous Man*,⁷ by Saikaku Ihara; the snow country in *Yukiguni* (1947), or the *Snow Country*,⁸ by Yasunari Kawabata among others. It must, nevertheless, be emphasized once again that all the worlds mentioned above are not for human beings, but for superhuman beings such as celestial maidens, the submarine princess or, in modern and more realistic works, women as ideal as can be imagined by men. This is why "alternative" as they may be, these works are generally considered to be imagined paradises rather than Utopias.

Similar to paradisal Utopias are religious Utopias. They are different from paradisal Utopias in that, while the former are more imaginary and literary, the latter are more spiritual and practical. Into this category of religious Utopias falls the community described in *Sensei and His People* (1969) by Yoshie Sugihara.⁹ Like other religious bodies or communities as *Soka Gakkai*, Perfect Liberty, and *Ittoen*, Sugihara's community is not believed by the majority of the Japanese to be as ideal or Utopian as he argues. This is easily proved by the fact that the *Tenri Kyō*, on which the community is based, cannot be the leading religious sect in Japan, though it does belong to Shintoism, the oldest religion in Japan. It is usual, in addition, that however Utopian they may pretend to be, religious Utopias have the spiritual salvation of the members as their primary aim. The betterment of communities to which those believers and followers belong in a secondary concern. Some members may be initially attracted to these communities as systems or as a practical way of life. I hesitate to include these communities in the category of Utopia proper, though some of them may, of course, be really Utopian.

Such moderate paradisal or religious writings and theories are not the only trends in Japanese utopianism. In reaction to Western culture

5. "The Bamboo Cutter and Moon-child," *The Japanese Fairy Book*, ed. Yei Theodora Ozaki, (Reissued Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co.; originally published Westminster, England: Archibald Constable and Co., 1903).

6. "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad," *The Japanese Fairy Book*.

7. *The Life of an Amorous Man*, trans. Kengi Hamada (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1963).

8. *Snow Country*, trans. Edward G. Seidensticker (Reissued Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co.; originally Alfred A. Knopf, 1956).

9. *Sensei and his People* (University of California Press, 1969). See Samson B. Knoll, "Form or Content? Reflections on the Concept of Utopia in Asian and West European Thought," *Alternative Futures* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1980): 6.

and ideologies introduced into Japan during the last century or so, the Japanese have taken more positive action in establishing Utopias. At best, however, this generally positive reaction has resulted in producing Utopias by imitation or, if put more favorably, in Japanese equivalents to Western Utopias. These imitation Utopias are not really Japanese. That is why I am reluctant to consider them so. Yet they must be mentioned here for the simple reason that in Japan there is the tradition that imitation is a way of paying homage to the original and thus imitation is encouraged rather than discouraged. This practice, characteristic of Japanese culture, has an analogue in literature called *honka dori*, the custom of composing poems by copying excellent ones, thus paying respect to the original poems and poets. In so far as and because they are imitations, those imitation Utopias under discussion can likewise be considered characteristically Japanese.

Japanese Utopias produced by imitation may be represented by four works which may be divided into two groups of two each. To the first group belong *Furyu Shidokenden* (1763), or *The Adventurous Biography of Shidoken*¹⁰ by Gennai Hiraga; and *Shizen Shin'eido* (1775), or *Nature: The Way of True Management* by Shoeki Ando. It is said that both works have Holland as the model. Another group consists of two actual communities: *Atarashiki Mura* (1918-), or the New Village; and *Kyosei Noen* (1922-1926?), or the Communal Farm. As noted above the New Village was established by Saneatsu Mushakoji in Miyazaki, Kyushu. The main influence on the New Village was Tolstoyan philanthropy, and it is run to this day by his followers both at Miyazaki, where it was first established, and at Saitama near Tokyo, as an extension. The Communal Farm was launched by Takeo Arishima at Karita, Hokkaido, in competition with, and criticism of, the New Village; but unfortunately, because of the suicide of Arishima, the Communal Farm did not last long. It is interesting as well as noteworthy that these imitation Utopias in Japan were all started by men of letters.

