

The Temple Of Master Hotei is based entirely upon the past life memories of the author. Master Hotei is commonly known as the Laughing Buddha. Each chapter is a spiritual lesson between Master Hotei and his young student, Ivory One.

The Temple Of Master Hotei

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The Temple Of Master Hotei

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The Temple Of Master Hotei

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Chapter 1

The Journey

The early morning sunlight filtered down through the tree tops making intricate shadow patterns dance across the ground. The air was cool and humid as the young boy trotted along behind his father's larger and relentless stride. The child panted from the effort of trying to maintain a respectable distance between himself, and that of the larger, adult man. He could hear his father's breath laboring also but dared not to suggest a slower pace. The decision had been made. One Like Ivory was to enter the Temple of Wise Ones today, and his father would see the boy there, regardless of the difficulty and length of the journey.

Farther and higher the young son and father climbed the narrow weaving dirt pathway up the mountain. It was a seldom traveled path and because of this was overgrown in many areas with patches of thick bamboo and dense ground covering. It was a difficult, dangerous journey for a full-grown man, but a nearly impossible trek for a small boy of seven years.

The local villagers had little reason other than sheer curiosity to risk the dangers of climbing a mountain only to view the famed outer walls and golden gates of the Temple. Besides, no one was allowed entrance into the outer gardens, let alone the Inner Temple, other than the occasional carefully selected young neophyte. Beyond the treacherous and physically painful pilgrimage up the mountain, the villagers were mostly superstitious about the happenings that went on behind the walls that surrounded the entire place.

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There were wild rumors, mostly all incorrect, as to the supernatural activities of the Master Teacher and his students who lived behind the Temple walls. Rumors concerning the longevity of some of these holy men were alleged to have spanned a few hundred years, and that alone intimidated the villagers for many miles in all directions. It was another of many reasons as to why outsiders simply did not travel up the mountain to even get a look at the Temple walls and only entry gate.

A family, whose son was selected to enter the Temple of Wise Ones, was highly revered and respected by all even though the relatives and villagers really knew nothing about the Temple, the Master, or what the students did therein. Their family name would live long and be uttered by many in their own village, and the surrounding villages as well, and this great honor helped considerably in dulling the deep pain of losing a son. Therefore, the false and naïve rumors would flourish generation after generation, helping to perpetuate the rarity and uniqueness of having one's young son selected for such a renowned yet enigmatic life.

On the seventh birthday of all male children in each of the villages, the local astrologer would carefully review the boy's natal planetary positions. If the natal chart indicated the child was ready and receptive for a life of focused spiritual learning's, then the boy's father, grandfather and town elders were all gathered for council. The astrologer would interpret the child's birth chart to them and a final decision was then made by them all.

It was a mixed blessing having a son chosen for Temple life, but it was also a financial burden for the whole family. It was a very serious and difficult choice to make; give up a son to a lifetime of spiritual learning's when that same son would

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normally work with his father and grandfather to feed and protect the whole extended family. Three days earlier Ivory One's father had told him of the families' decision.



“I, your Grandfather, the Astrologer and the Elders, have decided that your purpose in this life is to walk a different and difficult path my youngest son. I cannot prepare you for this journey, nor can I tell you much about the place we are sending you or about the Wise Men that live within the Temple,” he said slowly and as unemotionally as he could.

“You greatly honor our family by being chosen to live behind the Gates of Gold Ivory One. I can tell you that you will learn mysteries of the ancient Gods and will grow to become a man unlike any man of our village,” he said smiling proudly and straightened his square shoulders.

“What are the Gates of Gold Father, and why must I learn of the mysteries of the Gods? I want to remain here and become a great Fisherman like my honorable Father and Grandfather. Why must I leave when my brothers can stay and work beside you and Grandfather?” Ivory One questioned, his dark eyes filling with pools of tears. His father clenched the long edges of his sleeves uncomfortably and looked away from his youngest son.

“Your birth planets speak this message One Like Ivory; the stars themselves indicate it. They say you have reached this life where your destiny is to become much more than a Fisherman my son. You are to learn of great mysteries, not of fishing, boats, and endlessly mending nets. You are to learn of the Gods, not of

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the tides, the winds, and sailing like your older brothers Ivory One.

"The Gates of Gold are the only entrance into the Temple of Wise Ones, my son. I know you are frightened by this great change, but you must understand what an honor it is to be chosen, to be found ready for such a life of spiritual training as this," his father said trying to be brave for them both.

