



ACCORDING TO LEGEND, the Z/Yen chop – symbol of the quest for Z/Yen enlightenment – was inherited by Chao Kli Ning's most fervent disciple, Lo Fan. Given Lo Fan's Z/Yen, a philosophical desire to make money, he began a chain of successive sales of the Z/Yen chop to faithful disciples through the centuries. Legend has it that the chop was lost in a fairly messy takeover battle in the early late Middle Ages. However, there are dark rumours that the chop still survives, wielded by modern disciples who continue to spread the Z/Yen creed, for a quick buck.

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CHAO KLI NING (499BC TO 401BC?): Quasi-mythological, proto-businessman from the late Zhou period in ancient China. Said to have had an uncanny knack for spotting an opportunity to make a quick buck. Legend has it that the Z/Yen business philosophy (see opposite), which later came to dominate the Early Imperial Eastern Mercantile Period, was founded as the result of a massive endowment from Chao Kli Ning's stupendous fortune (although some accounts attribute the Z/Yen Institution to Lo Fan, protégé of Chao Kli Ning, patriarch of the powerful Lo family and holder of Chao Kli Ning's subsidiary rights in perpetuity). The only evidence of Chao Kli Ning's existence is a rich oral tradition of case studies.

Z/YEN (PRONOUNCED "ZEE-YEN"): A mystical philosophy that encompasses enlightenment in business and enlightenment in life. Z/Yen is based on a unique blend of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, decadent subcultures, arrogant supra-cultures and humour. The philosophy, which highlights the duality in all business problems and solutions, is sometimes summarised as "a philosophical desire to make money." Z/Yen is believed to have been founded by Chao Kli Ning (see opposite), although only fragmentary evidence of the origins of Z/Yen survives in its rich oral tradition. Historians have long sought documentary evidence of Chao Kli Ning, the origins of Z/Yen and the zest for enlightenment which made the ancient business world what it is today.

EXCERPTS FROM THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BUSINESS ARCHAEOLOGY PRIOR TO
THE DISCOVERY OF THE Z/YEN PAPERS – THE ANCIENT EASTERN BUSINESS TEXT
CONTAINED HEREIN.





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THE DEVIL IS NOT IN THE DETAIL,
THE DEVIL IS NOT EVEN IN THE BIG
PICTURE. GET A GRIP, THE DEVIL
IS A GREAT MARKETING DEVICE

(LOOSELY TRANSLATED) FROM THE BEST-SELLING
ORTHODOX TENETS OF CHAO KLI NING

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE GONNA GO,
YOU GOTTA BLOW YOUR DOUGH

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF CHAO KLI NING
(UNEARTHED IN ITALY TOGETHER WITH SOME UNUSUALLY
SHAPED NOODLES, PROBABLY A 15TH CENTURY FORGERY)



EPILOGUE

SEE YOU, Z/YEN

How a magnificent business philosophy was established due to the munificence of a great man – and further funding from his children's, and his children's children's gambling debts.

“ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END,” said Chao Kli Ning, the venerable businessman of his village, region and country as he left the gaming table. A shrill chorus of children’s screams greeted his remark – “You can’t leave now, Grandpa! How can you? You always leave when we’ve run out of money! Why can’t we ever use your pair of lucky dice?”

Kli Ning seemed oblivious to their protests, patting each grandchild on the head, and collecting IOUs from some of the more impoverished, inveterate losers. Kli Ning walked towards his mansion, past the still thriving, original business which had made him a household name in these parts, the Kwik Klining Duck Tea House and Laundry. As he walked, he mused on enforcing some of the IOUs by leaning on his own children for their offspring’s debts, purely in the interest of teaching his progeny not to participate in a rigged game. However, his thoughts soon moved from familial extortion to his forthcoming weekly tea with his loyal retainer and general manager, Lo Fan.



Lo Fan hurried his step as he bustled towards Kli Ning's mansion. Lo Fan knew Kli Ning would probably be a bit late; collecting from his grandchildren always took a bit of time. On this particular occasion, Lo Fan was especially keen to resolve an outstanding personal issue – his elevation to esteemed executive elder status, with all of the additional benefits that status implied: a regular stipend, tax-advantageous “business trips”, occasional consultancy fees plus virtually unlimited free time to spend with his grandchildren and goldfish. For Lo Fan, today's meeting with Kli Ning would seal the rewards of a lifetime's dedication to the highest standards of fast food and textile maintenance services.