Another category of Utopia in Japan today includes various communities or institutes for the physically and/or mentally handicapped. In Japan it is a new social trend to establish Utopias for the handicapped. One such enterprise recently established is *Ryuun Bokujo* or Ryuun Farm established at Takamatsu on Shikoku Island by a forty-nine-year-old Buddhist priest, Toshiaki Hosoi. According to a report in the *Asahi Newspaper*, dated 2 April 1983, the farm is run by fifty-three mentally retarded boys and girls, who are mainly employed in Alpine pasturing and mushroom growing. Although it may be hard to decide

10. For further information about *The Adventurous Biography of Shidoken* and *Nature: The Way of True Management*, see Knoll, "Form or Content," p. 6.

whether those boys and girls are really happy or not—and thus whether the community deserves the name of Utopia or not—what can at least be said about them is that these children might never live as happily in another arrangement. In this sense, the Ryuun Farm, however imperfect, may be as Utopian as a hospice is for dying people.

As a label "utopia" is also applied in Japan to many planned regions known as "Portopia," "Itopia" (pronounced "Eatopia" as it signifies the ideal town built by Itochu Trading Company, Ltd.), subtopia, and others. Portopia, the representative of them in many ways, is a minicity or a part of Kobe City constructed on reclaimed land and intended to be an ideal or independent city or possibly part of the larger city. One may welcome the appearance of this kind of city here and there, but it is doubtful whether such a minicity, or even several of them gotten together even as an organic whole, could be an alternative to utopia. Clearly a ministate like Portopia differs little from any well-equipped and well-governed political unit. As such it has little to do with utopia in the proper sense of the term. In fact, some believe, that utopia should be grand in scale, if not global.

Despite my conclusion that there is no really authentic Japanese utopia in the Anglo-American sense of the term, yet, as the remainder of this essay will demonstrate, there does exist a genuinely Japanese concept of paradise. And this concept, deeply rooted in Japanese culture, rich and pervasive in its influence, can be clearly seen in Japanese literature.

2. Representative Paradise in Japanese Literature

In considering the Japanese paradise, one soon encounters works written by monks. They are not particularly famous, nor do they deal with the examples representative of Japanese paradise, nor should they be identified with those works properly called the Buddhist literature. But they do describe the "paradise within" with which the Japanese are familiar through the teaching of Buddhism. Moreover, they have much in common with the representative examples of paradise in Japanese literature, which we shall examine below. Collateral though they may be, therefore, they should not be overlooked in the examination of paradise in Japanese literature. Those works which represent the "paradise within" are "Hojoki" (1212), "The Ten Foot Square Hut" by Chomei Kamo; "Tsureszuregusa" (1330-33), "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest" by Kenko Yoshida, and others.

"The Ten Foot Square Hut" and the "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest" tell us that nothing is certain in this world. All we see around us are illusions. Neither is there any such place as paradise on earth. If we

wish to find it, we must seek it within our mind. In this sense, both "The Ten Foot Square Hut" and the "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest" may be compared with those works by the seventeenth-century English writers under the influence of St. Augustine's idea of "interior illumination." The readers of those works are taught to look into themselves and learn that all kinds of worldly desire are vain. All we need is the calm, disinterested mind through which we shall see what we are really after. We shall then realize that everything is worthless and that resignation is the highest satisfaction, as well as a consolation in life. It may be said, therefore, that to seek a paradise in one's own mind through resignation — the "paradise within" — is to have one's own private world of satisfaction in one's own mind, a fulfillment which can be obtained by those who have trained themselves to raise themselves up to a level high enough to see that everything will be reduced to nothingness in the end. This is the teaching of *satori*, a way to the Buddhist salvation by means of abandonment. The "paradise through resignation" may, therefore, be said to be somehow esoteric, but the surest way to paradise, especially for those who train themselves with the intention of attainment.

