

Song of the Grass Roof Hermitage

-Shitou Xiqian

I built a grass hut where there's nothing of value.
After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap.
When it was completed fresh weeds appeared.
Now it's been lived in, covered by weeds.

The person in the hut lives here quietly,
Not stuck to inside, outside or in-between.
The places worldly people live, they don't live.
The realms worldly people love, they don't love.

Though the hut is small it includes the entire world.
In ten square feet, an old person illumines forms and their nature.
A Great Vehicle bodhisattva trusts without doubt.
The lowly and middling can't help wondering:
Will this hut perish or not?

Perishable or not, the original master is present,
Dwelling neither south nor north, east nor west.
Firmly based in steadiness, it can't be surpassed.
A shining window below the green pines -
Jade palaces and vermillion towers can't compare with it.

Just sitting with head covered, all things are at rest.
Thus, this mountain monk doesn't understand at all.
Living here, one no longer works to be free.
Who would proudly arrange seats, trying to entice guests?

Turn around the light to shine within, and just return.
The vast inconceivable source can't be faced or turned away from.
Meet the ancestral teachers, be familiar with their instruction,
Bind grasses to build a hut, and don't give up.

Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely,
Open your hands and walk, innocent.
Thousands of words, myriad interpretations,
Are only to free you from obstructions.
If you want to know the undying person in the hut,
Don't separate from this skin bag here and now.