"If this is your heart's desire Father, then I will go to this place and learn from those men to be more than a Fisherman. And when I have grown wise behind those Gates of Gold, I will return to aid my honorable Father and Mother, so that you will be proud of your youngest son too!" the little boy stated bravely looking up at his father. The man lowered his head and closed his eyes, falling silent for a long and painful few minutes.

"One Like Ivory," he replied slowly, raising his eyes to meet his youngest son's, "those who enter the Temple of Wise Ones never step outside its walls for the remainder of their day's child."



The warm golden sun was now directly overhead and the little boy's outer shirt was damp from the prolonged physical exertion executed at an adult pace. His legs and lungs aching for a reprieve, finally reached their destination six long and difficult hours later. Exhausted, the boy gratefully plunked himself down on a large rock to rest. His father slowly inched towards the huge gold Temple Moon Gates and apprehensively inspected them but from a respectful distance.

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During the entire six-hour journey up the mountain, Ivory One's father had not spoken a word and the child dared not to break the silence for fear of being disrespectful. At times, the boy thought his father was angry with him and that was the reason for his prolonged silence and hard, fast, pace throughout the journey. Yet he knew he had not done anything to cause his father's unhappiness so, he simply struggled to keep up with the man all the way up the mountain. It had been a painfully difficult journey for both of them.

The man stood looking at the famous and mysterious Temple Moon Gates for many long minutes as his son sat motionless upon the rock watching him. Eventually the boy realized his father was past the point of curiosity, and was actually struggling with the unavoidable act of turning around to face his youngest son, and say his good bye. Ivory One's heart skipped and thudded heavy in his little chest at the thought of what the two of them would have to do in the next few minutes. He strained unsuccessfully to hold back tears of love and tears of fear. Hearing his young son openly crying caused the father to turn around and take his child up in his arms for the last time. The father held the crying boy tightly while he fought back his own painful tears.

"As I told you before, there will soon be someone to greet you my son. Do not weep over this great honor that is all of ours One Like Ivory," he struggled to say. "Remember that you, my youngest son, bring great honor to our Family and Village for being chosen to live and learn within the Temple of Wise Ones. We will not forget you Ivory One, and you will live in all our hearts forever," the father said now crying himself. He placed his young son on the ground before him so he could look him in the eyes for one last time. The boy dried his eyes with his long

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sleeves and tried very hard to appear strong and mature for his father.

"I will work hard to bring honor and respect to our family and village Father," the boy said with a quivering voice, "but I miss all of you already."

His father smiled, nodded and said, "You have already done so my young son."

Abruptly his father turned with an artificial air of aloofness and rigidly walked away from his youngest son. Watching his father's stiff, awkward movements and staggering steps, the boy realized that this parting was much more painful for his father than he realized. He stared intently at his father's back as the man struggled along the tiny dirt footpath leading down the mountain. The boy quickly tried to burn the memory of his father's form into his mind and heart so he would always have it to draw upon in the future. When the man was completely out of sight, the young boy walked back to the rock, sat down, and began crying again.

After a half hour or so, the seven year old stopped crying as his attention was drawn back to the massive golden Temple gates. He got up and slowly walked over to them to get a better look at the sacred gates that had changed his young life overnight. They were huge carved Moon Gates the color of gold and red attached to the thick, high, Temple walls that stretched out east and west and disappeared behind enormous trees and shrubs. The decoratively carved gates allowed one to peer through open portions of them into the visible outer edge of the opulent gardens inside.

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The child stood outside the massive gates and waited. No one came. Occasionally he could hear footsteps shuffling along inside the walls but he never actually saw anyone. With his face pressed up against the Moon Gates, Ivory One viewed the most beautiful, lush gardens he'd ever seen. His eyes poured slowly over every tree, every flowering bush, and every carefully combed gravel pathway he could see from his limited position outside the Temple gates.

Enormous lush trees and multicolored flowering bushes were everywhere. Species of plants and flowers the boy had never seen before, sprawled out before him in a wild display of colors, scents, and shapes, giving the impression that it was a foreign garden in a foreign land.

The unique sounds of unseen birds singing were equally foreign to the young boy and added to the overall magic, mystery, and exotic beauty of the place. The boy could also hear the sounds of moving water and smelled the moisture in the fragrant air, hinting of further beauty hidden deeper back inside the gardens. Numerous massive gray and white flecked boulders sat looking as if they'd been strategically placed within the garden grounds, giving it the feel of ancient, earthy strength, perfect balance, and deep grounding.