Both "The Ten Foot Square Hut" and the "Miscellany of a Japanese Priest" are essays. One would rather like to examine and discuss the Japanese paradise in literary works of art in a purer sense of the term. One of those works in which the Japanese paradise may best be represented will be "Taketori Monogatari," or "Bamboo Cutter's Tale."

"Bamboo Cutter's Tale" is a unique story. It is rare, considering the date of its composition, that the story has a female protagonist. In those days it was usual for women to be treated as inferior; they ordinarily could not be central. There are, therefore, few works in Japanese literature contemporary with "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" which have female protagonists. Perhaps one notable exception will be "Ochikubo Monogatari," or "The Tale of the Lady Ochikubo" known as the work where the full-scale characterization was attempted with considerable success for the first time in Japanese literature. Compared with Lady Ochikubo, far less rounded and well-developed is Kaguya-hime, the Shining Princess or Princess Moonlight, the heroine of "Bamboo Cutter's Tale." She is flat to such an extent that she is appropriate for the heroine of a fairy tale, as explained below.

The Shining Princess was discovered by an old bamboo cutter at the foot of a thick bamboo radiating golden rays. A figurine as tiny as could be placed on the palm of the hand of the old bamboo cutter at the time of her discovery, she grew rapidly into a maiden so beautiful and sublime that men of all kinds and ranks came to see and woo her.

"Bamboo Cutter's Tale" can thus be counted as one of the representative examples in Japanese literature in which the protagonist is small in both size and significance at the time of birth, but soon grows into a superb youth. Other well-known stories of this kind in Japan are "Momo-Taro" or "The Story of the Son of a Peach" and "Issunb5shi" or "The Story of a Tom Thumb." It is also characteristic of them that they appear in moralities. "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" is a morality, needless to say, one of the oldest Buddhist stories in Japan.

The Shining Princess, having grown rapidly into a beauty, became very popular throughout the country, yet she remained mysterious and aloof at the center of general interest. She was too noble and unworldly. Moreover, she could be accused of no fault whatsoever. Before long it was rumored that the Emperor himself had failed to win her heart. In the meantime, she came to realize that people had suspected her to be other than a human female. She was too beautiful and faultless for that. As if tormented by such a suspicion, she got sadder and sadder day after day, until one night in the bright moonlight, looking up at the moon, she confessed that, as suspected, she was not human, but a celestial maiden banished to the earth and bound to go back to heaven shortly. After this scene of her confession, the story hastens to its climax. So dramatic is "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" in its latter half, that we are convinced by it. This tale is believed to be one of the oldest stories in Japan; still the technique of story-telling seems clearly to have been perfected.

On the night of the fifteenth of August, according to the old lunar calendar, when it is believed in Japan that the moon is brightest throughout the year, the Shining Princess left the earth for the moon. All the people besought her to stay, while they made their utmost effort to prevent her departure. The Emperor had sent his chosen army, lest she should be taken away. When the time came, however, a cloud round the moon began to roll down toward the earth, until the whole sky and the earth were obscured and people suddenly saw a flying chariot standing in front of them. A few minutes later the chariot with the Shining Princess in it began to return toward the moon, having kept everybody around it, soldiers and onlookers alike, all motionless as if paralyzed without making them aware of it. It was some time after the chariot and the Shining Princess had disappeared into the haze that people saw the day breaking and realized that they had come to themselves, so mighty is the celestial power. The story teaches us how helpless and powerless man is before it.

The Japanese have yearned for the superhuman power represented by the Shining Princess. Those powers are so peerless, the lunar world was also imagined to be matchless to the human world and

identified with paradise. The Japanese have long been looking up at the moon to which the Shining Princess returned, wishing it were indeed the lunar paradise. They believed that the moon, while facing the earth, was at the other end of the earth. Everything on the moon, therefore, was contrary to the earth like reflections on a mirror. The moon was, so to speak, the mirror held up to the earth. That is why the moon was always regarded as calm and peaceful, resplendent, and blissful, ideal and perfect. The moon was a better world, a pattern of the human world, an ideal world sought out in vain on earth and imagined to exist outside of it but nearest to it.

