

Intercultural Imaginaries of the Ideal: East-West Comparative Utopias

2pm - Monday 5th December 2005
Foundation Life Members' Room
1888 Building (School Graduate Studies)
University of Melbourne

The aim of this workshop on Comparative Utopias is to identify generic tendencies as well as fundamental divergences in imagining the ideal society across various cultural contexts. The Western heritage of utopia has been emphasized in recent large-scale exhibitions and publications held at the New York Public Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France at the turn of the Millennium, entitled "Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World". Two of the major contributors to that project, and co-editors of the self-titled publication, Lyman Tower Sargent and Gregory Claeys, will be adopting a different approach in this East-West Comparative Utopias workshop, exploring non-Western interpretations of the imaginary of the ideal.

The participants will each present their own research into utopias and utopianism, focusing on non-Western representations of the imaginary of the ideal society. The main emphasis will be on South East Asian utopias, principally from China and Japan.

Presenters will include:

Professor Lyman Tower Sargent (Fellow, Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Founder of the Society for Utopian Studies and Founding Editor of the journal *Utopian Studies*)

"*The Peach Blossom Spring* and early Western utopias of the earthly paradise mode"

Professor Gregory Claeys (Royal Holloway, University of London)

"Socialised Individuality? A Reassessment of the Sources and Classification of William Morris's Socialism"

Professor Yasuo Kawabata (Japan Women's University, Tokyo)

"Kenji Miyazawa and his Idea of *Nomin-Geijutsu* (Peasant Art)"

Dr Jacqueline Dutton and Haruka Hikita (University of Melbourne)

"From *Tokoyo no kuni* to *Tôgenkyô* to *Ukiyo*"

Future directions and projects to be explored:

Publication of an anthology of non-Western utopian-style projections

Organization of an International Conference on East-West Comparative Utopias

Research project on Comparative Utopianism

A preliminary report on the findings and follow-up from the workshop will be published electronically and linked to the School of Languages website at the University of Melbourne.

We invite potential discussants and interested observers to join us in opening this new area of Utopian Studies.

For all enquiries and RSVP, please contact Jacqueline Dutton (jld@unimelb.edu.au)