

SUN TZU

**L'ARTE DELLA GUERRA. TESTO CINESE E
VERSIONI IN ITALIANO ED INGLESE**

**A CURA DI
MASSIMO MORIGI**

PRESENTAZIONE

Nell'ambito della redazione della bibliografia internettiana del nostro saggio di imminente pubblicazione *Epigenetica, Teoria endosimbiotica, Sintesi evolucionista moderna, Sintesi evolucionistica estesa e fantasmagorie transumaniste. Breve commento introduttivo, glosse al Dialectical Biologist di Richard Levins e Richard Lewontin, su Lynn Margulis, su Donna Haraway e materiali di studio strategici per la teoria della filosofia della prassi olistico-dialettica-espressiva-strategica-conflittuale del Republicanesimo Geopolitico* abbiamo deciso di caricare su Internet Archive la presente antologia di versioni, oltre al testo in cinese, in italiano e in inglese dell'*Arte della guerra* di Sun Tzu. Sempre nell'ambito del sopraddetto saggio, abbiamo svolto analogo lavoro antologico anche per quanto riguarda le *Tesi su Feuerbach* (titolo di questa antologia: *Thesen über Feuerbach. Nelle traduzioni di Giovanni Gentile e Antonio Gramsci (più la traduzione di Palmiro Togliatti, il testo in tedesco e le versioni in inglese, francese, portoghese e spagnolo dal Marxists Internet Archive, agli URL di Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/karl-marx-thesen-uber-feuerbach-a-cura-di-massimo-morigi-republicanesimo-geopolitico/mode/2up> e <https://ia601704.us.archive.org/33/items/karl-marx-thesen-uber-feuerbach-a-cura-di-massimo-morigi-republicanesimo-geopolitico/Karl%20Marx%2C%20Thesen%20%20C3%BCber%20Feuerbach%2C%20a%20cura%20di%20Massimo%20Morigi%2C%20Republicanesimo%20Geopolitico.pdf> – più altri caricamenti sempre su medesima piattaforma) e le *Tesi di filosofia della storia* di Walter Benjamin (titolo di questa antologia: *Tesi di filosofia della storia, Thesen Über den Begriff der Geschichte e nelle principali lingue europee più Frammento teologico-politico, agli URL di Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/walter-benjamin-tesi-di-filosofia-della-storia-thesen-uber-den-begriff-der-gesch/mode/2up> e <https://ia601508.us.archive.org/23/items/walter-benjamin-tesi-di-filosofia-della-storia-thesen-uber-den-begriff-der-gesch/Walter%20Benjamin%2C%20Tesi%20di%20filosofia%20della%20storia%2C%20Thesen%20%20C3%9Cber%20den%20Begriff%20der%20Geschichte%2C%20a%20cura%20di%20Massimo%20Morigi%2C%20%20Republicanesimo%20Geopolitico%2C%20Neo-marxismo%2C%20%20Filosofia%20della%20prassi.pdf>). La ragione per cui in questo caso si è redatta una antologia escludente alcune lingue comprese nelle precedenti due è che *L'arte della guerra* di Sun Tzu, per quanto documento di fondamentale importanza per il paradigma olistico-dialettico-espressivo-strategico-conflittuale del Republicanesimo Geopolitico non ha, almeno finora, svolto in alcun modo un ruolo analogo alle *Thesen über Feuerbach* di Marx e alle *Thesen Über den Begriff der Geschichte* di Benjamin nel delineare nella cultura occidentale uno sviluppo della filosofia della prassi, della quale il Republicanesimo Geopolitico può essere considerato il frutto giunto a maturazione nel XXI secolo (veramente, per quanto riguarda Walter Benjamin, nessuno prima del Republicanesimo Geopolitico aveva osato una sua collocazione nell'ambito di una pienamente sviluppata visione prassistica anche se lo si era collocato nell'ambito del marxismo occidentale (anch'esso peraltro da riconsiderare nell'ambito della suddetta visione prassistica), ma, a parte il fatto, che questo suo collocamento ora è stato pienamente compiuto dal Republicanesimo Geopolitico, cfr. Massimo Morigi, *La Democrazia che Sognò le Fate. Stato di Eccezione, Teoria dell'Alieno e del Terrorista e Republicanesimo Geopolitico* e Id., *Walter Benjamin, Iperdecisionismo e Republicanesimo Geopolitico: Lo Stato di Eccezione in cui Viviamo è la Regola*, la citazione di Benjamin presso l'intelligenza occidentale è diventata addirittura una moda, e anche se profondamente frainteso non si può certo dire che il suo influsso non sia stato profondo presso l'intelligenza occidentale di sinistra, cosa che, invece, non si può certo dire di Sun Tzu e

della sua *Arte della guerra* che, seppur non sconosciuto, è da sempre rimasto appannaggio di quei ceti intellettuali, prevalentemente di destra, in cerca, oltre che di profonde ispirazioni di natura castrense anche di una antica visione tradizionale che rifiutasse la pratiche culturali e politiche dell'odierna ideologia liberal-democratica). Giustificiamo quindi il perché dell'italiano e dell'inglese che la fanno da padroni in questa antologia. In primo luogo dell'italiano. A questo punto attacchiamo con la solita lamentela. Mentre sul Web si possono trovare nelle lingue straniere non solo le opere dei più importanti autori della cultura italiana ma, quasi sempre, anche la fonte primaria dai quali sono stati esemplati e/o scannerizzati i documenti li presenti, la situazione italiana, come già detto, è tragica e, nel caso specifico, è sì possibile venire in contatto e scaricare *L'arte della Guerra*, ma non c'è nessun modo di comprendere quale edizione sia stata impiegata per arrivare al documento digitale immesso sul Web. Abbiamo trovato nella Rete due differenti versioni in Italiano dell'*Arte della guerra*, nessuna delle due dava alcuna indicazione della fonte primaria (cioè del libro) dalla quale erano state tratte e alla fine, non essendo nostro compito fornire una storia delle (scarse) fortune editoriali e culturali in Italia dell'*Arte della guerra* ma dare allo studioso un primo strumento per valutare, come nei casi delle *Tesi su Feurbach* e delle *Tesi di filosofia della storia*, quanto diverse versioni possono comportare tradimenti in sede di traduzione (o di traduzione di traduzione, come invece sospettiamo per quanto riguarda *L'arte della guerra* in italiano) abbiamo compreso nella seguente antologia tutte due le versioni. E, inoltre, un fatto di un certo interesse anche se di difficile giudizio e anche se non riguarda il testo ma il contesto riguardo ad una versione in italiano dell' *Arte della guerra* è il seguente: uno dei due siti che ospita una versione in italiano dell' *Arte della guerra* è un sito cattolico, URL <https://www.rassegnastampatotustuus.it/cattolica/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ARTE-DELLA-GUERRA-Sun-Tzu.pdf>, nostro congelamento Wayback Machine: <http://web.archive.org/web/20201130072433/https://www.rassegnastampatotustuus.it/cattolica/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ARTE-DELLA-GUERRA-Sun-Tzu.pdf>, mentre, molto meno interessante per il nostro punto di vista, l'altro sito è un sito commerciale di vendita libri online, come si può ben vedere cliccando sull'URL di presentazione del sito, <https://www.sunzi.it/>, Wayback Machine: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201202070235/https://www.sunzi.it/>, dove alla pagina compare la scritta «Questo sito e questo dominio sono in vendita. Contattami» (presso questo sito *L'arte della guerra*, che noi abbiamo copiacollato nella presente antologia, è raggiungibile e scaricabile all'URL [https://www.sunzi.it/Sun%20Tzu%20\(Sunzi\),%20L'arte%20della%20guerra.pdf](https://www.sunzi.it/Sun%20Tzu%20(Sunzi),%20L'arte%20della%20guerra.pdf), Wayback Machine: <http://web.archive.org/web/20201021104905/http://sunzi.it/Sun%20Tzu%20%28Sunzi%29,%20L'arte%20della%20guerra.pdf>). Veniamo ora ai siti che ospitano le versioni in inglese o, sarebbe meglio dire la versione, perché tutti i siti che ospitano *The art of War* non hanno effettuato altro che la trascrizione di Sun Tzû, *On the Art of War. The oldest military Treatise in the World*, Translated from the Chinese with introduction and critical notes by Lionel Giles, M. A. Assistant in the Department of Oriental Printed Books & MSS. in the British Museum, London, Luzac & Co, 1910 (e, aggiungiamo, il nostro sospetto che chi in Italia ha pubblicato *L'arte della guerra* abbia usato questo documento alla stregua del gran Vincenzo Monti da Alfonsine di Ravenna, il quale fu da Ugo Foscolo nel suo *Epigramma IX. Contro Vincenzo Monti* effigiato nella seguente maniera: «Questi è Monti poeta e cavaliere, Gran traduttore dei traduttore d'Omero.»), documento la cui scannerizzazione è, come, al solito, riscontrabile presso Internet Archive agli URL <https://archive.org/details/artofwaroldestmi00suntuoft/mode/2up> e <https://ia802304.us.archive.org/25/items/artofwaroldestmi00suntuoft/artofwaroldestmi00suntuoft.pdf>. Ma veniamo alle trascrizioni in inglese e non alle scannerizzazioni di questo documento, trascrizioni che hanno fornito i documenti nella lingua di Shakespeare copiacollati in questa antologia e che ci riservano qualche sorpresa, sorprese che in qualche modo si ricollegano alla bizzarria tutta italiana in merito alla presenza in Rete di opere originali di grandi autori italiani ed internazionali. Abbiamo già parlato della italianissima,

vedi *supra* scheda bibliografica sul *Vom Kriege* di Carl von Clausewitz, “Libreria militare” perché il sito ospita Carl von Clausewitz, *Della guerra* (titolo dell’opera originale *Vom Kriege*, 1° edizione in lingua italiana Stato Maggiore del R. Esercito Ufficio Storico, Roma 1942. Apparato introduttivo Arnoldo Mondadori Editore 1970. 1° edizione gli Oscar gennaio 1970 su autorizzazione dello Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito – Ufficio Storico), traduzione di Giorgio Bollati ed Emilio Canevari (con una antologia critica e una bibliografica a cura di Edmondo Aroldi), Milano, Mondadori, 1970. Ebbene la “Libreria militare” ospita anche *L’arte della guerra* di Sun Tzu ma non ospita una trascrizione o una scannerizzazione di una qualche edizione in italiana come hanno i due succitati siti di cui si è appena detto ma ospita una trascrizione dell’edizione curata da Lionel Giles, e quindi si tratta di un documento in inglese, cosa veramente singolare per un sito italiano, ma aggiungendo bizzarria a bizzarria, in testa al frontespizio del documento leggiamo «Greeen Farmers Eco-geo Resources» e alla base del frontespizio compare URL della CIA, www.cia.gov, e tramite questo URL e il logo della National Security Agency sempre alla base del frontespizio si viene informati che il documento è di provenienza di queste due agenzie governative degli Stati Uniti. Vista la bizzarra scritta in testa al frontespizio non ce ne sarebbe stato alcun bisogno ma, comunque, abbiamo verificato presso i siti di queste due agenzie governative se in questi fosse ospitata *On the art of war* di Sun Tzu, e, come c’era da aspettarsi, nessun riscontro né dello specifico documento messo in Rete dalla “Libreria militare” né di nessun altra edizione elettronica o scannerizzazione dell’*Arte della Guerra* curata e tradotta dal cinese dal benemerito Lionel Giles. Questo documento contiene quindi un depistaggio, un depistaggio, però, nemmeno tanto nascosto (o fors’anche esibito) se noi leggiamo la scritta finale che sta sempre alla base del frontespizio e che recita come segue: «JAGCorps resources for critical thinkers, and those ignorant of the consequences of religious, corporate and national Slave & Cannon Fodder Breeding (\$&CFB)». Ora, partendo da questa scritta ed inserendola nel motore di ricerca Google, si viene rinviati all’URL https://issuu.com/js-ror/docs/2083_nsa-covert-op, attraverso il quale si può avere contezza di un documento dal titolo *Eco-Geo Farmers: Covert Operations of the US National Security Agency by John St. Clair Akwei* (documento, purtroppo non scaricabile e nemmeno congelabile tramite la Wayback Machine), dove cliccando sul titolo si viene rinviati all’URL http://www.mindcontrolforums.com/pro-freedom.co.uk/cov_us.html, Wayback Machine: https://web.archive.org/web/20201202083101/http://web.archive.org/screenshot/http://www.mindcontrolforums.com/pro-freedom.co.uk/cov_us.html, attraverso il quale possiamo avere contezza di una pagina, dal sapore fra il complottistico e la rivelazione, magari deformate ad arte, di informazioni riservate, dove si pubblicizzano pubblicazioni che parlano di lavaggio del cervello e/o legati al mondo dell’*intelligence*. E non bastando questo, mettendo sul motore di ricerca Google il nome dell’autore del documento intravisto tramite il sito Issuu, un fantomatico signor John St. Clair Akwei, compaiono tutta una miriade di siti in lingua inglese tutti riconducibili a quella corrente della destra repubblicana statunitense contraria alla globalizzazione e lottante con tutte le sue forze contro il trionfo del c.d. ‘*deep state*’. Ma per non ricadere anche noi in una mentalità complottista – o meglio, perché l’argomento sia sul versante di questa bizzarria italiana di un sito italiano che pubblica un’opera originariamente in lingua cinese tradotta in inglese quando sono pur disponibili traduzioni italiane, forse perché proprio non si fida delle traduzioni italiane o forse perché ideologicamente vicino agli autori di destra di area anglosassone verosimilmente redattori del documento in questione ospitato dalla “Libreria militare”, ed anche sul versante anglosassone, sia sui siti più o meno complottisti o più o meno di destra estrema meriterebbe ben altra trattazione di una sezione di scheda bibliografica – passiamo ora agli altri due siti da noi rilevati che ospitano *On the Art of War* e i cui rispettivi testi abbiamo copiacollato nella presente antologia. Il primo è il “Project Gutenberg”, che all’URL <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17405/17405-h/17405-h.htm>, Wayback Machine: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17405/17405-h/17405-h.htm>, ospita l’e.Book direttamente estratto dalla *On The art of War* del 1910 curata e tradotta da Lionel Giles. Il secondo è il sito “chinapage.com” che parimenti al progetto Gutenberg ospitò

