



# Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership

*Thomas Cleary (Translation)*

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## **Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership** Thomas Cleary (Translation)

Drawing on private records, letters, and long-lost documents of the Song dynasty (tenth to thirteenth centuries), this book consists of short excerpts written in a language that is accessible to readers without any background in Eastern philosophy. It serves as a study of the personal qualities and conduct necessary for the mastery of any position of power and authority, whether religious, social, political, or organizational.

## **Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership Details**

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# From Reader Review *Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership* for online ebook

## Amy says

My dad was reading this book for some reason years and years ago. I picked it up and since then my idea of leadership in business had changed. To watch a human treat another human without judgement or authority in management is so rare, yet it is what works. let people go, trust that they are doing what you hired them to do, believe in them and chances are you will get more from them than if you are a micro-manager.

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## Jake Maguire says

Worth checking out

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## Angel says

There are some nuggets of wisdom here, but there are also a lot of superfluous passages. This is a book on leadership, or so it claims given that many passages seem to have little to do with the topic (or maybe it was just not as evident to me when I read it). While I did jot down a couple of good ideas, overall, this is a book to just skim. There may be other better books related to Zen and leadership. The book is basically a collection of sayings by various Zen masters.

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## Nikish Chanekar says

nice book on cumulative wisdom gleaned from the correspondences of wise and responsible people of old.this book is not telling us anything new but remind us not to forget the good, the beautiful and the true which is found everywhere irrespective of geographical, social climate. what matters however is having patience to apply this time honoured principle in practical life that is giving them chance to work its way into reality.

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## Gregg Bell says

I get this magazine every week (slight pun) called *The Week*. They propositioned me after *Newsweek* (which I used to get) went digital. *The Week* is basically a collection of other news sources. They have no reporters. Just '...in the NY Times so and so wrote...' There is endless paraphrasing and unattributed quotes. You lose track of who is saying what and then get to wonder if anybody is saying anything at all.

That's kind of what *Zen Lessons* is like. Now I've read extensively in eastern religions and I don't think I recognized one name in all the "lessons" compiled in the book.

Just opening the book at random one story begins with: "Wuzu said to Fojain." Then the next lesson is from the *Annals of the House of Equanimity* (I think it's an imprint of Time Warner). And the next page has a lesson from "Baiyun to Gongfu."

Which isn't to say all these no-names have nothing to say. There's some good stuff here.

Lesson 86: "The hundred-mile journey is still halfway at ninety."

Lesson 198: "In leadership there are three don'ts: when there is much to do, don't be afraid; when there is nothing to do, don't be hasty; and don't talk about opinions of right and wrong."

Lesson 84: "The small is a step of the great, the subtle is the sprout of the obvious. This is why the wise are careful of the beginning, sages are mindful of warnings. Even dripping water, if it does not stop, can ultimately turn a mulberry orchard into a lake. A flame, if not removed, will ultimately burn a meadow.

"When the water is streaming and the fire is raging, the disaster is already happening—even if you want to help, there is no way."

That, courtesy of Yuanwu's letter to Fozhi.

So these no-names may not have become famous like Confucius and his pals but nonetheless they've got some excellent things to share.

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## **KC Anton says**

I skim this puppy for enlightenment on group leadership. I know and do many of the principles shared, yet it is a great reminder in small one minute reads.

Zen masters of China sharing their teachings to students, other masters, and personal notes in their diaries. You don't need to understand Buddhism, its styles and sects (Chan is quoted strongly), or Eastern philosophy. These are short ideas to realize:

- what is leadership
- what is community
- what is spiritual authority
- how do you judge these when you experience them
- should you judge?

All are covered and then some. This is a small book with big philosophy presented in a way Westerners may or may not get. Hey, it's Eastern so it will be alien. Open the window of your mind and allow the wind of discipline, demonstration, and direction breath new life into your soul of living.

blessings,  
kc

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## **Graham says**

Review of "Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership": It is said that there is nothing new under the sun. Certainly the issues facing leaders today are comparable to those that have faced leaders across cultures and

throughout time. Human nature has not changed, and therefore the fundamentals of leadership -- the process of channeling human nature in a particular direction -- have not changed.

"Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership" conveys this message in spades. In the format of a series of compact passages, it presents excerpts from the cumulative wisdom of thousands of years of experience with continual political society. The insights and lessons contained in this book are as poignant today as they were when they were first put forth; the reader will be astounded, gratified, and ideally energized to pursue a path of virtuous leadership in his or her personal and professional life.

This reviewer highly recommends this book for those in corporate, governmental, public or private positions of leadership, as well as for the general reader. After all, it is the duty of the citizenry to expect great things from those it follows.

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### **GoldenjoyBazyl says**

While it is a small book in size it really takes a bit of time to read it. The teachings come from Chinese Zen Masters and while they are very thought provoking writings often I had to stop and really re-read and spend more than a quick minute on it. The lessons within the pages are for the person who wants to lead others in a humane and enlightened way. For me it was very affirming and at the same time offered new perspectives.

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### **Craig Werner says**

Less a book about/out of Zen than a compilation of aphorisms and teaching stories for leaders, especially the abbots of Zen monasteries. The sayings date to the Song dynasty (10th-13th centuries CE), which were perceived by those living then as a decline from Zen's classical period during the Tang dynasty. The Zen readings that speak to me are those located much closer to the paradoxes and silences of Huang Po; these pieces are a useful reminder that Zen existed in a real world of fallible human beings and institutions, but there are many better places to start or pursue Buddhism.

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