Unknown hours passed as the young boy sat watching, waiting, and wondering at the Temple gates. At times he became fearful but his fear would easily mutate back into deep fascination over the beauty and otherworldliness of the place. In addition, there was the thought of those mysterious Wise Men who lived within the Temple, and his heart would race with excitement and doubt all over again. How he could hear their footsteps so clearly and yet not see anyone intrigued him

immensely. The young boy squinted his eyes, hoping that that clever maneuver might possibly reveal whoever was creating the footsteps. He strained to see behind and around trees and flowers, visually searching in those shady areas between the dense foliage, but to no avail. One Like Ivory saw no one inside the garden, even though he could clearly hear footsteps moving about.

Suddenly, a few feet directly in front of the boy, was a man standing in the garden staring at him. Ivory One did not see the man walk to this position but simply appear there before him. The boy jumped back away from the gates as he considered this phenomenon and stared, awe struck, at the silent man. He was round and wore full length deep golden colored robes. His eyes were black and shown with a peculiar, otherworldly light. He stared at the young boy for a very long time without speaking or moving at all. Ever so slowly a grin began to spread across the stranger's full, round face, transforming it and the unusual light in his eyes into something very different.

"To enter here means to never leave here. To enter here means great sacrifice but even greater rewards! To enter here means to die many times, only to be reborn *many* more. Think well before you enter here or leave here. You alone may choose to do either Little One," the mysterious robed man said and then easily disappeared back into the garden.

Ivory One stood staring at the empty space where the strange round man had been moments before with his mouth hanging open. He blinked his eyes three or four times hoping that would help him comprehend what had just happened. There was such a dreamlike feel to what he had just seen and heard, that the child momentarily wondered if it had actually happened at all. The boy straightened himself and closed his mouth finally, wondering

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many different things for a good long while. He walked back up to the gold gates and sat down, propped his little chin on the ledge of the carved Moon Gate, and stared into the lush mystical gardens again.

“What strange words. What a strange man! Did that really happen?” Ivory One thought to himself as he viewed a large orange butterfly float from a pink to purple flower.

“To enter here means death and rebirth? How could I die in there? It’s so beautiful and safe looking in that garden,” the boy pondered. “What could possibly be hiding in that wonderful garden that could kill me? What sacrifice and great reward could I experience in a garden like this one? I wonder where that strange man went, and if he will come back soon?”

“I could go back home and work for my Father. Oh, no, I can’t. I would bring unthinkable shame upon my whole Family if I returned now. Ah...and the entire Village too. No, I cannot return home now,” the child realized with a serious frown.

“What great sacrifice could that strange man ask of me? I am only seven years old and I have nothing, I own nothing to give up. I do not understand anything that strange round man said, and I am not even certain that he did indeed say those strange things to me. Maybe I imagined it!” the boy thought to himself with much confusion, tiredness, and growing hunger.

In the middle of the boy’s mental and emotional conflicts, he noticed a large black iridescent beetle slowly hobbling its way out from under a thick shrub inside the garden and head straight for the gates. One Like Ivory watched the insect paddling along in a straight line towards him sitting on the outside of the Moon

gates. Its shiny black body changed colors in the sunlight as it moved along, first black, then emerald green into royal blue, and finally, a deep purple color. The boy was mesmerized watching the magical transformation of rainbow colors shining off the beetle's hard body. The closer the beetle got to the boy, he noticed that it was pushing and rolling something round and large in front of itself. As he strained to identify the beetle's round possession, he realized that it was a good-sized ball of dung. Ivory One smiled to himself as he continued watching the silly beetle nimbly maneuver his round load closer to the Moon Gates. He was immediately fond of the funny beetle, pushing its ball of waste towards him.

The beetle rolled his dung ball right up to the Temple gates in front of the child, turned blue black, then shining emerald green, and proceeded to shove its round dung package under the gate right at him. The beetle then turned around quickly and tracked a few feet back into the garden where he'd come from. Ivory One stared in utter amazement because he had never seen an insect offer a human a gift before. The boy began to giggle aloud watching the beetle watching him. Carefully he picked up the dry dung offering, and rolled it around in his palm grinning widely. He looked back at the beetle and then held the dung gift up between his finger and thumb and waved it at the watching insect through the Moon gates.