a suo tempo un'edizione elettronica della *On The Art of War* di Giles. Abbiamo usato non a caso il passato perché questo upload presso il sito lo abbiamo riscontrato tramite il congelamento Wayback Machine, da noi non effettuato, <https://web.archive.org/web/20040813070137/http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html>, mentre <http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html>, Wayback Machine: <http://web.archive.org/web/20201201072057/http://www.chinapage.com/sunzi-e.html>, sembra ospitare oggi una pagina commerciale tarata tramite *cookie* sulle preferenze delle navigazioni in Rete di colui che ha utilizzato l'URL. L'aver copiato anche questo testo sempre esemplato dal lavoro di Lionel Giles non è però pleonastico: ogni singolo capitolo in inglese rinvia al corrispettivo testo in cinese e, alla fine del documento in inglese, tramite un ipertesto si rinvia all'intero documento in cinese, che noi abbiamo diligentemente copiato. L'URL del testo in cinese è lo stesso di quello in inglese. Ma vi sono altri due siti che ospitano *L'arte della guerra* in inglese che per non allungare troppo la presente antologia non abbiamo copiato ma ci siamo limitati ad un congelamento dei URL tramite la Wayback Machine. Del primo dei due summenzionati siti che ospitano *L'arte della guerra* non siamo riusciti a risalire al nome ma abbiamo capito che è anch'esso un sito commerciale, come si può vedere dalla sua pagina di presentazione all'URL <https://fliphtml5.com/>, Wayback Machine: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201203153623/https://fliphtml5.com/>, mentre il documento relativo alla versione in inglese dell' *Arte della guerra* di Lionel Giles lo dobbiamo però citare come segue: Sun Tzu, *The Art of War (Restored Translation)*, Translated by Lionel Giles M.A., Pax Librorum Publishing House, 2009. Il documento è all'URL <http://online.fliphtml5.com/qscmv/twuu/>, Wayback Machine: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201203152613/http://online.fliphtml5.com/qscmv/twuu/#p=1> e ai lettori l'onere di stabilire quanto il tradimento della *Restored Translation* si discosti dai tradimenti dei documenti ospitati nei due precedenti siti e se, molto bravi, quanto si discosti dal testo in cinese. Del secondo ci limitiamo a dire che anch'esso ospita un'edizione del lavoro di Giles è che il documento ivi ospitato viene incontro alle eventuali difficoltà di questi molto bravi perché ad ogni piccolo gruppo di paragrafi in inglese vengono accostati i corrispettivi paragrafi in cinese. Il documento è all'URL <https://sgp1.digitaloceanspaces.com/proletarian-library/books/203ea0ae84b21fab951c5a55c5e0749d.pdf>, Wayback Machine: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201108033326/https://sgp1.digitaloceanspaces.com/proletarian-library/books/203ea0ae84b21fab951c5a55c5e0749d.pdf>. All'ultima pagina i *Due amanti* di Giulio Romano. Per chi ha compreso il paradigma olistico-dialettico-espressivo-strategico-conflittuale del Republicanesimo Geopolitico o, perlomeno, le intenzioni del presente lavoro, questa decisione apparentemente bizzarra su un'antologia che riguarda *L'arte della guerra* di Sun Tzu non necessita di alcuna spiegazione.

URL DEL DOWNLOAD EFFETTUATO DA MASSIMO MORIGI:

<https://www.rassegnastampa-totustuus.it/cattolica/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ARTE-DELLA-GUERRA-Sun-Tzu.pdf>, WAYBACK MACHINE:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20201130072433/https://www.rassegnastampa-totustuus.it/cattolica/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ARTE-DELLA-GUERRA-Sun-Tzu.pdf>

di
Sun Tzu

L'arte della guerra



Capitolo 1: Piani strategici

1. La guerra è di vitale importanza per lo stato.
2. E' materia di vita o di morte; è una scelta che può condurre alla salvezza o alla rovina. E' pertanto un argomento di studio e di riflessione che in nessun modo può essere trascurato.
3. L'arte della guerra si fonda su cinque fattori.
4. Questi fattori sono: il Tao (fattore morale), il Cielo (fattore climatico e atmosferico), la Terra (fattore morfologico), il Comando, la Dottrina (Addestramento e logistica).

5. Il Tao implica che il popolo sia in completa armonia con il sovrano, così da seguirlo senza riguardo per la vita e senza perdersi d'animo di fronte al pericolo.
6. Il Cielo significa: la notte ed il giorno, il freddo ed il caldo, le epoche e le stagioni.
7. La Terra riguarda: le distanze, grandi e piccole; i pericoli e la sicurezza; il terreno aperto ed i passaggi stretti; le possibilità di vita e di morte.
8. Il Comando riguarda chi esercita l'autorità e il comandante deve possedere le virtù della conoscenza, della sincerità, della benevolenza, del coraggio e della fermezza (severità).
9. La Dottrina riguarda: la suddivisione dell'armata in reparti e la loro assegnazione agli ufficiali; il controllo delle strade attraverso cui i rifornimenti raggiungono l'armata; le spese militari.
10. Ogni comandante deve avere familiarità con questi cinque fattori, li deve osservare quando prede le decisioni e cerca di assicurarsi le condizioni (più favorevoli) sul campo: sarà vittorioso colui che li conosce mentre fallirà colui che non li conosce.
11. Quando si deve decidere e si cerca di determinare le condizioni dell'azione militare, bisogna usare questi princìpi come punti di riferimento nel seguente modo:
 - a. in quale dei due stati regna l'armonia del Tao?
 - b. quale dei due generali ha maggiore abilità?
 - c. chi ha in suo favore i vantaggi derivanti dal Cielo e dalla Terra?
 - d. da quale parte la dottrina è più rigorosamente osservata?
 - e. quale armata è più forte?
 - f. da quale parte si trovano gli ufficiali e gli uomini meglio addestrati?
 - g. in quale armata c'è maggiore uniformità di comportamento nel ricompensare e nel punire?
12. Per mezzo di queste sette considerazioni si può prevedere la vittoria e la sconfitta.
13. Il comandante che presta ascolto a questi consigli, e agisce in conformità ad essi, sarà vittorioso: è necessario lasciare il comando ad uno così. Il comandante che non

vi presta ascolto, e non agisce conformemente ad essi, sarà sconfitto: non gli si deve affidare il comando.

14. Mentre prende coscienza del vantaggio che gli deriva da questi consigli, un comandante deve anche essere pronto ad approfittare di ogni circostanza favorevole al di là delle regole generali.

15. Infatti i piani devono essere sempre modificati in funzione delle circostanze.

16. La condotta della guerra si fonda sempre sull'inganno.

17. Quando si è in grado di attaccare, si deve apparire incapaci; quando si muovono le truppe, bisogna sembrare inattivi; quando si è vicini al nemico, bisogna fare in modo che egli creda che si è molto lontani; quando si è lontani, il nemico deve crederci vicini. Lanci esche per ingannare il nemico: fingi disordine, ad esempio, ed annientalo.

18. Se il nemico è forte in ogni settore, è necessario essere pronti a tenergli testa; ma se è superiore in forze, è meglio evitarlo.

19. Se il comandante nemico è di temperamento collerico, cerca di irritarlo: fingendoti debole, aumenterai la sua arroganza.

20. Se cerca un po' di riposo, non dargli tregua. Se le sue forze sono unite, fa in modo di separarle.

21. Attaccare il nemico dove è impreparato; mostrarsi dove non se lo aspetta.

22. Questi stratagemmi militari, che conducono alla vittoria non devono essere divulgati (né previsti rigidamente) prima della guerra.

23. Il comandante vincente resta a lungo nella sua tenda a fare molti calcoli prima dello scontro.

24. Se un comandante perde la battaglia, significa semplicemente che, prima, non ha meditato a sufficienza. Molta riflessione porta alla vittoria; poca riflessione porta alla sconfitta. E' prestando attenzione a questo che, conoscendo chi si conforma a questa regola e chi non, si può prevedere il vincitore e lo sconfitto.

Capitolo 2: Combattere la guerra

1. In una guerra, quando sia necessario allestire un migliaio di carri leggeri e altrettanti carri pesanti per centomila soldati, equipaggiati con mezzi sufficienti per trasportarli a cento miglia, la spesa complessiva per il mantenimento degli uomini e tutto il materiale ammonta a mille pezzi d'argento al giorno
2. Quando si è impegnati in un conflitto, se la vittoria tarda a venire, le armi degli uomini cominciano a spuntarsi ed il loro ardore diminuisce. Se poi si assedia una città (e la vittoria tarda a venire), si rischia di esaurire le proprie forze.
3. Se la campagna militare si protrae a lungo, le risorse dello stato finiranno per non bastare a sostenere lo sforzo.
4. Quando le armi sono spuntate, l'ardore spento, lo sforzo esaurito, le finanze esauste, è facile che appaiano pretendenti al potere per trarre vantaggio dalla difficile situazione del sovrano. Allora nessun uomo, per quanto saggio, sarà capace di evitare l'inevitabile.
5. Perciò, se talvolta si è udito dei danni provocati dalla fretta in guerra, la bravura non è mai stata associata al lungo protrarsi delle operazioni.
6. Non c'è esempio di stato che abbia tratto beneficio da una guerra prolungata.
7. Solo chi è interamente a conoscenza dei demoni della guerra può capire fino in fondo il vantaggio che può ricavare tirandola per le lunghe.
8. Il comandante esperto non ha bisogno di procedere alla chiamata di una seconda leva e non carica due volte i suoi carri.
9. Il materiale di guerra deve essere portato dal proprio paese, ma le vettovaglie devono essere reperite in territorio nemico. Così l'armata avrà cibo sufficiente per i suoi bisogni.
10. Lo stato si impoverisce quando deve sostenere il nutrimento di un esercito lontano e l'invio di vettovaglie ottenute per mezzo di requisizioni impoverisce il popolo.
11. La vicinanza di un esercito provoca l'aumento dei prezzi, e gli alti prezzi spazzano via i mezzi di sussistenza del popolo.

12. Quando i mezzi di sussistenza sono esauriti, i contadini sono afflitti da pesanti tassazioni
13. Con questa perdita di sostanze e diminuzione delle forze, le case del popolo saranno spogliate interamente e i tre decimi dei redditi andranno in fumo.
14. Intanto il governo spenderà i quattro decimi delle sue entrate per sostituire i carri da battaglia rotti, i cavalli uccisi, armature, armi, archi e frecce, materiali protettivi vari, animali da tiro e relativi carriaggi.
15. Per tutti questi motivi bisogna rifornirsi presso il nemico. Un carro di provviste preso al nemico vale venti dei nostri, e parimenti un picul del suo foraggio ne vale venti delle nostre scorte.
16. In vista della battaglia, per quanto riguarda l'uccidere i nemici, i nostri uomini devono essere incitati all'odio; essi devono credere che trarranno un vantaggio (diretto e immediato) dalla sconfitta del nemico e che riceveranno una ricompensa.
17. Nella battaglia tra i carri, quando dieci o più siano stati presi al nemico, si dovrà ricompensare coloro che per primi li hanno catturati. Le nostre insegne devono poi essere sostituite a quelle del nemico e quei carri uniti ai nostri. I prigionieri devono essere trattati con generosità e trattenuti.
18. Questo è il principio in base al quale si accresce la nostra forza diminuendo quella dell'avversario.
19. In guerra l'obiettivo è la vittoria, non le lunghe campagne.
20. Così bisogna riconoscere che il generale che comprende la natura della guerra ha nelle sue mani il destino del popolo e dello stato.

Capitolo 3: Attacco secondo stratagemmi

1. Dichiarata la guerra, il risultato ideale è di prendere intero ed intatto il paese nemico. Danneggiarlo o distruggerlo non è altrettanto buono. Del pari, è meglio catturare un'armata, o un reggimento, o una compagnia, o un distaccamento intatti piuttosto che distruggerli.

2. Perciò combattere e vincere cento battaglie non è prova di suprema eccellenza: la suprema abilità consiste nel piegare la resistenza (volontà) del nemico senza combattere.
3. Pertanto ciò che è di suprema importanza in guerra è sconvolgere la strategia del nemico; in secondo luogo bisogna distruggere le sue alleanze; in terzo luogo bisogna attaccare il suo esercito.
4. La peggiore scelta è quella di attaccare (assediare) le città fortificate. Attacca le città fortificate solo quando non c'è alternativa. La preparazione di veicoli corazzati, di tettoie e macchine da assedio varie richiede infatti almeno tre mesi; erigere terrapieni contro le mura porta via altri tre mesi.
5. Sei il comandante è incapace di controllare la propria impazienza e ordina ai suoi uomini di lanciarsi all'attacco come formiche brulicanti, un terzo di essi verrà ucciso senza che la città venga espugnata. Questi sono gli effetti disastrosi di un assedio.
6. L'abilità del comandante consiste nel piegare le forze del nemico senza alcun combattimento, nell'impadronirsi delle città senza assediarle, nel conquistare lo stato nemico senza lunghe operazioni militari.
7. Con le sue forze ancora intatte, egli potrà puntare al controllo dell'impero e così, senza perdere un solo uomo, il suo trionfo sarà completo. Questa è l'arte della strategia offensiva.
8. La regola in guerra è questa: se le nostre forze sono superiori nella misura di dieci a uno, basterà circondare il nemico che si arrenderà senza combattere; se sono di cinque a uno, bisognerà attaccarlo con la certezza della vittoria; se doppie di numero, dividi in due l'armata del nemico.
9. Se c'è parità di forze si può dare battaglia; se si è chiaramente inferiori di numero, bisogna evitare il nemico; se si è del tutto inferiori in ogni settore, è necessario disinpegnarsi. Benché una piccola forza possa sostenere un ostinato combattimento, alla fine viene vinta da una forza più grande.
10. Il comandante (e l'esercito) è il baluardo dello stato: se è perfetto in ogni sua parte, lo stato è forte e sicuro; se presenta delle lacune, lo stato è debole.

11. Tre sono i modi in cui un esercito può essere condotto al disastro:
- a. ordinando di avanzare, o di ritirarsi, ignorando il fatto che esso non è in grado di eseguire l'ordine;
 - b. dirigendo un'armata con le stesse leggi con cui si governa uno stato, ignorando quindi le situazioni specifiche che prevalgono in un corpo militare: ciò disorienta gli ufficiali;
 - c. utilizzando senza competenza gli ufficiali e senza rispettare il principio dell'adattamento alle circostanze: ciò scuote la fiducia dei soldati.
12. Quando l'armata è irrequieta e diffidente, sorgono certamente difficoltà con gli altri sovrani. Ciò è espresso dal detto: "La confusione nell'esercito conduce alla vittoria del nemico".
13. I princìpi fondamentali che conducono alla vittoria sono cinque:
- a. vince chi sa quando è il momento di combattere e quando è il momento di non combattere;
 - b. vince chi sa come condurre tanto un esercito superiore quanto un esercito inferiore;
 - c. vince chi ha un esercito animato dallo stesso spirito in tutte le sue parti.
 - d. Vince chi, essendo sempre pronto, sa cogliere il nemico impreparato;
 - e. Vince chi dispone di comandanti competenti al riparo dalle ingerenze del sovrano. La vittoria riposa sulla conoscenza di questi cinque princìpi.
14. Perciò vale il detto: se conosci il nemico e conosci te stesso, non devi temere il risultato di cento battaglie. Se conosci te stesso ma non il nemico, per ogni vittoria ottenuta potrai subire anche una sconfitta. Se non conosci né il nemico né te stesso, soccomberai in ogni battaglia.

Capitolo 4: Disposizioni tattiche

1. I buoni comandanti del tempo antico pensavano anzitutto al modo di evitare la sconfitta, poi aspettavano l'occasione per battere il nemico.