In Japan the moon is also associated with autumn and harvest, as suggested by the return of the Shining Princess to it on the fifteenth of August. On this night, and sometimes a few days before and after that, it is customary in Japan for people to offer wine and cakes to the moon to share in the festivities of the Moonlight Party, most grandly held in the imperial Court by Shintoists, in anticipation of the coming harvest. Then Japanese children are told by parents and elders, all looking up at the moon, that up there on the moon live some rabbits, that they are pounding steamed rice into cakes and that, in so doing, they are celebrating their peace, happiness, and prosperity. In order to partake of them, the Japanese are told, we hold the Moonlight Party, too. It is only after they have grown much older that they learn that what they saw as rabbits on the moon in childhood are the silhouettes made by the representative seas of the moon such as the Sea of Rains, the Ocean of Storms, the Sea of Serenity, and the Sea of Tranquility.

3. Other Examples of Paradise

"Bamboo Cutter's Tale" is a very popular story in Japan. It is so popular that there will be no Japanese who does not know it. Generally speaking, the story is first told to Japanese while they are still children. It will be read later, usually more than once. Of the provenance of this popular story, however, little is known. We know only that the story was written in the late tenth century by someone well versed in the literature of those days and familiar with Court life. Besides that, almost everything seems to be wrapped in mystery. To begin with, the author is unknown. Nor do we know how the story came to be produced. Neither is it known, except among specialists, that though "The Bamboo Cutter's Tale" has long been believed to be unique, a story very similar to it is also to be found in Tibet. Moreover, if the tale were confined only to Japan, it is but one of the three versions of an old legend. The other two versions are generally known as "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" and "Ama no Hagoromo" or "The Robe

of a Celestial Maiden." Yet these three versions look so different from one another that, even after having been thus told, it is still difficult for one to believe that they share a common origin. Upon closer examination, however, it will be discovered that there are more similarities between "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" and "The Robe of a Celestial Maiden" than between "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" and either of the other two. This becomes clear when we examine "The Robe of a Celestial Maiden." But the similarities are more clear and more useful to our discussion in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad"—to which we shall now turn.

"The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is about a fisherman who, because he had saved the life of a tortoise a few days before, was led to the Sea Palace by the tortoise as a token of gratitude and allowed to spend dreamlike days there, being entertained by the Princess of the palace and her pretty attendants. What distinguishes this story from the other versions are, first, that the central character is a fisherman, a human male like us, unlike the celestial maidens in the female versions and, second, that he as a living man visited and returned from the Sea Palace, the submarine paradise, though the paradise in Japanese literature does not admit any human being to it. And those are the reasons why "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" has been told and read with more intimacy and interest, if not with more excitement. Yet this accessibility to paradise by a living man was an offence against, as well as a reformation of, the general concept of the Japanese paradise. Instead of dreaming of, and yearning for, the happy life in paradise, man could now think of it as within his reach. The extramundane joy and happiness Urashima experienced in the Sea Palace are proved real and true. Also the Sea Palace, however fantastic it may look, turns terrestrial.

In the female versions, on the other hand, paradise is indeed treated, but merely as the home of the heroines who will reveal themselves as celestial maidens in the end. As regards the paradise or heaven in the female versions, we are only allowed to imagine it as this or that without being admitted to it. In these stories there is no journey either to paradise or anywhere, except when the heroines leave the earth for heaven at the end. This ascension, perhaps the only notable event in the stories, is the climax in them. Towards this climax the domestic life of the heroines is conducted with the emphasis on their beauty and graceful manners. It may be said, therefore, that the female versions are made to the taste of women, while the male version is prepared for men as a story of adventure and love.