After the ceremonies of tea and the usual update on business, Lo Fan carefully chose the moment to broach the subject of his esteemed executive elder status. “O esteemed master,” began Lo Fan, hoping that a sycophantic start would lead to a sympathetic solution, “we have worked long and hard together for many a year and my auspicious anniversary of birth is fast approaching. We have spoken several times before about the transition in my role which should be the natural consequence of my seniority.”

“Ah,” said Kli Ning, “you are speaking of your retirement. I suppose it is natural for a man of your age and limited ability to wish to leave the rather unrewarding affairs of business behind, in search of the joys of sitting at home with your family. I suppose it is fortuitous for our business that I have already spent such great efforts on preparing your assistant, Hai Fan, for high office. I feel that he will be a worthy successor to you.”

“Oh esteemed and far-sighted master,” riposted Lo Fan, hoping that a sycophantic riposte would prevent a disadvantageous resolution, “given our previous discussions, my lifetime of devoted service and the penury of my personal savings, I had rather hoped for esteemed executive elder status based on my potential future contributions to the business. As you know, many of my past contributions were wrapped up in my pension plan, much of which we misapplied in that ill-fated investment fund for advanced cleaning automata.”

“All’s well that ends well,” explained Kli Ning insensitively. “That’s the way the fortune cookie crumbles – to coin a phrase. Anyway, I’m sure that the paucity of your personal finance hardly precludes some comfortable twilight years. Despite your investments in advanced cleaning automata, you know that our business is unable to recompense your losses and, even if we were to consider compensating you, the tax effect would be prohibitive. Besides, esteemed executive elder status is reserved for the select few who deserve significant post-employment compensations and benefits in order to secure the application of their wisdom for future business endeavours. Get a big picture grip on the details. I hardly think that a mere forty years with the Kwik Klining Duck Tea House and Laundry qualifies you as a repository of significant wisdom. This may seem harsh, but I mean my remarks as an informative appraisal.”

“Oh esteemed, far-sighted and tax-efficient master,” opined Lo Fan, hoping that a sycophantic phrase would avert an impecunious disaster,

“whilst I admire, and indeed would normally support, your caring appraisal of the risk/reward potential of my future, the only asset I have to sell in my twilight years is the wisdom I have gained from involvement with your enterprises under your tutelage. It would seem a shame for me to have to top up my denuded pension with consultancy income derived from work for competing restaurants and laundries as well as occasional paid assistance to tax investigating authorities seeking business insights. As you are well aware, many businessmen protect their key employees’ knowledge by paying slightly more over the years against an exclusivity agreement. You, very wisely, perceived that loyalty did not need payment, as long as the restaurant and laundry skills were transferred from the older employees to the newer employees. It is a shame that, of the newer employees, so many of the skills are vested in one individual, Hai Fan.”

“Lo Fan,” interrupted Kli Ning, “despite your limitations, perhaps wisdom is of some importance in business. On reflection, it is only right and proper that a long-serving individual such as yourself, a font of knowledge of our operations, should retain an esteemed position as the principal source of training for the newer employees of the Kwik Klining Duck Tea House and Laundry.”

“Oh esteemed, far-sighted, tax-efficient and insightful master,” observed Lo Fan, hoping that a sycophantic observation might multiply his tenuous gains, “surely a mere training course could not possibly reflect on the wisdom I have to transmit – a wisdom not born from my humble experiences, but gained from years of exposure to you in action. Training would hardly do your

wisdom justice. A temple is the only establishment worthy of custody for such wisdom. Your name should be enshrined as founder of the first institution dedicated to the wisdom of business affairs. Monks of Business Affairs would go forth to spread your teachings to the far corners of the earth, naturally with exclusivity clauses preventing them from sharing their wisdom with fast food and laundry establishments.”

“Lo Fan, you are right to recognise your limited absorption of my teachings. Yet from your abject position, you are also right to recognise that to call this wisdom *training* is demeaning. Running a Kwik Klining Duck Tea House and Laundry is not just a profession, it is a philosophy of life. In fact, it is not just a philosophy of life, it is a way of life. It does deserve a temple. There ought to be a monastery dedicated to preserving and teaching this way of life. If only the monks could see the importance of my teachings and some of the tax-efficient ways in which the donations could be combined with our business.”