2. Se evitare la sconfitta riposa nelle nostre capacità, l'occasione per sconfiggere il nemico viene fornita dal nemico stesso.
3. Ma il comandante che riesce ad evitare la sconfitta, non per questo è necessariamente in grado di battere il nemico.
4. Perciò vale il detto: uno può sapere come vincere senza per questo vincere.
5. Per evitare la sconfitta si ricorre alle tattiche difensive; per vincere si ricorre alle tattiche offensive.
6. Si rimane sulla difensiva quando le forze sono appena sufficienti; per attaccare bisogna disporre di forze più che sufficienti.
7. L'abile comandante sfrutta tutti i vantaggi del terreno nella difesa; nell'attacco piomba sul nemico come un fulmine dal cielo. Da un lato egli ha la capacità di proteggersi; dall'altro lato ha la capacità di conseguire una vittoria completa.
8. Prevedere una vittoria che anche il primo venuto può conseguire (per lo squilibrio manifesto esistente tra le due forze opposte) non è il massimo dell'abilità.
9. Né è il massimo dell'abilità vincere una battaglia ed essere universalmente proclamato "esperto" poiché non ci vuole molta forza per tosare il pelo autunnale, né è indice di udito fine udire il rumore del tuono.
10. Nei tempi antichi, coloro che erano definiti esperti combattenti erano quelli che non solo vincevano, ma vincevano con facilità (senza grosse perdite, avendo costretto il nemico nelle condizioni più sfavorevoli).
11. Le autentiche vittorie non portano reputazione per la tattica adottata né credito per il coraggio dimostrato (in un combattimento sanguinoso).
12. L'eccellente combattente vince le battaglie senza commettere errori. Non fare errori significa che, qualunque cosa faccia, si assicura la vittoria: egli vince un nemico che è già battuto.
13. Un tale comandante si pone in una posizione nella quale è impossibile essere sconfitti e non si lascia sfuggire l'attimo decisivo per annientare il nemico.
14. Così un esercito vittorioso è tale prima ancora di combattere mentre un esercito destinato alla sconfitta si batte senza speranza di vittoria.

15. Il comandante esperto, coltivando il Tao e applicando la Dottrina, ha nelle sue mani il successo.
16. Nel rispettare la Dottrina, questo è l'ordine: primo, lo spazio; secondo, la quantità; terzo, il calcolo; quarto, la comparazione; quinto, le possibilità di vittoria.
17. L'apprezzamento dello spazio è in funzione del terreno; l'apprezzamento della quantità deriva dalle misurazioni; i calcoli si fondano sulle misurazioni; la composizione (delle forze) deriva dai calcoli; la vittoria si fonda sulla comparazione.
18. Un'armata vittoriosa opposta ad una sconfitta è come il peso di una libbra posta su un piatto della bilancia contro un singolo chicco posto sull'altro piatto.
19. L'assalto di un esercito vittorioso è come l'erompere improvviso di una massa d'acqua racchiusa in un bacino profondo cento braccia.

Capitolo 5: Uso dell'energia

1. La gestione di una grande forza militare si effettua con gli stessi criteri con cui si guidano pochi uomini: basta dividerla in reparti.
2. Combattere al comando di una grande armata è come combattere alla testa di una piccola: è solo necessario istituire contrassegni e segnali.
3. Per mezzo di manovre dirette ed indirette ci si assicura che tutte le truppe, restando compatte, siano in grado di opporsi all'urto dell'attacco nemico.
4. La forza d'urto di un'armata che si lancia all'attacco si deve paragonare a quella di un sasso che colpisce un uovo: questo risultato si ottiene per mezzo della conoscenza dei punti deboli e dei punti forti.
5. In ogni battaglia, il metodo diretto si usa per giungere allo scontro; ma il metodo indiretto è indispensabile per conseguire la vittoria.
6. Le tecniche del metodo indiretto, se efficacemente applicate, sono inesauribili come il cielo e la terra, senza fine come la corrente dei fiumi e dei ruscelli; come il sole e la luna, esse tramontano solo per sorgere ancora; come le quattro stagioni, passano solo per tornare di nuovo.

7. Non vi sono più di cinque note musicali, ma la loro combinazione produce una varietà sterminata di melodie.
8. Non vi sono più di cinque colori semplici, ma in combinazione essi producono più tinte di quante ne possiamo mai aver viste.
9. Non vi sono più di cinque sapori fondamentali, ma la loro combinazione ha prodotto più gusti di quanti ne possiamo mai assaggiare.
10. In battaglia non vi sono più di due metodi di attacco: diretto ed indiretto. Ma questi due, in combinazione, danno luogo ad una infinita serie di possibili manovre.
11. Il metodo diretto ed il metodo indiretto rinviano continuamente l'uno all'altro. E' come muoversi lungo una circonferenza: non c'è un punto di inizio e non c'è un punto finale. Nessuno può esaurire le possibilità derivanti dalle loro combinazioni.
12. L'attacco delle truppe è come un torrente impetuoso che trascina anche i massi lungo il suo percorso.
13. La qualità delle decisioni è come il fulmineo e preciso attacco di un falco che colpisce e abbatte la preda.
14. Perciò il buon comandante deve essere terribile nello sferrare l'attacco e rapido nel decidere.
15. L'energia può essere paragonata al momento in cui si tende la corda di un arco; la decisione, al momento in cui la corda viene lasciata.
16. In mezzo alla confusione ed al tumulto della battaglia può sembrare che regni il disordine più completo. In mezzo alla confusione ed al caos, la disposizione dei reparti può apparire senza logica, ma questo può essere utile per evitare la sconfitta.
17. Il disordine simulato postula infatti una perfetta disciplina; una paura simulata postula il coraggio; una debolezza simulata postula la forza.
18. Nascondere l'ordine sotto un manto di disordine; dissimulare il coraggio sotto l'apparenza del timore: ciò presuppone una riserva nascosta di energia. Mascherare la forza con la debolezza: questi sono i risultati cui mirano le disposizioni tattiche.
19. Così, uno che è pronto a cogliere il nemico quando è in movimento, assume falsi comportamenti che confonderanno le idee al nemico.

20. Per disorientare il nemico, è meglio colpirlo con un corpo di uomini scelti mentre è in marcia.

21. Il comandante esperto mira all'effetto dell'energia combinata (dei due metodi) e non chiede troppo ai singoli individui poiché è abile nello scegliere gli uomini giusti e nell'impegnare l'energia combinata.

22. Quando egli applica il principio dell'energia combinata, i suoi soldati sono come massi o tronchi che rotolano. E' nella natura di un tronco o di un masso restare immobile quando è in piano, e muovendosi quando è in discesa. Se è squadrato, resta fermo, ma se è arrotondato, rotola verso il basso.

23. Così l'energia che sanno suscitare i buoni comandanti è come l'attimo in cui una pietra rotonda precipita da un'altura di cento piedi.

Capitolo 6: Punti di forza e di debolezza

1. Chi prende posizione sul terreno per primo, si troverà più fresco per la battaglia; chi arriva per secondo sul campo e deve predisporre frettolosamente per lo scontro, sarà più stanco.

2. Il bravo comandante impone quindi la sua volontà al nemico e non consente che sia questo a dettarla a lui.

3. Si concedono vantaggi al nemico se gli si permette di prendere posizione a suo gradimento; gli si infliggono danni se gli si impedisce di muoversi liberamente.

4. Pertanto se il nemico manovra in tranquillità, bisognerà disturbarlo; se è ben rifornito di cibo, si cercherà di tagliargli i viveri; se è tranquillamente accampato, lo si dovrà costringere a muoversi.

5. Bisogna apparire improvvisamente in luoghi dove il nemico sarà costretto ad allestire in fretta una difesa. Per ottenere questo effetto di sorpresa, è necessario giungere rapidamente nei luoghi in cui non si è attesi.

6. Un'armata può percorrere grandi distanze senza difficoltà se procede attraverso un paese dove non sono presenti forze militari nemiche.

7. Per essere sicuri del successo dei propri attacchi, è necessario assalire soltanto i posti che non sono difesi. Per restare tranquilli al riparo delle proprie difese, è necessario attestarsi su posizioni inattaccabili.
8. Perciò è abile nell'attacco quel comandante il cui avversario non sa cosa difendere; ed è abile nella difesa quel comandante il cui avversario non sa che cosa attaccare.
9. Oh, arte divina della sottigliezza e della segretezza! Per tuo mezzo impariamo ad essere invisibili e a non essere uditi, e così possiamo tenere il destino del nemico nelle nostre mani.
10. Si può avanzare ed essere assolutamente irresistibili se si attaccano i punti deboli del nemico; per ritirarsi e mettersi in salvo, in caso di inseguimento, è però indispensabile che i propri spostamenti siano più rapidi di quelli del nemico.
11. Quando si vuole provocare la battaglia, il nemico può essere costretto allo scontro anche se è riparato dietro alti bastioni e profondi fossati: basterà attaccare altri luoghi, obbligandolo a soccorrerli.
12. Se invece non si desidera combattere, si può impedire al nemico di venire a contatto anche se le linee dell'accampamento sono appena tracciate sul terreno: è sufficiente ricorrere a qualche stratagemma che risulti incomprensibile al nemico.
13. Per scoprire le posizioni del nemico, e rimanere nel contempo invisibili, bisognerà tenere le forze concentrate e obbligare il nemico a dividere le sue.
14. Il principio è quello di formare un solo corpo compatto mentre il nemico deve essere frazionato. Così ci sarà un "intero" contrapposto a parti separate, e questo significa che saranno i "molti" contro i "pochi".
15. Questo principio consente ad una forza inferiore di attaccarne una superiore e di metterla in difficoltà.
16. Non bisogna far scoprire il luogo dove si intende dare battaglia: in tal modo il nemico sarà costretto a prepararsi contro un possibile attacco in diversi punti. Con le sue forze così divise in parecchi luoghi, si potrà affrontare in ogni punto una massa nemica proporzionalmente ridotta.

17. Volendo rafforzare l'avanguardia, il nemico indebolirà le retrovie; se rafforzerà queste, indebolirà quelle; se rafforzerà l'ala sinistra, indebolirà la destra; se rafforzerà l'ala destra, indebolirà la sinistra. Se spedisce rinforzi dappertutto, in ogni luogo sarà debole.

18. L'inferiorità numerica deriva quindi dalla necessità di prepararsi contro possibili attacchi (in più luoghi); la superiorità numerica deriva dal costringere l'avversario a fare questi preparativi.

19. Deciso il luogo ed il momento della battaglia, si ha tempo per predisporre il concentramento delle forze fin dalle più grandi distanze.

20. Ma se né il momento né il luogo dello scontro sono noti, allora l'ala sinistra sarà incapace di soccorrere la destra, e l'ala destra parimenti sarà incapace di soccorrere la sinistra; l'avanguardia non potrà soccorrere la retroguardia, e viceversa. E questo sarà tanto più vero quanto più distanti tra loro sono le diverse parti dell'armata: da un po' meno di cento li a soltanto pochi li.

21. Sebbene secondo le mie stime i soldati di Yueh superino i nostri per numero, questo di per sé non garantisce loro la vittoria. Dico perciò che la vittoria può essere creata poiché se il nemico è più numeroso, si può evitare il combattimento.

22. Bisogna scoprire i piani del nemico e stimare quante siano le sue probabilità di successo.

23. Riuscendo a stanare il nemico, si scoprono le ragioni della sua attività o della sua inattività. Costringendolo a rivelare se stesso, si mettono a nudo i suoi punti deboli.

24. Bisogna sempre confrontare accuratamente l'armata che si ha di fronte con la propria per dedurre in quale forza è superiore e in quale è inferiore.

25. Nel prendere le decisioni tattiche, la prima preoccupazione sia quella di tenerle segrete. Se le decisioni restano nascoste, sono al riparo dall'attività delle spie e dalle macchinazioni delle menti più acute.

26. La gente comune non può capire come la vittoria possa ottenersi dalle mosse stesse del nemico.

27. Se tutti possono vedere le manovre concrete per mezzo delle quali un vince, nessuno può vedere il grande disegno per mezzo del quale la vittoria si realizza.
28. Bisogna evitare la ripetizione delle tattiche che hanno già dato la vittoria una volta; le decisioni devono essere suggerite dall'infinita varietà delle circostanze.
29. Le tattiche militari sono infatti simili all'acqua che nel suo corso naturale scorre dai luoghi più elevati e si precipita verso il basso.
30. Così, in guerra, la regola è di evitare ciò che è forte e di colpire ciò che è debole.
31. Come l'acqua traccia il suo corso secondo la natura del terreno dove scorre, così il comandante pianifica la sua tattica vittoriosa in rapporto al nemico che ha di fronte.
32. Perciò, come l'acqua non mantiene una forma costante, così in guerra non vi sono situazioni immutabili.
33. Colui che è in grado di modificare i suoi piani, adattandoli all'avversario, e perciò ottiene la vittoria, può essere definito un condottiero divino.
34. I cinque elementi (acqua, fuoco, legno, metallo, terra) infatti, non sono ugualmente distribuiti; le quattro stagioni si susseguono una dopo l'altra. Ci sono giorni corti e giorni lunghi; la luna cresce e decresce.

Capitolo 7: La manovra

1. In guerra, il comandante riceve il comando dal sovrano.
2. Radunata l'armata e concentrato le forze, il comandante ne deve fondere ed armonizzare gli elementi prima di iniziare le operazioni.
3. Effettuato l'addestramento, il comandante inizia le manovre, compito difficilissimo. La difficoltà consiste nel mutare in diritto ciò che è tortuoso e lo svantaggio in vantaggio.
4. Dopo aver sviato il nemico, prende una lunga e tortuosa strada e, pur essendo partiti dopo di lui, raggiunge l'obiettivo per primo: questo dimostra la conoscenza dell'artificio della deviazione.
5. Manovrare con un'armata (ben addestrata) è vantaggioso; manovrare con una moltitudine indisciplinata è molto dannoso.

6. Se si aspetta, per cogliere un vantaggio, di poter guidare un'armata perfettamente equipaggiata, c'è il rischio di arrivare tardi. D'altra parte, abbandonare il campo con una colonna leggera a quello scopo, implica il sacrificio di equipaggiamenti e di scorte.
7. Se un comandante ordina ai suoi uomini di prendere la loro roba e, a marce forzate, senza soste né di giorno né di notte, coprendo il doppio della distanza (normale) tutto d'un fiato, fa percorrere loro un centinaio di miglia per strappare un vantaggio, i luogotenenti di tutte e tre le sue divisioni cadranno nelle mani del nemico.
8. Gli uomini più resistenti resteranno davanti, gli stanchi cadranno nelle retrovie, e in tal modo solo un decimo dell'armata giungerà a destinazione.
9. Se invece si marcia per cinquanta miglia per avere la meglio sul nemico, si perderà per strada il comandante della prima divisione, e solo la metà delle forze raggiungerà l'obiettivo.
10. Ma se si percorrono trenta miglia in vista dello stesso obiettivo, arriveranno i due terzi dell'armata.
11. Se ne deduce che senza equipaggiamento, senza provviste e senza basi di rifornimento, un'armata è perduta.
12. Non si devono concludere alleanze fino a che non si è informati sulle intenzioni dei vicini.
13. Il comandante non deve far muovere l'armata sino a quando non ha familiare l'aspetto del paese: montagne e foreste, luoghi favorevoli alle imboscate e precipizi, paludi e forme della vegetazione.
14. Ma il comandante sarà incapace di utilizzare i vantaggi naturali senza fare uso di guide locali.
15. In guerra, la simulazione è la via per il successo. Inoltre si deve agire solo quando c'è un reale vantaggio da conseguire.
16. Il comandante deve lasciarsi guidare dalle circostanze nel decidere se concentrare o dividere le truppe.