As a story of adventure and love, "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is, contrary to our expectation, neither heroic nor

exciting. This is because, though it may be a brave act to save a tortoise from some naughty boys, Urashima is not really a hero. He returned to his native village and died miserably. After his happy days in the distant sea, when he returned, he found himself to be a stranger in his own village. He thought he had spent only three days in the Sea Palace, but the fact is that he had spent three hundred years there. Not knowing what else to do, though told never to do so on any occasion, he determined to open *tamate-bako*, the beautiful casket he was presented as a souvenir of the submarine paradise. Out of this casket rose a little purple cloud in three soft wisps and wrapped in them, Urashima instantly grew old and died. This sudden death of the hero at the end of the story reminds one of the Irish myth of the voyage of Bran and his men. In both legends death comes suddenly after a long joyous voyage in the remote sea without the sufferings of old age. Those two legends are similar also in that the sudden death comes upon seamen and that it takes place on the shore of the native land upon their return. On the beach Urashima died, as did Bran and his men, turning into ashes.

"The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is a morality as much as the female versions are. Urashima visited the Sea Palace and was not only cordially treated but also besought to live as the husband of Oto-hime, the daughter of the Dragon King of the Sea. Perhaps, as the result of this hedonistic life, the fisherman had to die shortly after he returned to his native village. In "Bamboo Cutter's Tale," on the other hand, men, whatever kind or rank, wished to get married to, or at least live with, the heroine, as she was so beautiful and graceful. Should any one of them have succeeded, how proud he would have been, while those around him would have boasted of having such a man as their own son, their brother-in-law, their relative or even their friend. In "The Robe of a Celestial Maiden" the hero stole and hid the robe of one of the celestial maidens, while they enjoyed bathing, and told her that he knew nothing about it. Without the robe, the celestial maiden could not return to heaven and became his wife for a while, until she somehow came to find her robe at the bottom of his chest of drawers. Although the heroine got married to a human male in "The Robe of a Celestial Maiden" as in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad," in the female versions men are taught in the end by the departure of the celestial maidens that it is absurd for them to want more than they are allowed. The lesson is that one must pay a price for enjoyment. As a morality tale the female-oriented "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" is the most severe. But almost as severe is "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad," for in the "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" no marriage was permitted between the hero and the heroine—between a human male and a celestial maiden—even though the man was the

Emperor; but in the male-oriented tale the hero (the fisher lad) was married to the Princess, though he was not allowed to live long after that happy experience in the submarine paradise. His visit to the paradise is, then, similar to visits made by the blessed dead, and becomes commonplace. The Japanese paradise is inaccessible to the living but has admitted the blessed dead.

The last thing that should be noted about "The Story of the Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad"—and in fact should be emphasized—is that it represents what I may call the Utopian paradise. The Utopian paradise, as suggested by the combined terms, is a hybrid, something between the two or what may be at once paradise and Utopia, though, if anything, closer to paradise. The Sea Palace in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is such a variant of paradise. Paradise as it may be and unlike the other models of the Japanese paradise, it was visited by Urashima. And it is described in considerable detail for that reason. Yet the Sea Palace is still too unrealistic. It appears too far removed from the world in which we live. In fact, if the opportunity were offered, it would be impossible for us to live in it. But at the same time it is different, too, from the kind of Utopia which is the best and ideal *human* world. We must therefore conclude that the Sea Palace is neither Utopia nor paradise in the genuine sense of the terms, but a kind of paradise also unearthly and imaginary like other models of paradise in Japanese literature, though different from them again in that it is represented in the way Utopias often are represented; and because of the description of the Sea Palace "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is unique among the three versions of the same legend, as well as among other works of Japanese paradise.

"Tao Hua Yuan Ji" is another work of Utopian paradise that may be compared with "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad." Yet this is not Japanese. It is a Chinese story written by Tao Yuan-ming or Tao Qian in the Jin Dynasty. The reason it should be included here is that it is so well known in Japan, especially among Sinologists, as the work from which the Japanese term *fogenkyo* is derived. This Japanese term is for *shin-wai lao-yuan* in Chinese, peach orchard in another world, that is to say, utopia or paradise in China.