"I suppose I should thank you little beetle for your gift!" Ivory One said aloud to the insect watching him from a few feet inside the garden. "I do not know what I shall do with this treasure but I thank you anyway. At the moment I feel I have a more than adequate amount of this material already!" he said and laughed at himself. The beetle shuffled its legs around while

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watching the boy, causing its black body to turn deep iridescent blue again.

Suddenly the large beetle turned away from the boy at the gates and headed back towards the shrubs he'd come from. The child watched the beetle scurry off, its hard shell like body shining orange, green, black, and then purple. It finally disappeared beneath some shrubs ringed a large tree. Ivory One continued inspecting the dung gift, and thought the insects in this place were equally as strange as everything else was there. Rolling the dry dung ball in a circle on his palm again, he wondered why the beetle would do such a peculiar thing.

"Maybe it was not a gift after all. Maybe the beetle was just disposing of its dung outside of his garden?" the boy pondered while gazing at the ball circling in his little palm. "Maybe he was just cleaning out his house to make room for more food or something?" One Like Ivory considered. Watching the dung ball rolling in his palm he gasped and froze in place. He stared at the now motionless little dung ball in his hand, and then back at the shrub where the beetle had disappeared.

"Little beetle," the boy excitedly cried, "am I supposed to clean out my house before I can enter this garden?" Ivory One's voice sang out across the inner garden grounds with the first sign of hope all day. He sat very still and stared intently at the dirt floor beneath the shrub where the beetle had returned. He watched, he hoped, he waited, staring intently as if calling to the beetle with his very heart and soul.

Many minutes later, the shiny blue-black rear end of the large beetle reappeared from under the shrub and backed its way out from underneath it. The insect waddled around, and then

stood motionless watching the young boy whose face was pressed firmly against the carved openings in the gate. Seeing the beetle reemerge from under the shrubs, the boy giggled aloud and squirmed, waving excitedly at it again.

"It *is* true isn't it honorable beetle? I must leave my own dung outside these gates before I can enter!" Ivory One said aloud with much enthusiasm and hope.

"First, a very strange man tells me riddles about the mysterious things I can expect if I do enter here. Then he tells me, that the choice to enter or leave is mine alone, not that of my Father, or the Elders, or even the villagers. I like that strange man for telling me it was my choice alone to make," One Like Ivory said with his heart feeling larger in his chest than usual.

"Then you my unusual little friend, give me this splendid gift of yours," the boy said to the beetle, smiling as he rolled the dung ball around in his palm again. "A gift that I think might be a message for this confused, tired, and hungry boy! I am not certain, but I believe that this is the secret behind your unusual actions little beetle," he said staring at the dung ball in his hand. When the boy looked up, the strange black beetle had disappeared again. One Like Ivory smiled happily to himself and carefully put the little dung pellet in his coat pocket for safekeeping. It had suddenly taken on the qualities of a sacred and powerful amulet and he wanted to keep it close, and keep it very safe.

Ivory One stood up and dusted off his pants. He turned around and viewed the surrounding terrain for many long minutes. He was saying goodbye to the outside world he was familiar with. As best as he knew how, he released his own

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emotional symbolic ball of dung...those of fear of the unknown, doubt, loneliness, homesickness, and sorrow.

The seven-year-old boy decided that between the strange round man who had shown him more respect than anyone previously, and the mysterious iridescent gift giving beetle, that this place might not be so bad after all. So far this curious and beautiful place had only shown him kindness, respect, and magic, which were just the right combination of ingredients for one little seven-year-old boy named Ivory One. The child turned back towards the Temple Moon Gates of gold and happily let himself in.

Chapter 11

The Sounds Of Balance

Weeks effortlessly and quickly became months, and the months rolled into multiple seasons as Jade One grew and further developed his telepathic and communicating abilities. Master Hotei had successfully trained the young man to a high point of mental reception and telepathic transmitting that now made physical discourse and contact obsolete.

Three full months passed the first time in which neither of them uttered one word to each other physically. Then suddenly one afternoon Master Hotei came out of his Temple and wandered through the garden to where Jade One was silently working, sat down beside him, and unexpectedly began to physically talk.

Stunned and traumatized by the foreign sounds of physical human speech, Jade One reeled back in pain and dismay at the loud, unrefined, and highly intrusive noise. Hotei was actually speaking very softly but the sudden sound of external speech, crackled and reverberated like claps of thunder inside Jade One's now ultra sensitive skull, in great waves of rude misery. Tears of physical pain filled his squinting eyes as he frowned horribly while listening to Hotei ask him what he was doing and remark about how beautiful the day was.