17. L'armata sia veloce come il vento e compatta come la foresta; nelle irruzioni e nel saccheggio sia come il fuoco; nel tenere le posizioni sia inamovibile come la montagna.
18. I piani del comandante siano oscuri ed impenetrabili come la notte affinché, quando si muove, arrivi come il fulmine.
19. Saccheggiando una contrada, il comandante lasci che il bottino sia diviso tra i suoi uomini e quando conquista un nuovo territorio lo divida in settori a vantaggio della truppa.
20. Riflettere a lungo prima di compiere una mossa.
21. Sarà vittorioso chi ha appreso l'artificio della deviazione. Tale è l'arte della manovra.
22. Il Libro della direzione dell'armata raccomanda: sul campo di battaglia gli ordini gridati a voce non giungono abbastanza lontano; ne deriva la necessità di gong e tamburi. Né possono essere visti abbastanza chiaramente oggetti ordinari; ne deriva la necessità di vessilli e bandiere.
23. Gong e tamburi, vessilli e bandiere: questi sono i mezzi per cui le orecchie e gli occhi delle milizie vengono attirati in un punto particolare.
24. Solo così la moltitudine forma un corpo compatto: né il coraggioso che avanza né il codardo che arretra restano isolati. Questa è l'arte di dirigere grandi masse di uomini.
25. Nel combattimento notturno bisognerà fare grande uso di segnali luminosi e di tamburi; nel combattimento diurno, di vessilli e bandiere: essi sono gli strumenti per influenzare gli occhi e le orecchie delle armate.
26. Un'intera armata può essere privata del suo spirito combattivo e un comandante può perdere l'autocontrollo.
27. Lo spirito di un soldato è più vivace all'alba; a mezzogiorno comincia a vacillare; a sera, la sua mente è concentrata solo sul desiderio di tornare al campo.

28. Un buon comandante evita quindi di attaccare il nemico quando il suo spirito è più vivace, ma lo attacca quando esso vacilla ed inclina al ritorno. Questa è l'arte di studiare gli stati d'animo.
29. Conservando la disciplina e la calma, si può mostrare disordine vociando confusamente in prossimità del nemico. Questa è l'arte dell'autocontrollo.
30. Essere vicini all'obiettivo mentre il nemico è ancora lontano; aspettare con calma mentre il nemico si affatica e si agita; essere sazi mentre il nemico è affamato. Questa è l'arte di amministrare le proprie forze.
31. Astenersi dall'intercettare un nemico i cui vessilli siano in perfetto ordine; astenersi dall'attaccare un'armata disposta in calmo e fiducioso ordine di battaglia. Questa è l'arte di studiare le circostanze.
32. E' un assioma della dottrina militare il non avanzare in salita contro un nemico, né opporsi ad esso quando cala da un'altura.
33. Non inseguire un nemico che finge la fuga; non attaccare soldati agguerriti.
34. Non accettare le esche offerte dal nemico. Non interferire con un'armata che torna a casa.
35. Quando circondi un'armata, lasciale una via di fuga; non pressare troppo duramente un nemico disperato.
36. Questa è l'arte della guerra.

Capitolo 8: Nove variazioni

1. In guerra, il comandante riceve il comando dal sovrano, raduna l'armata e concentra le forze.
2. Quando è in un paese ostile, non pone l'accampamento. In un paese dove grandi strade si incrociano, si congiunge con gli alleati. Non indugia in luoghi pericolosamente isolati. Se accerchiato, deve uscirne con uno stratagemma, ma se si trova in posizione disperata, deve combattere.

3. Ci sono strade che non devono essere seguite, eserciti che non devono essere attaccati, città che non devono essere assediate, posizioni che non devono essere contrastate, ordini del sovrano che non devono essere eseguiti.
4. Il comandante che conosce a fondo i vantaggi che derivano dalle varianti tattiche sa come guidare le truppe.
5. Colui che non li conosce, anche se è consapevole della condizione del terreno, non sarà capace di trasformare questa conoscenza in un profitto concreto.
6. Lo stratega che non è versato nell'arte di modificare i piani, anche se conosce i Cinque Vantaggi, non riuscirà a fare il miglior uso dei suoi uomini.
7. Perciò un comandante giudizioso, nel mettere a punto i suoi piani, tiene conto delle condizioni di vantaggio e delle condizioni di svantaggio.
8. Se l'aspettativa del vantaggio è temperata in questo modo, possiamo avere successo nel realizzare la parte essenziale dei piani.
9. Se, parimenti, nel mezzo di una situazione difficile siamo sempre pronti a sfruttare un improvviso vantaggio, potremo tirarci fuori dalle difficoltà.
10. Bisogna indebolire i comandanti nemici infliggendogli perdite, provocando il disordine tra essi, tenendoli costantemente impegnati, offrendogli seducenti allettamenti e facendoli correre da un luogo all'altro.
11. L'arte della guerra insegna a fare assegnamento non sull'eventualità che il nemico non venga, ma sulla nostra preparazione a riceverlo; non sulla eventualità che esso non attacchi, ma piuttosto sul fatto che abbiamo reso invincibile la nostra posizione.
12. Un comandante può cadere in cinque pericolosi errori:
 - a. l'avventatezza, che conduce al disastro;
 - b. la codardia, che conduce alla cattura (dell'armata);
 - c. il temperamento irascibile, che può essere esasperato dalle provocazioni;
 - d. un eccessivo senso dell'onore, che cede a un eccesso di scrupolo;
 - e. un eccesso di sollecitudine per gli uomini, che lo espone alla preoccupazione e all'ansia.
13. Questi sono i cinque tratti inconfondibili di un condottiero inadatto al comando.

14. Quando un'armata è sconfitta ed il suo comandante ucciso, la causa potrà essere individuata tra questi cinque errori. Che essi siano oggetto di profonda meditazione.

Capitolo 9: Il movimento delle truppe

1. Quanto alle operazioni militari in terreno montagnoso, si ricordi di attraversare rapidamente le montagne e di prendere posizione in prossimità delle valli.
2. Accamparsi in posizione elevata e sul versante assolato. Evitare di combattere procedendo in salita.
3. Dopo aver attraversato il fiume, è opportuno allontanarsi abbastanza da esso.
4. Quando una forza nemica attraversa un fiume, non bisogna attaccarla quando è (ancora tutta) in mezzo al guado. Sarà meglio aspettare, per scatenare l'attacco, che una metà raggiunga la riva.
5. Se si è impazienti di combattere, non si dovrebbe andare ad incontrare il nemico vicino ad un fiume da attraversare.
6. Ormeggia le tue imbarcazioni a monte di quelle del nemico. Non muoverti controcorrente per incontrare il nemico.
7. Nell'attraversare le paludi, la sola preoccupazione sia di lasciarle al più presto e senza indugio.
8. Se si è obbligati a combattere nel mezzo di una palude, si cerchi di posizionarsi con le spalle addossate ad un gruppo di alberi.
9. In una contrada asciutta e pianeggiante bisogna occupare una posizione facilmente accessibile con il terreno in salita sulla destra e alle spalle così che il pericolo venga di fronte e la salvezza sia dietro.
10. Queste quattro regole della conoscenza militare permisero all'Imperatore Giallo di vincere molti nemici.
11. Tutti gli eserciti preferiscono il terreno elevato a quello basso e le zone assolate a quelle ombrose.
12. Se hai cura dei tuoi uomini e ti accampi su un terreno solido e asciutto, l'armata sarà libera dai disagi di ogni specie, e questo significa vittoria.

13. Quando arrivi su una collina o un'altura, occupa il versante assolato, con il pendio direttamente alle spalle. Così potrai nello stesso tempo agire per il benessere dei soldati e utilizzare i vantaggi naturali del terreno.
14. Quando, a causa di grandi piogge, un fiume che desideri guadare è gonfio e vorticoso, aspetta che si calmi e si abbassi il livello.
15. Bisogna allontanarsi il più rapidamente possibile e tenersi lontano da una zona nella quale ci sono dirupi scoscesi con torrenti che scorrono in mezzo, profonde gole, posti isolati, boschi intricati, pantani e crepacci.
16. Mentre ci troviamo lontani da siffatti luoghi, dovremmo viceversa spingervi il nemico: se noi li abbiamo di fronte, il nemico dovrebbe averli alle spalle.
17. Se nelle vicinanze dell'accampamento ci fosse un paese, stagni circondati da erbe acquatiche, profondi canneti o boschi con fitto sottobosco, tutti questi luoghi dovrebbero essere accuratamente perlustrati poiché sono quelli dove uomini nascosti o insidiose spie stanno di solito in agguato.
18. Quando il nemico è vicino e rimane tranquillo, vuol dire che si fida della forza naturale della posizione (che occupa).
19. Quando il nemico si tiene a distanza e cerca di provocare lo scontro, tradisce il desiderio che l'altra parte avanzi.
20. Se il luogo in cui il nemico è accampato è di facile accesso, vuol dire che sta tendendo un tranello.
21. Movimento tra gli alberi di una foresta indica che il nemico sta avanzando. La scoperta di qualcosa di insolito in mezzo all'erba fitta significa che il nemico vuole renderci sospettosi.
22. Un improvviso mutamento di direzione nel volo degli uccelli tradisce un'imboscata. La fuga di animali indica che sta iniziando un attacco improvviso.
23. Quando si vede una nube di polvere alzarsi in forma di colonna, è segno che avanzano i carri; quando la nube è bassa e sparsa su una larga superficie, indica l'avvicinarsi della fanteria. Quando la nube si estende in diverse direzioni, vuol dire

che alcuni reparti sono stati mandati a raccogliere legna per il fuoco. Poche nubi di polvere che si muovono avanti e indietro, segnalano che l'armata si sta accampando.

24. Pochi ordini gridati e accompagnati da intensi preparativi sono segno che il nemico sta per avanzare. Un linguaggio violento, come se si volesse ordinare un attacco, indica invece che il nemico si appresta a ritirarsi.

25. Quando i carri leggeri appaiono per primi e prendono posizione sulle ali, è segno che il nemico si sta predisponendo per la battaglia.

26. Proposte di pace non accompagnate da giuramento indicano un tranello.

27. Quando i soldati segnano rumorosamente il passo e restano inquadrati nei ranghi, significa che è arrivato il momento critico..

28. Quando si vedono alcuni soldati avanzare ed altri arretrare, c'è sotto qualche inganno.

29. Quando i soldati in piedi stanno un po' inclinati appoggiandosi alle lance, vuol dire che sono deboli per insufficienza di nutrimento.

30. Se quelli che sono stati mandati ad attingere acqua cominciano immediatamente a bere, vuol dire che l'armata sta soffrendo la sete.

31. Se c'è un vantaggio che il nemico potrebbe facilmente ottenere ma non fa alcuno sforzo per conseguirlo, significa che i soldati sono esausti.

32. Se si vedono svolazzare da ogni parte gli uccelli, significa che il luogo non è occupato. I rumori notturni inducono al nervosismo.

33. Se c'è disordine nel campo, l'autorità del comandante è debole. Se le bandiere ed i vessilli cambiano continuamente di posto, significa che c'è una sedizione in atto. Se gli ufficiali gridano infuriati, significa che gli uomini sono svogliati.

34. Quando un'armata nutre i cavalli con grano ed uccide il bestiame per nutrirsi, e quando gli uomini non appendono le loro cintole vicino ai fuochi del campo, mostrando che non torneranno alle tende, significa che sono determinati a combattere fino alla morte.

35. La vista di uomini che, radunati in piccoli capannelli, parlano sottovoce, indica disaffezione tra i soldati e gli ufficiali.

36. Ricompense troppo frequenti significano che il nemico è allo stremo delle energie; troppe punizioni tradiscono una situazione di angoscia disastrosa.
37. Cominciare a rumoreggiare e poi spaventarsi per il numero dei nemici, dimostra una totale mancanza di intelligenza.
38. Quando la bocca dei messaggeri è piena di ossequi è segno che il nemico desidera una tregua.
39. Se le truppe nemiche marciano con decisione e poi sostano a lungo di fronte alle nostre senza dare battaglia o ritirarsi, la situazione richiede grande vigilanza e circospezione.
40. Quando le nostre truppe sono numericamente inferiori a quelle del nemico, la situazione è chiara: significa che non possiamo sferrare un attacco diretto. Quello che possiamo fare è semplicemente concentrare tutte le nostre forze valide, sorvegliare attentamente le mosse del nemico e cercare rinforzi.
41. Il comandante che non è previdente e prende alla leggera il suo avversario, sarà sicuramente catturato (con la sua armata).
42. Se i soldati vengono puniti prima che si siano affezionati al comandante, non dimostreranno sottomissione; e, senza sottomissione, saranno praticamente inutili. Se, quando i soldati si sono affezionati al comandante, le punizioni non sono fatte osservare, ancora, essi saranno inutili.
43. Perciò i soldati devono essere trattati prima di tutto umanamente, ma tenuti sotto controllo con ferrea disciplina. Questa è la via per la vittoria.
44. Se nell'addestramento dei soldati, gli ordini dei comandanti sono eseguiti normalmente, l'armata sarà ben disciplinata; altrimenti la sua indisciplina, costituirà un fattore negativo.
45. Se un comandante mostra fiducia nei suoi uomini ma insiste sempre affinché i suoi ordini siano eseguiti, il vantaggio sarà reciproco.

Capitolo 10: Configurazioni del terreno

1. Si possono distinguere sei tipi di terreno, e cioè:

- a. terreno accessibile;
 - b. terreno difficoltoso;
 - c. terreno di attesa;
 - d. passaggi stretti;
 - e. alti precipizi;
 - f. posizioni a grande distanza dal nemico.
2. Il terreno che può essere attraversato liberamente da ambo i lati, si definisce accessibile.
3. Riguardo al terreno di questo tipo, è necessario arrivare prima del nemico, occupare i luoghi elevati e assolati e proteggere le proprie linee di rifornimento. Così si potrà combattere da una posizione vantaggiosa.
4. Il terreno che può essere abbandonato, ma che è difficile da rioccupare, si definisce difficoltoso.
5. Da una posizione di questo tipo, se il nemico non sta all'erta, si può fare una sortita e sconfiggerlo. Ma se il nemico aspetta al varco e non si riesce a sconfiggerlo, con la ritirata impossibile, il disastro è inevitabile.
6. Quando la posizione è tale che nessuna delle due parti ha convenienza a prendere l'iniziativa, si dice che ci si trova su un terreno di attesa.
7. In una posizione di tale natura, se il nemico dovesse offrire un'esca attraente, sarà consigliabile non farsi avanti, ma anzi, ritirarsi, attirando così a nostra volta il nemico; allora, quando una parte della sua armata si sarà sbilanciata in avanti, si potrà sferrare l'attacco con vantaggio.
8. Riguardo ai passaggi stretti, se si possono occupare per primi, bisogna presidiarli e attendere l'arrivo del nemico.
9. Se il nemico dovesse anticiparci nell'occupare un passaggio stretto, non gli si andrà dietro se il passaggio è ben presidiato, ma solo se è debolmente controllato.
10. Riguardo agli alti precipizi, quando si è in anticipo sul nemico, è opportuno occupare i luoghi più elevati ed assolati ed attendere il suo arrivo.