“Oh esteemed, far-sighted, tax-efficient, insightful and ever-enterprising master”, complimented Lo Fan, hoping that a sycophantic egging-on might build an even more favourable result, “such narrow-mindedness is typical of the monastic orders. They are so obsessed with religion that they often lose sight of the substantial financial rewards here on earth. If they can’t dress their teachings up in some mumbo-jumbo, some marketing mystique, they are rarely interested in true enlightenment.”

“Ah, enlightenment in business,” mused Kli Ning. “Now there’s a concept. I bet that would sell. If only we had a snazzy, thrilling name for our business

philosophy, something like Improved Business Performance or Totally Total Re-engineering. No, perhaps it should be short and snappy, say Yen, like the Yen Buddhists. You could even be the chief Yen monk, training my acolytes.”

“Well, Yen is good and implies a craving. As we know, the only great sales opportunities are philosophies or dependencies or drugs,” observed Lo Fan, realising that sycophantic preambles were unnecessary as he approached the winning straight, “but there are already Yen philosophies, Yen money, Yen restaurants, the yin-yang lot and even Yen – the Cantonese Craving (opium). Perhaps we should look for something more philosophical and exotic sounding, say Zen?”

“Zen sounds philosophical and implies enlightenment,” cogitated Kli Ning. “But speaking as a professional marketeer, Zen is a great name for a philosophy but a terrible name for a religion. Get a detailed grip on the big picture. It would never catch on with the monks. Without a catchy name, a monastic institution is bound to fail. Perhaps we won’t need the services of a chief monk after all.”

“Oh esteemed, far-sighted, tax-efficient, insightful, ever-enterprising and sensitive master,” murmured Lo Fan, hoping that a lengthy sycophantic phrase might buy him some thinking time. “Why not combine the philosophy of enlightenment with the craving for money. Zen is a good philosophy word; Yen is a good desire word. Combine the two. Let’s call your wonderful Total Business Philosophy and Way of Life, Zen/Yen or Z/Yen – a philosophical desire to make money. Business people would pay a fortune for a well packaged philosophy.”

Kli Ning was ecstatic. After a few weeks of arguing with his children's and grandchildren's lawyers, plus some subtle pressure regarding gambling debts, he was able to convince the more militant of his family that an educational foundation would prove to be the best way of passing on his inheritance. Lo Fan gained great prestige as the chief monk of Z/Yen. As the chief chronicler of Chao Kli Ning's teachings, Lo Fan presided over many Chao family conflicts in the years after the great man's death. In making his difficult judgements as executor of Kli Ning's estate, Lo Fan used fully his position as head of the most pre-eminent religious business order in the region, as well as a set of lucky dice which Kli Ning had mysteriously left to him. Lo Fan's impartiality in judgement was legendary, especially when a key decision required one of six choices. As he remarked himself, judgement fees with substantial book rights ensured him a seriously comfortable lifestyle.

In the centuries that followed Kli Ning and Lo Fan, the school of Z/Yen flourished under the skilful direction of Lo Fan's successors, wielders of Kli Ning's original Z/Yen chop.



Disciples dispersed to the many corners of the soon-to-be-round earth. Many disciples' businesses flourished too. Where the disciples' businesses did not flourish, the disciples retrained as Monks of Business Affairs and turned to

teaching the business of Z/Yen. And thus were many pointless and repetitive business books born. Thankfully, the passing of the ages, and some darn good bonfires at business libraries, have saved scholars the trouble of translating most of the obscure works, although many of the original “Totally Total” concepts can still be found in *The Z/Yen Papers* – the extant manuscript remnants of Chao Kli Ning, restaurateur, launderer and man with an uncanny knack for spotting an opportunity to make a quick buck.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Devise a test to calibrate the fairness or unfairness skew of Chao Kli Ning’s lucky dice. Warning: these dice might be heavily loaded, so do use appropriate safety equipment.
- Draft a will for Chao Kli Ning which protects Z/Yen’s intellectual property rights for the benefit of Kli Ning’s immediate descendants and those of Lo Fan in perpetuity. Ensure that the will contains sufficient loopholes to provide you with substantial, personal risky rewards the Z/Yen way.

Clean Business Cuisine: Now and Z/Yen the humorous risk/reward management novel

The Sunday Times Book of the Week

“highly entertaining . . . wonderfully daft . . . hilariously sophisticated stuff” - DJ Taylor, “Zen and the Ancient Art of Making Yen”



OVERVIEW How to manage organisations, motivate people and make a quick buck: the eternal Z/Yen questions. As with many ancient questions, the answers have been locked away in obscure Eastern texts that have only recently re-emerged. At last, these excerpts from The Z/Yen Papers, modernised and re-published as **Clean Business Cuisine**, reveal to our age the one true path(s) to enlightenment. Today, with the benefit of these teachings, businesses everywhere will thrive and the course of history will be irrevocably improved.