Seeing Jade One's profound physical discomfort over his spoken words automatically caused Hotei to begin laughing. Frantically he fumbled with stuffing his robes into his face in an attempt to muffle his approaching laughter. After his giggling fit

subsided, and with much further effort, Master Hotei continued to speak physically. Repeatedly he would have to stop and cover his face with his robes as he lost control and started laughing at Jade One again. Eventually Jade One adapted to the sounds of Hotei speaking physically again and his tearing ceased which caused Hotei's laughter to cease as well.

"I am truly sorry Little One," Hotei genuinely apologized, "but you looked so funny with your face all red and contorted, with tears running down your cheeks, and all simply from the physical sound of my voice. Do you see how easily and quickly we can become out of balance? Most people are out of balance due to their dependence upon physical speech as their only means of communicating. But you became just as out of balance due to your lengthy period of no external verbalization.

"Little One, I did this to you deliberately to prove this point," Hotei confessed and Jade One gave him another stern frown.

"Students all too often and much too easily, reach the erroneous conclusion that silence is somehow more spiritual, more befitting a person in search of expanded truths and awareness. But what benefit is it for a person who lives in silence receiving internal wisdoms, if he then cannot externalize and share it?" Hotei asked with an exaggerated shrug of his shoulders and shook his head in disapproval.

"We seek deeper truths to apply and share them in our daily physical lives on this plane of manifestation as well as the finer levels. Do not forget this important insight you have learned today Jade One. We are beings of spirit expanding that spirit while endeavoring to manifest it within this dense physical realm

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and bodies,” Hotei said and smiled warmly at his now young adult student.

“I understand Master Hotei,” Jade One replied and instantly swayed from the effort and affect of speaking physically. Hotei quickly grabbed at his robes again to muffle his laughter.

Jade One started to laugh too, which immediately knocked him right over on his side. His own laughter had literally destroyed his equilibrium and he tumbled over and into the dirt. This of course was far too much for Master Hotei to endure. He roared with uncontrollable laughter into his robes, causing them to become terribly wrinkled and tear stained. Bunches of beautiful golden silk fabric popped out between Hotei’s chubby fingers, as he desperately smothered his face and laughter in the colorful folds.

At this point Hotei’s emotional bedlam was nothing compared to Jade One’s. He also could not stop the laughter that unbalanced him so terribly. The more he laughed, the worse his dizziness and spinning head became. He was reduced to pathetically rolling on the ground, clutching at rocks and plants in hopes of not falling off the earth!

“If this continues,” Jade One thought to himself, “I am going to become nauseous all over myself!” Sheer pride, vanity, and fear abruptly halted his laughter. Hotei of course heard his thoughts and shrieked even more hysterically with laughter.

“For once Jade One,” Hotei sputtered with much difficulty, “your pride offers us a positive and highly constructive result; not getting sick to your stomach on yourself, and my beautiful gardens!”

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Master Hotei eventually subdued his mirth and demanded that Jade One quickly recite aloud the words of power he'd taught the young man so many years ago. They were short prayer songs spoken with very precise tones and inflections that, when uttered correctly, produced instant internal balance of polarities within the one speaking or singing them. They helped to greatly realign one's inner frequencies and energetic fields very quickly.

Within moments of speaking them Jade One was in control again and well balanced, with all signs of nausea dissipated. Together Master Hotei and Jade One joyfully sang aloud the ancient sounds of power and balance. They filled the garden with sounds of spirit triumphantly expressed and balanced throughout the physical human body and voice. Hotei smiled broadly as they sang together and in that special moment, Jade One fully realized the complexity and necessary duration of his teacher's perfect, and highly elaborate three month long spiritual lesson.

After so many months of physical silence Hotei knew that this particular spiritual lesson would end in this manner; extended silence begetting spiritual song. This was the teaching for Jade One; the need for harmony and balance in all that would ever be thought, felt, spoken, and done on multiple levels. The two of them continued to happily sing the sounds of balance together, causing the garden to come alive in a manner Jade One had never witnessed prior. As the young man sang, he blissfully observed and felt his much-loved garden singing right along with both he and Master Hotei.

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Master Hotei glowed lovingly at his rapidly blossoming student as they sang, and nodded his head acknowledging that indeed, the garden was participating in their spiritual songs of balance. The two of them sat radiating and singing joyfully until the sun sank well below the distance mountain range, as day, balanced itself with night.

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