11. Se il nemico li ha occupati per primo, non si deve seguirlo, ma ritirarsi e cercare di snidarlo.
12. Se ci si trova in posizioni a grande distanza dal nemico e la forza delle due armate è uguale, non è facile giungere allo scontro. Se si percorre quella grande distanza, l'armata arriverà alla battaglia stanca e il combattimento si risolverà a nostro sfavore.
13. Questi sono i sei principi legati alla forma del terreno. Il comandante in capo deve studiarli attentamente.
14. L'armata è esposta a sei pericoli che non derivano da cause naturali, ma da errori di cui il comandante è responsabile. Questi sono: la fuga, l'insubordinazione, il crollo, la rovina, la disorganizzazione, la disfatta.
15. A parità di altre condizioni, se una forza è lanciata a sfidarne un'altra dieci volte superiore di dimensioni, il risultato sarà la fuga della prima.
16. Quando i soldati semplici sono troppo arroganti ed i loro ufficiali troppo deboli, il risultato è l'insubordinazione.
17. Quando gli ufficiali sono troppo arroganti ed i loro soldati semplici troppo deboli, il risultato è il crollo (dell'armata).
18. Quando gli ufficiali superiori sono collerici e insubordinati, ed incontrando il nemico danno battaglia per conto loro per rancore personale, prima che il comandante in capo possa dire se l'armata è o no in condizione di combattere, il risultato è la rovina.
19. Quando il comandante è debole e senza autorità, quando i suoi ordini non sono chiari e distinti, quando non ci sono compiti definiti per ufficiali e soldati, ed i ranghi sono formati in maniera negligente e casuale, il risultato è una grande disorganizzazione.
20. Quando un comandante, incapace di stimare la forza del nemico, permette che una forza inferiore si scontri con una più grande, o lancia un reparto debole contro uno forte, e non i soldati scelti in prima fila, il risultato sarà la disfatta.
21. Questi sono sei modi di attirare la sconfitta, che devono essere attentamente evitati dal comandante in capo.

22. La conformazione naturale del paese è il miglior alleato del soldato, ma il potere di valutare il nemico, di controllare i fattori della vittoria e di calcolare con perspicacia le difficoltà, i pericoli e le distanze, costituisce la prova della verità per un grande comandante.
23. Colui che conosce queste cose, e nella battaglia mette in pratica le sue conoscenze, vincerà le sue battaglie. Colui che non le conosce o non mette in pratica le sue conoscenze, sarà sicuramente sconfitto.
24. Se la lotta sarà sicuramente vittoriosa, allora devi combattere, anche se il sovrano lo vieta; se la lotta non sarà sicuramente vittoriosa, allora non devi combattere, anche se il sovrano lo ordina.
25. Il comandante che avanza senza preoccuparsi della gloria e si ritira senza temere di cadere in disgrazia, ed il cui unico pensiero è proteggere il suo paese e rendere un buon servizio per il suo sovrano, è uno strumento prezioso del regno.
26. Tratta i tuoi soldati come tuoi bambini, ed essi ti seguiranno nelle valli più profonde; sorvegliali come i tuoi amati figli, ed essi ti rimarranno accanto anche fino alla morte.
27. Se però sei indulgente, ma incapace di far sentire la tua autorità; di buon cuore , ma incapace di far eseguire i tuoi ordini; ed incapace inoltre di reprimere i disordini, allora i tuoi soldati devono essere paragonati a bambini viziati: essi sono inutili a qualsiasi scopo pratico.
28. Se sappiamo che i nostri uomini sono in condizione di attaccare, ma ignoriamo che il nemico non è pronto a dar battaglia, siamo solo a metà strada verso la vittoria.
29. Se sappiamo che il nemico è pronto a dar battaglia, ma ignoriamo che i nostri uomini non sono in condizione di attaccare, siamo solo a metà strada verso la vittoria.
30. Se sappiamo che il nemico è pronto a dar battaglia, e che i nostri uomini sono in condizione di attaccare, ma ignoriamo che la natura del terreno rende impossibile il combattimento, siamo ancora solo a metà strada verso la vittoria.
31. Perciò il soldato esperto, una volta in movimento, sa dove andare; una volta che ha rotto gli indugi, non sarà sconfitto.

32. Da qui il detto: se conosci il nemico e conosci te stesso, la tua vittoria non sarà in dubbio; se conosci il Cielo (fattori atmosferici e climatici) e conosci la Terra (il teatro delle operazioni), potrai ottenere una vittoria completa.

Capitolo 11: Nove situazioni

1. L'arte della guerra enumera nove varietà di territorio: dispersivo, facile, conteso, aperto, dove si incrociano vie di comunicazione, pericoloso, difficile, senza vie d'uscita, disperato.

2. Quando il comandante combatte entro il territorio del suo paese, è in un territorio dispersivo.

3. Quando è penetrato in territorio nemico, ma non in profondità, è in un territorio facile.

4. Il territorio il cui possesso è di grande vantaggio per entrambe le parti, è conteso.

5. Il territorio sul quale entrambi i contendenti hanno libertà d'azione si dice aperto.

6. Un luogo che si trova al vertice di tre stati confinanti, così che chi lo occupa per primo ha la maggior parte dell'impero sotto il suo controllo, si dice territorio dove si incrociano vie di comunicazione.

7. Quando un'armata è penetrata nel cuore di un paese nemico, lasciandosi alle spalle un certo numero di città fortificate, si dice che si trova in un territorio pericoloso.

8. Montagne, foreste, luoghi aspri, acquitrini e paludi - tutti i luoghi difficili da attraversare: questi sono territori difficili.

9. Un luogo raggiungibile attraverso strette gole, e dal quale possiamo ritirarci solo attraverso sentieri tortuosi tali per cui un numero limitato di nemici può essere sufficiente ad annientare un nostro grosso reparto è un territorio senza vie d'uscita.

10. Un luogo dal quale si può scampare la disfatta solo combattendo senza tregua è un territorio disperato.

11. In un territorio dispersivo, perciò, non combattere. In un territorio facile, non fermarti. In un territorio conteso, non attaccare.

12. In un territorio aperto, non cercare di chiudere la strada al nemico. In un territorio dove si incrociano vie di comunicazione, unisciti ai tuoi alleati.
13. In un territorio pericoloso, astieniti dal saccheggio. In un territorio difficile, attraversalo senza accamparti.
14. In un territorio senza vie d'uscita, ricorri ad uno stratagemma. In un territorio disperato, combatti.
15. Coloro che erano chiamati comandanti astuti dagli antichi, sapevano come inserire un cuneo tra il fronte del nemico e la sua retroguardia; impedire la cooperazione tra i suoi reparti grandi e piccoli; evitare che le truppe valide soccorrano quelle deboli; ostacolare gli ufficiali nel radunare i loro uomini.
16. Quando gli uomini del nemico erano uniti manovravano per portarli al disordine.
17. Quando la situazione era a loro vantaggio, facevano la mossa successiva; altrimenti restavano in attesa.
18. Se ti viene chiesto come far fronte ad una grande moltitudine di nemici disposta in schiere ordinate e sul punto di sferrare l'attacco, io dico: "Incomincia con l'appropriarti di qualcosa cui il nemico tiene molto, così sarà sensibile alla tua volontà."
19. La rapidità è l'essenza della guerra: trai vantaggio dalla lentezza del nemico, segui un itinerario inaspettato, ed attacca le posizioni sguarnite.
20. I seguenti sono i principi che devono essere osservati da una forza d'invasione: più si penetra a fondo in un paese, maggiore sarà la compattezza delle tue truppe, e i difensori non prevarranno su di te.
21. Effettua delle scorrerie nei territori fertili per rifornire la tua armata di cibo.
22. Curare attentamente il benessere degli uomini e non pretendere troppo da essi. Concentrare le energie e risparmiare le forze. Tenere l'armata sempre in movimento e, intanto, elaborare piani impenetrabili.
23. Porta i tuoi soldati in posizioni senza scampo, e preferiranno la morte alla fuga. Se vedranno la morte in faccia, non ci sarà impresa che non potranno compiere. Ufficiali e soldati spenderanno tutte le loro estreme forze.

24. I soldati in situazioni disperate perdono il senso della paura. Se non c'è luogo in cui rifugiarsi, terranno le posizioni. Se sono in un paese ostile, mostreranno una resistenza ostinata. Se non sono attesi rinforzi, combatteranno senza risparmiarsi.
25. Così, senza attendere gli ordini, i soldati saranno sempre all'erta; senza attendere che gli venga chiesto, faranno ciò che tu vuoi; senza costrizioni, saranno fedeli; crederanno sempre agli ordini che gli saranno dati.
26. Proibisci di fare presagi e vai oltre i dubbi delle superstizioni. Così, finché la morte stessa non verrà, nessuna calamità sarà temuta.
27. Se i nostri soldati non sono coperti di denaro, non è perché hanno ripugnanza per la ricchezza; se le loro vite non sono straordinariamente lunghe non è perché non amano la longevità.
28. Il giorno della battaglia i soldati possono piangere, Le lacrime bagnano gli indumenti di quelli seduti e solcano le gote di quelli che giacciono distesi.
29. Ma per una volta lasciali lamentarsi, e mostreranno il coraggio al momento opportuno.
30. L'abile tattico può essere paragonato allo shuai-jan (serpente veloce). Il shuai-jan è un serpente che si trova sulle montagne del Ch'ang.
31. Colpiscilo alla testa, e ti attaccherà con la coda; colpiscilo alla coda, e ti attaccherà con la testa; colpiscilo nel mezzo, e ti attaccherà contemporaneamente con la testa e la coda
32. Chiedimi se un'armata può essere mossa come lo shuai-jan, e io ti risponderò di sì. Infatti, sebbene gli abitanti di Wu e quelli di Yueh siano nemici, se stanno attraversando un fiume sulla stessa barca e vengono sorpresi da una tempesta, si daranno reciproca assistenza come la sinistra aiuta la destra.
33. Perciò per sentirsi sicuri non basta legare i cavalli e interrare le ruote dei carri.
34. Il principio sul quale gestire l'armata è di ottenere un livello di coraggio che tutti devono raggiungere.
35. Come ottenere il meglio dalla forza e dalla debolezza: questo è il problema che riguarda lo sfruttamento delle situazioni.

36. Così l'abile comandante conduce la sua armata come se tenesse per mano un solo uomo, ce lo voglia o no.
37. E' compito del comandante essere calmo e infondere fiducia, mentre con la correttezza e l'imparzialità mantiene l'ordine.
38. Egli deve essere in grado di ingannare i suoi ufficiali e soldati con falsi rapporti e apparenze, e così tenerli nella totale ignoranza.
39. Modificando le disposizioni e cambiando i suoi piani, tiene sempre il nemico nell'incertezza. Spostando il campo e prendendo strade indirette, gli impedisce di prevenire le sue mosse.
40. Nel momento decisivo il comandante dell'armata agisce come uno che si è arrampicato su una cima e allontana con un calcio la scala dietro di se. Conduce i suoi uomini nel profondo del territorio nemico prima di fornire indicazioni.
41. Brucia le sue imbarcazioni e infrange le sue marmitte. Come un pastore che guida un gregge di pecore, conduce i suoi uomini di qua e di là, e nessuno sa dove sta andando.
42. Addestrare i soldati e condurli al pericolo: questo può essere considerato il compito del comandante.
43. Le diverse opportunità che derivano dalle nove situazioni: l'utilizzo delle tattiche offensive e difensive; e le leggi fondamentali della natura umana: questi sono i fattori che devono essere studiati più attentamente.
44. Quando si invade un territorio nemico, il principio generale è che la penetrazione profonda porta coesione, la penetrazione solo per poco porta dispersione.
45. Quando ti lasci il tuo paese alle spalle e porti la tua armata attraverso il territorio nemico, sei in una situazione critica. Quando ci sono vie di comunicazione in tutte e quattro le direzioni, il territorio è di intersezione di strade.
46. Quando penetri profondamente in un paese, è un territorio pericoloso. Quando ti inoltri per poco, il terreno è facile.

47. Quando hai le roccaforti del nemico alle spalle e stretti passaggi di fronte, il terreno è circondato. Quando non c'è alcun luogo in cui rifugiarsi, il terreno è disperato.
48. Quindi su un terreno dispersivo, bisogna indurre gli uomini alla coesione.
49. Su un terreno facile, bisogna curare che ci sia stretto collegamento tra tutte le parti dell'armata.
50. Su un terreno conteso, conviene tenere vicina la retroguardia.
51. Su un terreno aperto, bisogna tenere d'occhio le proprie opere di difesa. Su un territorio dove si intersecano strade, ci si unisce agli alleati.
52. Su un terreno pericoloso bisogna assicurare il regolare flusso degli approvvigionamenti. Su un terreno difficile è meglio spingersi avanti sulla strada (per uscirne al più presto).
53. Su un terreno circondato, bisogna escludere ogni ipotesi di ritirata. Su un terreno disperato, si dica all'armata che ci sono poche probabilità di salvare le loro vite.
54. Così si potrà sfruttare l'innata tendenza dei soldati ad opporre una resistenza ostinata quando sono circondati, a combattere strenuamente quando disperano di salvarsi, e a obbedire prontamente quando sono nel pericolo.
55. Non si devono concludere alleanze con i principi vicini fino a quando non si conoscono le loro intenzioni. Non si deve mettere in marcia un esercito fino a quando non si ha piena familiarità con l'aspetto del paese: montagne e foreste, trappole e precipizi, paludi e pantani. Non saremo capaci di approfittare dei vantaggi naturali senza far uso di guide locali.
56. Ignorare uno dei quattro o cinque principi che seguono non giova al sovrano.
57. Quando un sovrano attacca uno stato potente, la sua abilità si manifesta nell'impedire la coalizione delle forze nemiche. Egli intimorisce i suoi avversari e impedisce loro di allearsi contro di lui.
58. Quindi non si misura contro potenti coalizioni e non favorisce la potenza degli altri stati. Egli tiene segreti i suoi piani, mantenendo i suoi avversari nell'incertezza. Così può conquistare le loro città e impadronirsi dei loro regni.