DESCRIPTION **Clean Business Cuisine: Now and Z/Yen** is a novel modelled as a rediscovered ancient business text. It comprises a series of stories (or case studies) set around the workings of an ancient laundry and restaurant and its legendary proprietor, Chao Kli Ning. Each story is based on a simple duality, centralisation versus decentralisation, managing people or managing results, technology is wonderful or technology is useless. **Clean Business Cuisine** is firmly grounded in management theory and practice, served up in a wry, lighthearted manner for the general reader to enjoy.

Clean Business Cuisine is a uniquely enjoyable yet informative read, perfect for managers, students and anyone interested in enlightenment. The design of this book is stunning – a great gift.

DETAILS

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Clean Business Cuisine: Now and Z/Yen the humorous risk/reward management novel

SOME OF OVER 50 RAVE REVIEWS

- ♦ ***“entertaining and excellent spoof...worth buying as a present for a colleague or customer”*** – Graham Hutton, “Book Reviews”, Long Range Planning, Vol 34, Issue 2, pages 268-269 (April 2001).
- ♦ ***“shows how business acumen can be successfully combined with humour, fun and a distinct lack of regard for convention . . . very sharp and even witty”*** - Ruth Sachs, “Kli Ning Up and Dum Ing Don”, Strategy, page 21 (September 2000).
- ♦ ***“Cleverly constructed and amusingly related, this will appeal across the board.”*** - Ingrid Fisher, “Best of the Rest”, Venture, page 202 (September 2000).
- ♦ ***“it’s a must for any management student . . . it really does make management studies fun while simultaneously covering all the main topics”*** - Lucy Cole, “Dealing with Dirty Laundry”, Kaleidoscope, page 26 (Autumn 2000).
- ♦ ***“firmly grounded in management theory and practice . . . design is stunning”*** - James Bayliss, “Clean Business Cuisine: Now and Z/Yen”, Business World, page 18 (August 2000).
- ♦ ***“Clean Business Cuisine is the 1066 and All That of management.”*** - Francis Beckett, “No More Chinese Laundry Blues”, Ambassador, page 32 (September 2000).
- ♦ ***“very tongue in cheek and very funny but also strangely enlightening”*** - Alex Smith, “Clean Business Cuisine”, Business Age, page 126 (September 2000).
- ♦ ***“light style and unforced humour”*** - David Shirreff, “Fishy path to enlightenment”, Euromoney, page 6, (August 2000).

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Michael Mainelli and Ian Harris are founders/directors of the risk/reward management firm Z/Yen and the modern scions of Chao Kli Ning's dynasty. Before reaching total Z/Yen enlightenment, Michael and Ian's monastic duties included service as management consultants and corporate strategists, advising businesses and organisations on the one true path(s), as well as writing and contribution to numerous business publications (see also www.zyen.com).

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Prologue – Z/Yen Things You Always Wanted to Know About Business; Chapter One: Centralisation/Decentralisation – Confederal Unity; Chapter Two: Technology – Gizmo's Big Adventure; Chapter Three: Human Resources – People Are for Turning; Chapter Four: Continuous Improvement – Quality is Free; Chapter Five: Management Information – The Question of Hu; Chapter Six: Leveraged Growth – Brothers in Alms; Chapter Seven: Strategy – The Greeks Have a General Word for It; Chapter Eight: Commercial Ethics – Kli Ning's Principle Problem; Chapter Nine: Sales and Marketing – Saving Faith; Chapter Ten: Risk/Reward – Fat Chance's Risky Business; Epilogue – See You, Z/Yen.

TELEVISION

“a fascinating book with fascinating accolades” - Becky Anderson, CNN World Business This Morning (7 August 2000).

“a recipe for success” - Heather Scott, Sky News, (1 September 2000).

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

“Clean Business Cuisine offers advice on business principles and practices in a highly imaginative and entertaining way. It will amuse and fascinate business managers, students of management and anyone interested in life.” - The Baroness Dunn of Hong Kong and Knightsbridge (July 2000).

“A very lighthearted, entertaining read that would make an ideal gift.” - The Rt Hon John Gummer MP (September 2000).