Tao Yuanming
- poems -

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Tao Yuanming()
Begging For Food

The pangs of hunger drove me from my home;
with no idea of where to go
I travelled on for miles
until I reached a village,
knocked on the nearest door,
blurted out some clumsy words.

The owner understood my need
his warmth dispelled my shame
that I'd come empty-handed.

We played and sang till sunset,
the wine-cups often tilted,
with the pleasure of new-found friends
we chanted and composed verses.

I remember the story of the washerwoman. *
Ashamed that I lack the skills of general Han,
how can I show my gratitude?
I can only repay him in the world to come.

Tao Yuanming
Reading The Classic Of Hills And Seas

In the summer grass and trees have grown.
Over my roof the branches meet.
Birds settle in the leaves.
I enjoy my humble place.
Ploughing's done, the ground is sown,
Time to sit and read my book.
The narrow deeply-rutted lane
Means my friends forget to call.
Content, I pour the new Spring wine,
Go out and gather food I've grown.
A light rain from the East,
Blows in on a pleasant breeze.
I read the story of King Mu,
See pictures of the Hills and Seas.
One glance finds all of heaven and earth.
What pleasures can compare with these?

Tao Yuanming
Returning To Live In The Country

Young, I was always free of common feeling.
It was in my nature to love the hills and mountains.
Mindlessly I was caught in the dust-filled trap.
Waking up, thirty years had gone.
The caged bird wants the old trees and air.
Fish in their pool miss the ancient stream.
I plough the earth at the edge of South Moor.
Keeping life simple, return to my plot and garden.
My place is hardly more than a few fields.
My house has eight or nine small rooms.
Elm-trees and Willows shade the back.
Plum-trees and Peach-trees reach the door.
Misted, misted the distant village.
Drifting, the soft swirls of smoke.
Somewhere a dog barks deep in the winding lanes.
A cockerel crows from the top of the mulberry tree.
No heat and dust behind my closed doors.
My bare rooms are filled with space and silence.
Too long a prisoner, captive in a cage,
Now I can get back again to Nature.

Tao Yuanming