59. Concedi ricompense senza guardare il grado, dai ordini senza riguardo ai precedenti, e sarai in grado di dirigere un'armata intera come se avessi a che fare con un solo uomo.
60. Metti i soldati a confronto con le loro azioni; non lasciar loro scoprire i tuoi piani. Se la linea di condotta appare chiara, mostrala ai loro occhi; ma non dire niente loro quando la situazione è oscura.
61. Spingi l'armata nel pericolo mortale, e sopravviverà; mettila in condizioni disperate, e ne verrà fuori salva.
62. Poiché è proprio quando essa è caduta in una situazione di grave pericolo che è capace di uno straordinario sforzo che le consente di cogliere la vittoria.
63. Il successo in guerra si ottiene adeguandosi accuratamente alla tattica del nemico.
64. Attaccando insistentemente il fianco del nemico, si riuscirà, alla fine, ad uccidere il suo comandante in capo
65. Questa è l'abilità di agire ricorrendo all'astuzia più sottile.
66. Il giorno in cui prendi il comando, fai chiudere i valichi di frontiera, annulla i permessi di transito e ferma il passaggio di tutti i corrieri.
67. Sii rigoroso in camera di consiglio, così da poter controllare la situazione. Se il nemico lascia una porta aperta, devi approfittarne senza indugio.
68. Anticipa il tuo avversario impadronendoti di ciò che ha caro, e battilo sul tempo per conquistare le migliori posizioni sul terreno.
69. Segui il sentiero deciso, e adattati al nemico finché non puoi dare battaglia decisiva.
70. All'inizio, quindi, mostrati timido come una vergine, finché il nemico non ti offrirà una opportunità; allora agisci rapido come una lepre, e sarà troppo tardi per il nemico per attuare le contromisure.

Capitolo 12: Attacco col fuoco

1. Ci sono cinque modi di attaccare col fuoco. Il primo è appiccare il fuoco quando i soldati sono nel campo; il secondo è bruciare le provviste; il terzo è bruciare i carri da

trasporto; il quarto è bruciare gli arsenali ed i magazzini; il quinto è lanciare stoppie infuocate in mezzo al nemico.

2. Per condurre un attacco, bisogna disporre dei mezzi idonei. Il materiale per appiccare il fuoco dovrebbe sempre essere tenuto pronto.

3. C'è una stagione propizia per condurre attacchi col fuoco, e giorni particolarmente favorevoli per appiccare gli incendi.

4. La stagione propizia è quella in cui il clima è molto secco, i giorni particolari sono quelli in cui la luna è nella costellazione del Sagittario, Pegaso, Acquario e Corso, poiché essi sono giorni in cui il vento cresce di intensità.

5. Attaccando col fuoco, si deve essere preparati ad affrontare cinque possibili sviluppi della situazione:

a. quando il fuoco scoppia all'interno del campo nemico, intervieni immediatamente con un attacco dall'esterno;

b. se si sviluppa un incendio, ma i soldati nemici restano tranquilli, aspetta un'occasione più favorevole e non attaccare;

c. Quando la forza delle fiamme ha raggiunto la massima altezza, lancia un attacco, se possibile; altrimenti resta dove sei;

d. Se è possibile condurre un attacco col fuoco dall'esterno, non aspettare che l'incendio scoppi dal di dentro, ma porta il tuo attacco in un momento favorevole;

e. Quando appicchi il fuoco, resta sopravvento. Non attaccare sottovento.

6. Un vento che cresce di giorno dura a lungo, ma una brezza notturna cade presto.

7. In ogni armata, i cinque sviluppi connessi all'uso del fuoco devono essere conosciuti, i movimenti delle stelle calcolati e bisogna prestare attenzione ai giorni propizi.

8. Perciò quelli che usano il fuoco come aiuto per l'attacco dimostrano intelligenza; quelli che usano l'acqua come aiuto per l'attacco guadagnano un supplemento di forza.

9. Per mezzo dell'acqua, un nemico può essere intercettato, ma non privato di tutti i suoi mezzi.

10. Infelice è il destino di chi cerca di vincere le sue battaglie ed avere successo nei suoi attacchi senza coltivare lo spirito d'iniziativa, poiché il risultato sarà una perdita di tempo ed una generale impotenza.
11. Da qui il detto: il sovrano illuminato pianifica con molto anticipo, il buon comandante coltiva le sue risorse.
12. Non muoverti se non vedi un vantaggio; non usare le tue truppe se non c'è nulla da ottenere; non combattere a meno che la posizione sia critica.
13. Nessun sovrano dovrebbe scatenare una guerra solo per soddisfare la sua collera; nessun comandante dovrebbe combattere una battaglia solo per puntiglio.
14. Se è a tuo vantaggio fai la mossa successiva; se no, resta dove sei.
15. L'ira può, col tempo, trasformarsi in allegrezza; la contrarietà può essere seguita dalla soddisfazione.
16. Ma un regno che è stato distrutto una volta, mai può tornare come era; né un morto può essere riportato alla vita.
17. Perciò il sovrano illuminato è prudente e il buon comandante è pieno di attenzioni. Questo è il modo per conservare un paese in pace e l'esercito intatto.

Capitolo 13: Uso delle spie

1. Richiamare alle armi centomila uomini e farli marciare a grande distanza comporta gravi perdite per il popolo ed un impoverimento delle risorse dello Stato. La spesa giornaliera ammonterà a mille pezzi d'argento. Ci sarà malcontento in patria e all'estero gli uomini cadranno esausti lungo le strade. Almeno settecentomila famiglie saranno ostacolate nel loro lavoro.
2. Le armate contrapposte possono affrontarsi per anni, impegnandosi per la vittoria che sarà decisa in un solo giorno. Stando così le cose, restare nell'ignoranza delle condizioni del nemico solo per risparmiare la spesa di cento pezzi d'argento in onori e ricompense, è il massimo dell'inumanità.
3. Uno che agisce così non è un condottiero di uomini, non è di vero aiuto al sovrano, non è un maestro di vittoria.

4. Perciò, quello che permette al sovrano ed al buon comandante di colpire e conquistare, ed arrivare al di là della portata della gente comune, è la conoscenza anticipata.
5. Questa conoscenza anticipata non può essere ricavata dagli spiriti; non può essere ottenuta con l'esperienza, né dal ragionamento deduttivo.
6. La conoscenza della disposizione del nemico può essere ottenuta solo da altri uomini.
7. Da questo l'utilità delle spie, di cui esistono cinque specie: spie locali, spie interne, spie convertite (disertori), spie condannate, spie sopravvissute.
8. Quando queste cinque specie di spie sono tutte all'opera e nessuno può scoprire il sistema con cui agiscono, formano quello che si può definire "sublime manipolazione dalla trama". E' il bene più prezioso dei regnanti.
9. Avere spie locali, significa utilizzare i servizi degli abitanti del posto.
10. Avere spie interne, significa far so degli ufficiali del nemico.
11. Avere spie convertite, significa tenere in pugno le (ex)spie del nemico ed usarle per i propri fini.
12. Avere spie condannate, significa prendere iniziative apertamente a scopo d'inganno, permettere alle nostre spie condannate di venirme a conoscenza e riferirlo al nemico.
13. Le spie sopravvissute, infine, sono quelle che portano notizie dal campo nemico.
14. Ne deriva che con nessuno, dell'intera armata, si dovranno vare più intimi rapporti che con le spie. Nessuno dovrebbe essere ricompensato più generosamente. In nessun altro affare dovrebbe essere maggiormente preservata la segretezza.
15. Non si possono impiegare utilmente le spie senza una certa dose di astuzia innata.
16. Esse non possono essere dirette senza riguardo e franchezza.
17. Senza una sottile ingegnosità della mente, uno non può accertarsi della veridicità delle spie.
18. Sii sottile! Sii sottile! E usa le tue spie per ogni genere di affare.

19. Se una parte segreta delle notizie è divulgata da una spia anzitempo, essa deve essere condannata a morte con l'uomo al qual il segreto è stato rivelato.
20. Che l'obiettivo sia quello di annientare un'armata, di saccheggiare una città, o di assassinare un individuo, è sempre necessario iniziare scoprendo i nomi degli attendenti, degli aiutanti di campo, dei piantoni e delle sentinelle del comandante (nemico). Le nostre spie devono essere incaricate di accertarlo.
21. Le spie del nemico che sono venute a spiarci devono essere scoperte, corrotte col denaro, condotte via e alloggiate in modo confortevole. Così diventeranno spie convertite e utilizzabili al nostro servizio.
22. E' attraverso le informazioni fornite dalle spie convertite che saremo in grado di acquisire ed impiegare spie locali ed interne.
23. E' grazie alle sue informazioni, di nuovo, che potremo far in modo che le spie condannate portino false notizie al nemico.
24. Infine, è per mezzo delle loro informazioni che le spie sopravvissute possono essere usate nel modo opportuno.
25. Il fine e l'obiettivo dello spionaggio in tutte e cinque le sue forme, è la conoscenza del nemico; e la sua conoscenza può derivare solo, in primo luogo, dalla spia convertita. Perciò è indispensabile che la spia convertita sia trattata con la massima generosità.
26. Anticamente, la fondazione della dinastia Yin fu opera di I ChiH che aveva servito sotto gli Hsia. Parimenti, la fondazione della dinastia Chou fu opera di Lu Ya che aveva servito sotto gli Yin.
27. Perciò solo il sovrano illuminato ed il comandante astuto useranno gli uomini più intelligenti dell'esercito a scopo di spionaggio e per loro mezzo conseguiranno grandi risultati. Le spie sono l'elemento più importante dell'esercito poiché da loro dipende l'abilità dell'esercito di muoversi.

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Sun Tzu (Sunzi)



L'arte della guerra

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Capitolo 1

Pianificazione, Valutazione

1. La guerra è di somma importanza per lo Stato: è sul campo di battaglia che si decide la vita o la morte delle nazioni, ed è lì che se ne traccia la via della sopravvivenza o della distruzione. Dunque è indispensabile studiarla a fondo.

2. Considerarne perciò gli aspetti fondamentali, e analizzarli mediante i sette criteri di valutazione. Così, potrai definire la tua strategia.

3. Il primo degli elementi fondamentali è il Tao; il secondo è il clima; il terzo è il terreno; il quarto è il comando; il quinto è la dottrina.

Tao: definito anche la "via diretta"; con questo termine Sunzi, tende ad indicare la forza morale e il prestigio del governo ed, in particolare, di un sovrano.

4. Col termine Tao, intendo tutto ciò che induce il popolo ad essere in armonia coi suoi capi, per la vita e per la morte, sfidando anche il pericolo estremo.

5. Col termine clima, intendo l'azione complessiva delle forze naturali: il freddo in inverno, la calura in estate e la necessità di condurre le operazioni in armonia con le stagioni.

6. Col termine terreno, intendo la distanza, e se il territorio da percorrere è agevole o arduo, se è ampio o ristretto, e le eventualità di sopravvivenza o di morte che offre.

7. Col termine comando, intendo le qualità di saggezza, rettitudine, di umanità, di coraggio e di severità del generale.

8. Col termine dottrina militare, intendo l'organizzazione e il controllo, la nomina di ufficiali adeguati al grado, ossia la gerarchia, e la gestione dei mezzi di sussistenza necessari all'esercito, ossia la logistica.

9. Non può esservi generale, se non conosce i cinque elementi fondamentali. Chi li padroneggia, vince; chi non se ne cura, è annientato.

10. Perciò, prima di attuare qualsiasi piano, prendi in esame i suddetti elementi, soppesandoli molto attentamente

11. Per valutare la situazione, sappi rispondere a queste domande: Quale sovrano possiede il maggiore Tao ? Quale comandante è più abile ? Per quale esercito gli elementi naturali e il terreno costituiscono un vantaggio ? Quale esercito è meglio preparato e disciplinato ? Quali sono le truppe più forti ?

12. Quale esercito ha gli ufficiali e i soldati meglio addestrati ?

13. In quale esercito si dispensano ricompense e punizioni con il metodo più illuminato ?

14. Sapendo ciò, potrai prevedere quale parte sarà vittoriosa e quale sconfitta.

15. Assicurati i servigi di un generale che sappia applicare integralmente le concezioni strategiche che indico, perché quegli ha la vittoria in pugno. Destituisci, invece, il generale che si rifiuta di farlo: sarà sicuramente sconfitto.

16. Dopo aver analizzato le situazione per rilevarne i vantaggi, il generale deve creare le circostanze che contribuiscano a realizzare i suoi obiettivi, schierando le truppe nel modo più opportuno.

17. Con l'espressione creare le circostanze, intendo che deve agire rapidamente secondo ciò che è vantaggioso e assumere il controllo dell'operazione militare nel suo insieme, organizzando le giuste mosse tattiche.

18. Fondamentale in tutte le guerre è lo stratagemma.

19. Quindi, se sei capace, fingi incapacità; se sei attivo, fingi inattività.

20. Se vuoi attaccare in un punto vicino, simula di dover partire per una lunga marcia; se vuoi attaccare un punto lontano, simula di essere arrivato presso il tuo obiettivo.

21. Offri al nemico un'esca per attirarlo; fingi disordine fra le truppe, e colpiscilo.

22. Quando vedi il nemico pronto, preparati contro di lui; ma evitalo, dove è forte.

23. Irrita il suo generale e disorientalo.

24. Simula inferiorità e incoraggiane l'arroganza.

25. Tienilo sotto pressione e logoralo.

26. Quando il nemico è unito, dividilo.

27. Il segreto per creare le divisioni interne sta nell'arte di suscitare i seguenti cinque contrasti: dissensi tra i cittadini nelle città e nei villaggi; dissensi con gli altri paesi; dissensi all'interno; dissensi che hanno per conseguenza la condanna a morte; e dissensi le cui conseguenze sono i premi e le ricompense. Queste cinque specie di dissensi non sono che rami di uno stesso tronco.

28. Chiamo dissenso nelle città e nei villaggi quello che ci dà il modo di staccare dal partito che ci è nemico gli abitanti sotto il suo dominio, e di farceli amici in modo da potercene servire in caso di bisogno.

29. Chiamo dissenso con gli altri paesi quello che ci consente di servirci a nostro profitto degli ufficiali che servono nell'esercito nemico.

30. Per dissensi all'interno intendo quelli che mettono a nostro profitto la

mancanza di accordo che può esserci tra gli alleati, tra i diversi corpi militari o tra gli ufficiali che servono nell'esercito nemico.

31. Il dissenso da condanna a morte è quello che per mezzo del quale tentiamo, attraverso dicerie tendenziose, di gettare discrediti e sospetti, fino a porre sotto processo dinanzi alla corte del sovrano nemico i generali che lo servono

32. Il dissenso da premio è quello che si ottiene con larghe ricompense elargite a tutti quelli che hanno cessato di servire il loro legittimo padrone e sono passati alla nostra parte sia per combattere con noi sia per renderci altri servizi non meno essenziali.