Shin-wai tao-yuan and *togenkyo* remind the Chinese and the Japanese of that beautiful peach orchard deep in the inland of China, though it may leave the impression that it is so far inland that if there be such a blissful place, it is hardly accessible. In addition, during the long period in which the story has been told among the Japanese, the term *togenkyo* has become old-fashioned, and today, when paradise is meant, the Japanese often use a different term, *paradaisu*, derived from the English. Somehow the Japanese have been deluded us into a false idea that

the peach orchard in China was indeed another world in old days, a legendary paradise with no root in reality. In fact most Japanese are either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the fact that there is a monument commemorating the discovery of the Chinese paradise at Mount Tao-yuan or Peach Mountain in Hunan province.

"Tao Hua Yuan Ji" is the story of an unidentified fisherman from Wu Ling who paid an incidental visit to Tao Yuan Xiang. What must be noted about this story is that the hero is, like Urashima, a fisherman and a human male who, in addition to those similarities, visits Tao Yuan Xiang, an earthly paradise like the Sea Palace. Despite those outstanding similarities, the stories are different. They are different even in their similarities. The paradise Urashima visits is submarine, while Tao Yuan Xiang is inland. Also different are the protagonists, although both are fishermen. Urashima was a famous fisherman, the most skillful fisherman in all the countryside where he lived, whereas the Chinese fisherman was unidentified, and he caught fresh-water fish in streams and ponds. And yet the two stories are similar even to such an extent that one suspects their similarities might be artificial rather than accidental. It is my hope that those similarities will so stand out that they will justify the claim I am making in the course of the comparison which will follow.

The first, and perhaps the most important, point of comparison between "Tao Hua Yuan Ji" and "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" will be that both stories represent what may be called the Utopian paradise. Of the two, however, the inland paradise in "Tao Hua Yuan Ji" is more realistic than the submarine paradise in the Japanese story. In "Tao Hua Yuan Ji" there is no such fantastic garden as the one in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" which surrounds the Sea Palace, giving expression to all of the four seasons at once. Neither was there the tortoise in it that carried Urashima on its back to the Sea Palace, nor were there the fish-inhabitants that entertained him with their dances. All the inhabitants in the Chinese story are human beings as ordinary as the rest of us, somewhat old-fashioned as they might look. This suggests that though both may belong in the category of paradise rather than Utopia, Tao Yuan Xiang was closer to the human world than the Sea Palace, and that Tao Yuan Xiang was closer to Utopia than the Sea Palace, which was closer to paradise. Perhaps this is why Urashima had to die after his return from the Sea Palace, whereas the Chinese fisherman survived even after his return from Tao Yuan Xiang. Yet, as in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad," Tao Yuan Xiang is not described with the intention either to criticize Wu Ling in comparison with it, or to construct any better society after the example of Tao Yuan Xiang. However realistic

Tao Yuan Xiang might appear, therefore, "Tao Hua Yuan Ji" should be classed with "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" as another hybrid work of what I have termed above a "utopian paradise."

Another point of noteworthy similarity is that both stories deal with the betrayal to which the protagonists were tempted after their return to their native land. Urashima betrayed the Princess of the submarine paradise by opening the souvenir casket. The Chinese protagonist betrayed the people in Tao Yuan Xiang by telling the district headman in his native land all about them, though he was asked never to, shortly before he left for Wu Ling; nor had he any necessity of breaking his promise. Moreover, he was led into this betrayal in spite of his strong intention to return to Tao Yuan Xiang once again. He had left marks here and there on his way home to Wu Ling in order that he might possibly trace them back to Tao Yuan Xiang. He was much attracted to Tao Yuan Xiang; but he betrayed its inhabitants.

