

# THE THREE LAUGHING MONKS

Spiritual Story by Osho

In China they are only known simply as “The Three Laughing Monks.” No name is mentioned, because they never told their names to anybody, they never answered anything.

They did only one thing: they would enter a village, stand in the marketplace, and start laughing.

Suddenly people would become aware and they would laugh with their whole being.

Then others would also get the infection!

Then a crowd would gather, and just looking at them the whole crowd would start laughing.



Then it happened they became famous all over the country — the three laughing monks. The whole of China loved them, respected them. Nobody had preached that way — that life must be just a laughter and nothing else.

And they were not laughing at anybody in particular, but simply laughing as if they had understood the cosmic joke. They spread so much joy all over China without using a single word. People would ask their names but they would simply laugh, so that became their name, The Three Laughing Monks.

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Then they became old, and in one village one of the three monks died.

The whole village was very expectant, filled with expectations, because now at least when one of them had died they must weep. This would be something worth seeing, because no one could even conceive of these people weeping.

*The whole village gathered...*

The two monks were standing by the side of the corpse of the third and laughing such a belly laugh. So the villagers asked:

“At least explain this!”

So for the first time they spoke, and they said:

"We are laughing because this man has won.

We were always wondering who would die first, and this man has defeated us. We are laughing at our defeat, at his victory.

He lived with us for many years, and we laughed together and we enjoyed each other's togetherness, presence.

There can be no other way of giving him the last send-off, we can only laugh."

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The whole village was sad, but when the dead monk's body was put on the funeral pyre, then the village realized that not only were these two joking — the third who was dead was also laughing... because the third man who was dead had told his companions, "Don't change my dress!"

It was conventional that when a man died they changed the dress and gave a bath to the body, so he had said, "Don't give me a bath because I have never been unclean. So much laughter has been in my life that no impurity can accumulate near me, can even come to me. I have not gathered any dust, laughter is always young and fresh. So don't give me a bath and don't change my clothes."

So just to pay him respect they had not changed his clothes.

And when the body was put on the fire, suddenly they became aware that he had hidden many things under his clothes and those things started...

Chinese fireworks!

So the whole village laughed, and those two said

"You rascal! You have died, but again you have defeated us. Your laughter is the last."