33. Attacca il nemico dove non è preparato, fai sortite con le truppe quando non se l'aspetta.

34. Queste sono le chiavi strategiche della vittoria. La loro preminenza è indiscutibile.

35. Non comunicare a nessuno il tuo schieramento e la strategia che intendi adottare.

36. Ora, se le valutazioni fatte dal Consiglio dei Saggi prima dell'inizio delle ostilità indica vittoria, ciò è perché i calcoli hanno dimostrato che la propria forza è superiore a quelle del nemico. Se invece indicano sconfitta. È perché la propria forza è inferiore a quella del nemico.

37. Solo valutando tutto esattamente si può vincere, con cattive valutazioni si perde. Quanto esigue sono le probabilità di vittoria di chi non fa alcun calcolo ! Coi principi che ho elencato, io valuto la situazioni: il risultato, allora si definisce da solo.

Capitolo 2

Preparazione alla Guerra

1. In genere per le operazioni belliche sono necessari un migliaio di carri da guerra veloci tirati da quattro cavalli, un migliaio di carri trasporto coperti e centomila soldati.

2. Quando gli approvvigionamenti vengono trasportati per un migliaio di li, le spese in patria e sul campo di battaglia, gli stipendi per il mantenimento di consiglieri e visitatori, il costo dei materiali come la colla e lacca, quello dei carri e delle armature, raggiungono i mille pezzi d'oro al giorno. Se ne disponi, puoi arruolare centomila soldati.

li: unità di misura, utilizzata nell'antica Cina, pari a circa 360 metri. Mille li, equivalgono a 360 chilometri.

3. Ciò che dà valore alla guerra, è la vittoria. Quando la guerra dura troppo a lungo, le armi si spuntano e il morale si deprime. Quando le truppe assediano troppo a lungo le città, le loro forze si esauriscono in fretta.

4. Quando l'esercito nemico s'impegna troppo a lungo, le risorse dello Stato non saranno più sufficienti.

5. Con le armi spuntate, l'ardore spento, la forza esaurita, il denaro volatilizzato, i vicini potranno avvantaggiarsi delle tue difficoltà e insorgere contro di te. Anche se hai saggi consiglieri, non potranno cambiare la situazione a tuo favore.

6. Ho visto troppe guerre-lampo condotte male, ma non ho mai saputo di un'operazione militare abile protratta nel a lungo.

7. Non vi è mai stata una guerra protratta a lungo nel tempo della quale un paese abbia tratto vantaggio.

8. Chi non ha conosciuto a fondo i mali di una guerra, non saprà neppure mai valutare correttamente i vantaggi che se ne traggono.

9. Il generale esperto non ha bisogno di una seconda leva di coscritti, né di un secondo invio di approvvigionamenti.

10. Il generale esperto si equipaggia in patria ma si approvvigiona a spese del nemico. Così l'esercito non manca mai di cibo

11. Il trasporto su lunghe distanze degli approvvigionamenti necessari alle operazioni militari, impoverisce gli Stati: trasporta lontano carri e salmerie, e ridurrai il popolo in miseria.

12. Dove si trova un esercito, i prezzi salgono. Dove i prezzi salgono, la ricchezza del popolo si esaurisce. Quando la ricchezza si è esaurita i contadini troveranno insopportabile la pressione fiscale. Sun Tzu 7

13. Col tesoro dissanguato, lo Stato aumenta le tasse. Beni e risorse svaniscono, e il paese è alla fame. I contadini perdono i sette decimi dei guadagni, e il governo i sei decimi degli introiti.

14. Le spese che il governo dovrà sostenere per riparare o sostituire i carri da guerra danneggiati, ripristinare i cavalli esausti, le armature, gli elmi, le frecce, le balestre, le lance, gli scudi e le corazze, gli animali da tiro e i carri da trasporto, equivalgono al sessanta per cento del totale.

15. Perciò, un generale esperto e avveduto, farà in modo che le sue truppe consumino cibo strappato al nemico, perché uno stajo di provviste preso al nemico, ne vale venti dei propri; un cesto di foraggio nemico, ne vale cento dei propri.

Commento di Z'ao Z'ao (155-200 d. C. – Generale): "Per trasportare, si consuma venti volte il trasportato."

16. Lanciati sul nemico con ardore.

17. Saccheggia le risorse del nemico e dividile fra le truppe come giusta ricompensa. Perciò, quando in un combattimento di carri vengono catturati carri nemici, ricompensa il primo che ne cattura dieci.

19. Sostituisci le bandiere e gli stendardi nemici coi tuoi, poni i carri catturati

fra i tuoi, e utilizzali a tuo vantaggio.

20. Tratta bene i prigionieri, e fornisci loro in necessario.

21. Questo vuol dire “vincere la battaglia e diventare più potenti”.

22. L'obbiettivo essenziale della guerra è la vittoria, non le operazioni prolungate.

23. Per questo, un generale che conosce l'arte della guerra diventa giudice della sorte del suo popolo e arbitro dei destini della nazione.

Capitolo 3

Attacco Strategico

1. In guerra è meglio conquistare uno Stato intatto. Devastarlo significa ottenere un risultato minore.

2. Catturare intatto un esercito nemico è meglio che sterminarlo. Meglio catturare una divisione intatta che distruggerla: meglio catturare un battaglione intatto che distruggerlo: meglio catturare una compagnia intatta che distruggerla. Questo è il principio fondamentale dell'Arte della Guerra.

3. Ottenere cento vittorie su cento battaglie non è il massimo dell'abilità: vincere il nemico senza bisogno di combattere, quello è il trionfo massimo.

4. Il generale esperto attacca la strategia del meno esperto. Questa è la prima cosa da fare.

5. La seconda cosa da fare, è spezzare le alleanze del nemico.

6. La terza cosa da fare, è attaccare il suo esercito.

7. La tattica più rischiosa è assediare le città. Assediate soltanto se non hai altra alternativa.

8. Per preparare i carri protetti dagli scudi, le armi e l'equipaggiamento, occorrono tre mesi; per erigere i bastioni di terra davanti alle mura, altri tre mesi.

9. Se il generale è incapace di controllare la propria impazienza e lancia le truppe all'assalto delle mura come uno sciame di formiche, ne farà massacrare un terzo senza prendere la città. Simili attacchi sono manifestazioni di stupidità assassina.

10. Chi è veramente esperto nell'arte della guerra sa vincere l'esercito nemico

senza dare battaglia, prendere le sue città senza assieparle, e rovesciarne lo Stato senza operazioni prolungate.

11. Il tuo scopo primario deve essere quello di riuscire a prendere Tutto-Sotto-Il-Cielo: così, non dovrai mantenere le truppe di occupazione e i tuoi profitti saranno assoluti. Questa è la regola per la strategia dell'assedio.

12. Le regole per impiegare le truppe sono queste: Se sei dieci contro uno, devi accerchiare il nemico.

13. Se sei cinque volte più forte, attaccalo.

14. Se la tua forza è il doppio della sua, dividiti.

15. Quando le forze sono eguali, se puoi impegna il combattimento.

16. Quando sei inferiore in tutto, se puoi ritirati.

17. Se sei inferiore in tutto al nemico, devi riuscire a sfuggirgli. Se ti ostini a cercare il combattimento sarai fatto prigioniero, perché, per una forza più potente, una forza esigua diventa preda desiderata.

18. Il generale è considerato il protettore dello Stato. Se la sua protezione si estende su ogni cosa, lo Stato sarà sicuramente forte; se difetta, sarà sicuramente debole.

19. Un sovrano può danneggiare il proprio esercito in tre modi.

20. Il primo modo è quando, senza conoscere la situazione, ordina alle truppe di avanzare o ritirarsi nelle circostanze sbagliate. Questo vuol dire "legare l'esercito".

21. Il secondo modo è quando, senza conoscere l'Arte della Guerra, assume il comando dell'esercito. Ciò provoca incertezza tra gli ufficiali.

22. Il terzo modo è quando, pur senza conoscere l'arte delle manovre, dirige le operazioni militari. Ciò determina incertezza fra le truppe.

23. Se l'esercito è disunito e confuso, i sovrani vicini avranno terreno facile per creare turbamenti. Questo È il senso detto: "Un esercito indisciplinato ne conduce alla vittoria un altro".

24. Ci sono cinque circostanza nelle quali la vittoria può essere prevista.

25. Chi è in grado di distinguere quando è il momento di dare battaglia, e quando non lo è, riuscirà vittorioso.

26. Chi è in grado di stabilire quando deve usare forze minori, e quando maggiori, riuscirà vittorioso.

27. Chi ha creato un esercito compatto, con ufficiali e soldati che combattono uniti per un unico fine, sarà vittorioso.

28. Chi è prudente e preparato, e resta in attesa delle mosse del nemico temerario e impreparato, sarà vittorioso.

29. Chi dispone di generali esperti non vincolati da funzionari di corte, sarà vittorioso.

30. I cinque punti che ho descritto individuano la strada della vittoria.

31. Perciò dico: "Conosci il nemico come conosci te stesso. Se fari così, anche in mezzo a cento battaglie non ti troverai mai in pericolo".

32. Se non conosce il nemico, ma conosci soltanto te stesso, le tue possibilità di vittoria saranno pari alle tue possibilità di sconfitta.

33. Se non conosci te stesso, né conosci il tuo nemico, sii certo che ogni battaglia sarà per te fonte di pericolo gravissimo.

Capitolo 4

Schieramento, Disposizione dell'Esercito

1. Un tempo i generali esperti, prima d'ogni cosa cercano di rendersi invincibili, poi aspettavano il momento in cui il nemico era vulnerabile

2. L'invincibilità, dipende soltanto da noi stesso; la vulnerabilità del nemico dipende soltanto da lui.

3. Ne consegue che in una guerra un abile generale può rendersi invincibile, pur se non può indurre un nemico a diventare vulnerabile.

4. Per questo si dice che chi conosce l'Arte della Guerra può prevedere la vittoria, ma non determinarla.

5. L'invincibilità dipende dalla difesa; la possibilità di vittoria, dall'attacco.

6. Ci si deve difendere quando le nostre forze sono inferiori; si deve attaccare quando le nostre forze sono molto superiori.

7. Gli esperti nell'arte della difesa si nascondono come se fossero sotto i nove strati della terra; gli esperti nell'arte dell'attacco si muovono come se fossero in cielo. In questo modo riescono a proteggere se stessi e gli e ottengono una completa vittoria.

“nove strati della terra”: riferimento a montagne, colline e fiumi.

8. Prevedere una vittoria evidente, come chiunque può prevederla, non è vera abilità.

9. Chi riporta la vittoria in battaglia è riconosciuto da tutti come un generale esperto, ma non è questa la vera abilità. Strappare la pelle d'autunno non richiede forza; distinguere fra il sole e la luna non è difficile per gli occhi;

sentire il rumore del tuono non è prova di orecchie fini.

“pelle d'autunno”: riferimento alla pelle del coniglio, che in autunno, ha un manto molto leggero.

10. I generali d'un tempo, vincevano rendendo facile vincere.

11. Perciò, le vittorie ottenute dai maestri nell'Arte della Guerra non si distinguono né per l'uso della forza, né per l'audacia.

12. I loro successi in guerra non dipendono dalla fortuna. Perché per vincere basta non commettere errori. “Non commettere errori”, vuol dire porsi in condizione di vincere con certezza: in questo modo, si sottomette un nemico già vinto.

13. Perciò, il generale esperto crea situazioni grazie alle quali non potrà essere battuto, e non si lascia sfuggire alcuna occasione di porre in condizioni di inferiorità il nemico.

14. in tal modo, un esercito vittorioso prima vince, poi dà battaglia; un esercito destinato alla sconfitta prima dà battaglia, poi spera di vincere.

15. Chi è esperto nell'Arte della Guerra coltiva il Tao, segue le sue regole ed elabora strategie vittoriose. Così domina sulla confusione.

16. Ricorda, gli elementi della strategia militare sono cinque: primo, misurazione dello spazio; secondo, valutazione della quantità; terzo, calcolo; quarto, confronto; e quinto, probabilità di vittoria.

17. Le misurazioni dello spazio si deducono dal territorio.

18. Le valutazioni della quantità si deducono dalle misurazioni, i calcoli della quantità, i confronti dai calcoli, e la probabilità di vittoria dai confronti.

19. In tal modo, un esercito vittorioso stabilisce un rapporto di cento contro uno, e un esercito sconfitto quello di uno contro cento. Schierando abilmente le truppe, un generale vittorioso è capace di far combattere il proprio popolo come l'acqua racchiusa in un serbatoio montano che, rilasciata di colpo, si

riversa verso il basso.

Capitolo 5

Forze

1. Gestire molti è come gestire pochi: basta curare l'organizzazione.

2. Controllare molti è come controllare pochi. È solo una questione di addestramento e di segnalazioni.

3. Attaccare il nemico senza essere sconfitti dipende dall'impiego corretto delle forze frontali e di quelle laterali.

“forze frontali”: unità impegnate in un normale attacco.

4. Lancia le truppe contro il nemico, per schiacciarlo come una pietra può schiacciare le uova: una forza possente scagliata contro il nulla.

“nulla”: punto più debole.

5. Si attacca con la forza frontale, ma si vince con quelle laterali.

6. Le possibilità di chi sa impiegare abilmente le forza laterali sono vaste e infinite come il cielo e la terra, inesauribili come le acque di grandi fiumi.

7. Esse finiscono e ricominciano di nuovo, come il movimento del sole e della luna. Muoiono e rinascono, come le stagioni

8. Le note musicale non sono che cinque, ma le loro melodie sono così numerose che nessuno può dire di averle udite tutte.

9. I colori fondamentali non sono che cinque, ma le loro combinazioni sono così tante che nessuno può immaginarle tutte.

10. Cinque soltanto sono i sapori, ma le loro mescolanze sono così varie che nessuno può dire di averle gustate tutte.

11. Le azioni d'attacco in battaglia sono soltanto due: l'attacco frontale ordinario e quello laterale di sorpresa, ma le loro combinazioni sono infinite e nessuno può dire di conoscerle tutte.

12. Queste due forze si riproducono reciprocamente, e le loro interazioni sono infinite, come gli anelli concatenati. Chi può stabilire dove comincia l'una e l'altra finisce ?

13. L'acqua torrenziale scorrendo svelle le rocce, grazie alla sua velocità.

14. Il falco in picchiata spezza in due il corpo della preda, perché colpisce con precisione.

15. Così la velocità di chi è abile nell'Arte della Guerra è fulminea, e il suo attacco è assolutamente preciso.

16. La sua forza è quella della balestra tesa al massimo, il suo tempismo come lo scatto del grilletto.

17. Tumulto e fragore; la battaglia sembra caotica, ma non c'è disordine; le truppe che manovrano ordinatamente, non possono essere vinte.

18. Ciò che sembra confusione, in realtà è ordine; ciò che sembra viltà è coraggio; la debolezza è forza.

Commento di Tu Mu (803-853 d. C. – Letterato, poeta, funzionario della Corte Imperiale): "Vuol dire che, se uno intende simulare disordine per ingannare il nemico, deve in realtà essere molto ben disciplinato; soltanto così può fingere confusione. Chi desidera apparire debole per rendere il nemico audace e imprudente, deve essere in realtà fortissimo; soltanto così può simulare debolezza. Se si vuol fingere vigliaccheria, per indurre il nemico ad avanzare con vana baldanza, si deve essere molto coraggiosi: soltanto così si può simulare timore."