"Tao Hua Yuan Ji" and "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" are similar further in that neither Tao Yuan Xiang nor the Sea Palace is rediscoverable or accessible but once. Urashima thought of returning to the submarine paradise, when he found himself without any more resources than opening the souvenir casket. But then, without the guidance of the tortoise, he knew neither the right way, nor how to travel such a long distance to the Sea Palace. Without the tortoise, therefore, we may not have learned any more from him about the Sea Palace, nor could his further information about it, if any, have led us to it. Like Urashima, as already pointed out, the Chinese fisherman also had the intention to return to Tao Yuan Xiang. His intention was evident from his act to leaving marks on his way home. Yet his attempt to rediscover Tao Yuan Xiang failed in the end. It failed for all the help given him by the district headman. Tao Yuan Xiang could not be located again. And since the Chinese fisherman was set free by the district headman, it has become impossible for us to find Tao Yuan Xiang anymore, for we do not know the identity and whereabouts of the fisherman. The fisherman is the only person who can supply us with the information about Tao Yan Xiang; he is the only person who can lead us there. But unlike Urashima, the Japanese fisherman, the Chinese fisherman was never identified.

Nyogashima or Women's Island in *Koshoku Ichidai Oloko* (1682), or *The Life of an Amorous Man*, by Saikaku Ihara is an island imagined to exist in the remote sea and believed to be populated exclusively by women. Although it was located on earth, unlike other models of Japanese paradise, nobody knew where it was or whether or not such an island really existed in the distant sea. It might be located on earth,

but it is as if it had never existed on earth and is thus identified with other examples of the Japanese paradise.

The Women's Island came into the mind of Yonosuke, the hero of *The Life of an Amorous Man*, when he has gotten tired of his life on earth and wanted to find out a new world where he could start afresh. It is possible that he got and developed his concept of the Women's Island, as he had often heard of Ogres' Islands and the Sea Palace in the remote sea, not to mention his erotic disposition for which he was so well-known from his childhood. Yet, because of his mood of boredom with the present world, he may best be compared with Johnson's Prince Rasselas in the Happy Valley, though he is different from the prince in that he still believes in the possibility of happiness on the Women's Island, whereas Prince Rasselas came to learn after extensive travel and observation that "of [all the] wishes that they had formed ... none could be obtained." Yonosuke did not realize yet what the prince had learned—that the world, even when devoid of frustration of any kind, will prove tedious in the end. It can be said, on the other hand, that Yonosuke, still dreaming of his happiness on the Women's Island, is a more passionate pursuer of love. He may be compared with Don Juan and the Prince of Genji, though again he is different from them in that even after having been frustrated by innumerable women, he still wants another woman, one after another, and cannot gain tranquility of mind, say, through devotion to God. Yonosuke was amorous by nature.

Yonosuke, more fully Ukiyonosuke, is a "sad man." This is also suggested by his name. *Ukiyo*, denoting, in common use, this "floating world" in which we live, originates in the Buddhist phrase for the "sad world." In Yonosuke *no* is the particle equivalent to *of* in English and *suke* the suffix indicative of the male name, though somewhat old-fashioned today. Yonosuke, believed to be the fictional composite of many men of wealth of the day, thus represents the present world. Of this world on earth, however, Yonosuke had become so tired that at the end of the novel he set about his journey into the distant sea in search of the Women's Island. Yet the novel does not tell whether or not he and his company reached their destination successfully. There is no need for that kind of ending. There is a belief in Japan, popular in old days, that if we set sail for a distant land, we will reach a better world and be happier. Yonosuke's Women's Island is reminiscent of just such salvation and bliss in the distant sea. On earth as it may be, it is still a symbolic island. And, as such, it may be counted as one more example of the dreamland in Japanese literature with which we are already familiar.

Another example of paradise in Japanese literature is the Snow Country in *Yuki-guni* (1947) by Yasunari Kawabata. The Snow Country is believed to be modelled after Yuzawa Hot Spring to be reached through Shimizu Tunnel, one of the longest tunnels in Japan, but it suggests more than that. The spa also reminds us of a cozy nook of a similar kind. It is at once the hotsprings resort as is described and anywhere else which is "nowhere." This manner of description is quite characteristic of Kawabata who is a symbolic, or at least a suggestive, novelist. The novel is, therefore, full of implications, while its illusory and suggestive nature is reinforced by the topography of the Snow Country.

The author's temperament and the geographical features are not all that make the *Snow Country* unrealistic. The characters also contribute a great deal towards producing the unrealistic atmosphere of the novel. Indeed, nothing is substantial about Shimamura, the hero. His birth, age, family, and occupation are all nominal. We do not know why he should have visited the Snow Country more than once to meet Komako, the heroine, except for one self-sufficient reason: he told her that she was a good woman. Equally unsubstantial is Komako. She tried to live as honestly as she could, at least with Shimamura, but she was a geisha girl. She was anybody and nobody to anyone, even to the hero. Well matched to these phantomlike characters is the Snow Country itself, with its mystic air and its isolation by the long tunnel and its near inaccessibility caused by deep snow. It is isolated from the rest of the world to such an extent that it may well be called another world. It is an example of paradise rarely found in modern Japanese literature.

4. *Features of the Japanese Paradise*

So far I have examined some examples of paradise in Japanese and other literatures. Now to sum up the main characteristics of the Japanese paradise. To begin with, the Japanese paradise is sacred and inaccessible. It is the abode of gods, as exemplified by Takamagahara, the Shintoist paradise and Gokuraku-jodo which is Amida's Pure Land, though the latter may not necessarily be celestial. The Japanese paradise is the divine territory to which no human being has ever been admitted. Whether celestial or submarine, therefore, it must be remote from the human world to express that it is essentially extramundane. Here is a basic difference between the Japanese paradise and the Western paradise represented by the Garden of Eden, the Christian earthly paradise. As described in the Bible, the Garden of Eden is the place in which the ancestors of human beings, Adam and Eve, once

lived and from which they were expelled. Of course there are also instances of celestial paradise in the West, but many of them are neither so excellent in quality nor so prominent as the Garden of Eden to be representative of the Western paradise. Some of them, it has been pointed out, are even modelled after the earthly paradise. Therefore, the Western paradise comparable with the Japanese paradise would have to be the celestial paradise and superior to the Christian earthly paradise, for example, the Good Pasture in *Le Roman de la Rose* which reminds one somehow of Amida's Pure Land.

As examined above, the Japanese paradise is sacred and out of human reach. Due to those qualities, it must be mysterious and imaginary. The distance between the Japanese paradise and the human world is not only the physical distance but also the gap between the ideal and the reality. The remoteness of the Japanese paradise from the human world is symbolic of its *raison d'être*, which is that the Japanese paradise is not primarily for the mortal, but for gods and the blessed dead. It implies further that it is the other side of the earth. And it is not only the Japanese who hold that paradise is at the other side of the earth. In the West the Sumerians and the Greeks also conceived of paradise as such.

As the abode of gods and the blessed dead, the Japanese paradise can easily be differentiated from Utopia by the fact that the latter is an ideal state for men and women who are still among the living. As the abode of the blessed dead, on the other hand, the Japanese paradise may also be compared with *pardes* in the apocalyptic tradition of the Jews or that in the rabbinical tradition. Still more, it can be identified with Amida's Pure Land. Thus, the Japanese paradise proves to be not only prehistoric but transhistoric as well. It can be distinguished once again from Utopia, for it teaches that immortality is unattainable even with the most advanced technological engineering of which the Utopians can boast.

Finally, the Japanese paradise is feminine. It is the world of women. To review it chronologically, Takamagahara or the Shintoist paradise is the world ruled by Amaterasu Omikami, the Sun-goddess who is in charge of agriculture or production. The lunar paradise in "Bamboo Cutter's Tale" is the world of the Shining Princess. The Sea Palace in "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad" is nominally ruled by the Dragon King of the Sea, but for Urashima it is the world of Oto-hime, the Dragon King's daughter and her female attendants. Women's Island in *The Life of an Amorous Man* is the world of women in name and reality, as it is exclusively populated by them. The spa in the *Snow Country* is the world of Komako, the geisha girl, to which Shimamura is attracted and makes occasional visits. The Japanese paradise, thus, has an erotic atmosphere associated with it and because of that, it has something in common with the prelapsarian paradise in the West.