19. Ordine e disordine dipendono dall'organizzazione; coraggio e viltà dalle circostanze; forza e debolezza dallo schieramento.

20. Il generale esperto induce il nemico a muoversi, e ad assumere un certo schieramento. Lo adesca con qualcosa che il nemico è sicuro di prendere e, attirandolo, con l'illusione di un piccolo vantaggio, lo aspetta in forze.

21. È per questo che il generale esbero prepara la vittoria studiando la situazione. Non si affida ai subordinati.

22. Egli sceglie i suoi uomini e definisce i loro compiti.

23. Chi sa valutare la situazione, adopera i propri uomini in battaglia come se fossero tronchi o pietre, da far rotolare. Per loro natura, tronchi e pietre, sono statici sul terreno piano, ma si muovono su un terreno inclinato. Se hanno forma squadrata rimangono immobili, se rotonda, rotolano.

24. Così, il potenziale delle truppe abilmente comandate in battaglia può essere paragonato a questi massi rotondi, che rotolano giù dalla sommità delle montagne. Questa è la forza.

Capitolo 6

Punti di Debolezza e Punti di Forza

1. Di solito, chi ha occupato per primo il campo di battaglia e attende il nemico, è riposato; chi invece arriva più tardi e si impegna all'ultimo momento nella battaglia, è affaticato.

2. Per questo il generale esperto non va, ma fa in modo che sia il nemico a venire: non si lascia condurre da lui.

3. Per indurre il nemico a muovere, gli si deve prospettare un vantaggio. Per scoraggiarlo, fargli temere un danno.

4. Quando il nemico è riposato, devi essere in grado di stancarlo; quando è ben nutrito, di farlo morire di fame; quando è rilassato, di indurlo a muoversi.

5. Appari in luoghi dove sarà obbligato ad affaticarsi per raggiungerti in fretta; dirigiti rapidamente dove non se lo aspetta.

6. Puoi marciare anche per mille li senza stancarti, se ti muovi dove il nemico non c'è.

7. Per essere certo di conquistare la zona dove hai impegnato battaglia, attacca un punto che il nemico non difende. Per essere certo di tenere ciò che difendi, attestati dove il nemico non può attaccare.

8. L'attacco migliore è quello che non fa capire dove difendersi. La difesa migliore è quella che non fa capire dove attaccare.

9. Muovi con rapidità senza lasciare traccia, quasi fossi evanescente, meravigliosamente misterioso, impercettibile: sarai padrone del destino del

nemico.

10. L'avanzata inarrestabile si getta nei varchi del nemico. La ritirata inafferrabile è data dalla massima velocità.

11. Se voglio ingaggiare battaglia contro un nemico saldo in difesa dietro alte mura e profondi fossati, attacco un obiettivo che di sicuro dovrà difendere: così, non potrà evitare di uscire per muovere al contrattacco.

12. Se invece voglio evitare di ingaggiare battaglia, inganno il nemico con fattori di diversione. Così non muoverà contro di me, neppure se gli indicassi la strada disegnata sul terreno.

13. Induci il nemico a schierarsi, ma nello stesso tempo tieni l'esercito unito; così le forze saranno concentrate e le sue divise.

14. Se concentro la mia forza, mentre il nemico la divide in dieci, posso usare tutta la mia forza per attaccare soltanto una parte della sua. In questo modo, gli sarò sempre superiore di dieci contro uno.

15. Avendo più uomini per sconfiggere chi è in inferiorità numerica, potrò ridurre il numero di soldati da mandare in battaglia.

16. Se il nemico non sa dove attaccherai, dovrà essere prepararsi ponendo piccoli presidi dappertutto. E poiché i presidi sono isolati, ti basteranno poche truppe.

17. Un fronte forte significa una retroguardia debole, una retroguardia debole significa che il fronte è più vulnerabile. Essere forti a sinistra significa essere attaccabili a destra, rafforzarsi a destra significa rimanere scarsi a sinistra. Se poi ci si divide dappertutto si sarà deboli dappertutto.

18. Chi ha poche truppe, è obbligato a grandi preparativi di difesa; chi ha un forte esercito, costringe il nemico a prepararsi contro di lui.

19. Se sai il luogo e il momento della battaglia, le tue truppe potranno

marciare anche per mille li, ma si incontreranno sul punto di raduno. Se non sai né il luogo né il giorno della battaglia, sappi che la tua ala sinistra non sarà in grado di aiutare l'ala destra, né la destra la sinistra; l'avanguardia non sarà in grado di sostenere le retrovie, né le retrovie di sostenere l'avanguardia, anche nel breve spazio di poche decine di li.

20. Sebbene io sappia che le truppe di Yueh sono molto numerose, dubito che questa superiorità sia di effettivo vantaggio rispetto al risultato. Il numero non dà vittoria certa.

21. Per questo affermo che la vittoria deve essere creata.

22. Se il nemico prevale numericamente, devo evitare di impegnarlo.

23. Perciò, cerca di anticipare i piani del nemico, e individua i suoi punti forti e deboli: potrai decidere quale strategia usare per avere successo, e quale no.

24. Disturbalo con azioni improvvise, spingilo a muoversi e studia il tipo di azione che adotta per fronteggiarti. Intanto, tieni a riposo il grosso delle truppe.

25. Individua le sue posizioni: così conoscerai il terreno della vita e della morte.

“il terreno della vita e della morte”: campo di battaglia.

26. Compi azioni limitate, e individua i punti in cui è più scarso, il suo pieno e il suo vuoto.

27. La tua formazione sia senza forma. In questo modo anche le spie più abili non avranno nulla da scoprire, né un esperto potrà elaborare una strategia efficace contro di te.

28. La forma che vince i molti, non appare ai molti. Dopo la vittoria, la mia forma sarà palese a tutti. Prima della vittoria, nessuno sa la forma che impiegherò.

29. Perciò, la forma che fa conseguire la vittoria non è ben definita, ma muta ogni volta.

30. Ricorda, un esercito può essere paragonato a un fiume, perché proprio come il fiume evita le alture e si precipita nella vallata, altrettanto devono fare le truppe: scansare il pieno e colpire il vuoto.

31. Come la conformazione del terreno determina il corso del fiume, così il nemico determina la vittoria.

32. Come il fiume non ha corso costante, così la forza non ha forma costante.

33. Perciò, chi è capace di conseguire la vittoria adattando la sua tattica in base alla situazione del nemico, quegli può dire di possedere un'abilità superiore.

34. Dei cinque elementi, nessuno è predominante; delle quattro stagioni, nessuna dura in eterno; delle giornate, alcune sono lunghe e altre corte; e la luna, prima cresce e poi cala.

Capitolo 7

Scontro, Manovre Militari

1. Quando un esercito scende in campo, di norma dapprima il generale riceve gli ordini dal sovrano, poi mobilita il popolo e raduna le truppe. Si adopera per amalgamare le truppe, poi stabilisce l'accampamento.

2. Nessuna arte è più difficile dello scontro sul campo.

3. La difficoltà principale sta nel rendere vicino ciò che è lontano, e convertire gli ostacoli in vantaggi⁴. Disorienta il nemico attirandolo con un'esca, e allungargli la strada. Così potrai partire dopo ma arrivare prima. Questa è la strategia che fa vicino il lontano.

5. Ricorda: lo scontro armato presenta vantaggi e svantaggi.

6. Chi, in vista di un vantaggio, fa muovere l'intero esercito, perderà di vista il vantaggio.

7. Chi affronta lo scontro con sole truppe leggere, perderà per mancanza di mezzi.

8. Se raduni le truppe e parti in velocità con poco equipaggiamento, senza fermarti né di giorno né di notte, e avanzi a marce forzate per una distanza di cento li, i tuoi tre comandanti saranno fatti prigionieri perché le truppe più forti arriveranno prima, mentre le più deboli giungeranno in ritardo. Un decimo solamente dell'esercito arriverà.

9. In una marcia forzata di cinquanta li, il comandante dell'avanguardia cascherà a terra morto o esausto. Con questo metodo, solo metà dell'esercito arriverà a destinazione. In una marcia forzata di trenta li, arriveranno solamente i due terzi.

10. Un esercito che manchi di equipaggiamento, di cibo e di denaro, sarà

perduto.

11. Chi non conosce la strategia del nemico, non potrà concentrarsi con gli alleati.

12. Chi non conosce le montagne, le foreste, le gole più propizie agli agguati, l'estensione delle paludi piene d'acqua e di quelle piene di melma, non può dirigere la marcia di un esercito.

13. Utilizza quindi guide esperte dei luoghi, per usufruire dei vantaggi offerti dal terreno.

14. Ricorda, la guerra si fonda sull'inganno. Il movimento si fonda sui vantaggi che ne vuoi conseguire. La divisione e riunione delle tue truppe si fonda sulla situazione che vuoi determinare.

15. Quando muovi, sii rapido come il vento, maestoso come la foresta, avido come il fuoco, incrollabile come la montagna.

Commento di Li C'uan (618 (?)-907 (?)) d. C. – Esperto di arti marziali e filosofo Taoista: "Quando soffia, il vento non lascia traccia, e muta direzione inaspettatamente. La maestosità della foresta è data dall'ordine. Il fuoco è avido perché dietro di sé non lascia un filo d'erba. Quando prendi posizione, sii fermo come la montagna."

16. Imperscrutabile come la nebbia, subitaneo come il tuono.

17. Ricorda che se ti dai al saccheggio, dividi le tue forze: ma se conquisti, dividi il bottino.

18. Valuta bene la situazione prima di muoverti.

19. Chi conosce l'arte di colpire al fronte e ai fianchi, avrà la vittoria. Questo è il fondamento dello scontro armato.

20. Il libro dell'Amministrazione Militare, dice: la voce non viene udita in battaglia: usa tamburi e gong. L'occhio non discerne: usa bandiere e stendardi.

21. Gong e tamburi, bandiere e stendardi si usano per focalizzare l'attenzione: se le truppe sono compatte, il valoroso non può farsi avanti da solo, il codardo non può tirarsi indietro da solo. Questa è l'arte di armonizzare i soldati.

22. Nei combattimenti notturni, utilizza torce e tamburi. Di giorno, utilizza stendardi e bandiere. In questo modo, sarai padrone della vista e dell'udito delle truppe.

23. Ricorda, un esercito può essere derubato del suo ardore, un generale spogliato del suo senno.

24. Al mattino presto, il morale è più alto. Durante il giorno s'abbassa, A sera i pensieri volano a casa.

25. Perciò, chi è esperto nell'Arte della Guerra, evita il nemico quando sa che il suo morale è alto, e l'attacca quando sa che il suo morale è basso, o quando i suoi soldati hanno nostalgia di casa. Questo significa avere il controllo del fattore morale.

26. Con ordine, affronta il disordine; con calma, l'irruenza. Questo significa avere il controllo del cuore.

27. Solamente attestato sul tuo terreno, attendi il nemico. Attendi in riposo il nemico esausto; ben nutrito, il nemico affamato. Questo significa avere il controllo della forza.

28. Non ingaggiare battaglia con un nemico che avanza coi vessilli bene allineati, non attaccare formazioni imponenti. Questo significa avere il controllo delle diverse circostanze.

29. Non affrontare un nemico attestato più in alto di te. Se ha una collina alle spalle, non contrapposti a lui.

30. Quando finge di fuggire, non inseguirlo.

31. Non attaccare le sue truppe scelte.

32. Evita di abboccare alle sue esche.

33. Non opporti al nemico che rientra a casa.

34. Al nemico accerchiato, lascia una via di fuga.

Commento di Tu Mu (803-853 d. C. – Letterato, poeta, funzionario della Corte Imperiale): "Mostragli che ha una possibilità di salvarsi, e fagli balenare l'idea che esiste un'alternativa alla morte. Dopo di che, colpiscilo."

35. Non incalzare un nemico agli stremi.

36. Queste sono le regole dello scontro armato.

Capitolo 8

Variabili, Variazioni ed Adattabilità

1. Solitamente, il generale riceve mandato dal sovrano di mobilitare il popolo e adunare l'esercito. Ci sono nove fattori che variano a seconda delle circostanze. Sono questi.

2. Il primo è: non attestarti su un terreno, se è difficile.

3. Il secondo è: su un terreno dove è facile stabilire collegamenti, stringi alleanze coi confinanti.

4. Il terzo è: su un terreno aperto, non attardarti.

5. Il quarto è: su un terreno chiuso, abbi molte risorse.

“terreno chiuso”: circondato da montagne.

6. Il quinto è: sul terreno della morte, combatti.

7. Il sesto è: ci sono strade che non si devono seguire. Il settimo è: ci sono eserciti che non si devono attaccare. L'ottavo è: ci sono città che non bisogna assediare e territori che non si devono disputare.

8. Il nono è: possono presentarsi circostanze in cui gli ordini del sovrano non devono essere obbediti.

9. Un generale che ha conoscenza approfondita dei vantaggi offerti dai nove fattori variabili, è esperto nell'Arte della Guerra.

10. Il generale che non ha chiari i vantaggi che può trarre dai nove fattori variabili, non sarà in grado di utilizzare il terreno a proprio vantaggio, anche

se lo conosce bene.

11. Nelle campagne militari, chi non capisce la tattica basata sui nove fattori variabili, non sarà neppure capace di utilizzare al meglio le sue truppe, anche se capisce bene le “cinque variazioni”.
 Semplificazione del Commento di Cia lin (618-907 d.C.) alla spiegazione sulle “cinque variazioni”:
 A) Una strada breve, se si pensa porti ad un’imboscata, non deve essere percorsa.
 B) Un esercito nemico che si trovi in una situazione talmente disperata da costringere i soldati da combattere fino alla morte, non deve essere attaccato.
 C) Una città, anche se isolata e suscettibile di assedio, se è ben fornita di provviste, difesa da truppe scelte, comandata da un’abile generale, con ministri intelligenti e fedeli, in grado di ideare piani che la rendano impenetrabile, non deve essere assediata.
 D) Un territorio che si può conquistare, ma che è difficile da difendere o che si ritiene non si possa trarre grande vantaggio da esso, non vale la pena di una guerra.
 E) Anche se si deve sempre obbedire al Sovrano, quando si ritiene che suoi ordini possano portare a grandi ingerenze nella condotta di una guerra, non si devono eseguire i suoi ordini.

12. Per queste ragioni il generale esperto deve considerare nelle sue decisioni le circostanze favorevoli insieme con quelle sfavorevoli.

13. Analizzare i vantaggi serve a elaborare i piani. Analizzare gli svantaggi serve a evitare i danni.

14. Il timore di un danno frena. L’azione logora. La prospettiva di un vantaggio incita.

15. Per confondere i nemici, poni in atto azioni di disturbo.

16. Il generale esperto logora il nemico tenendolo costantemente sotto pressione. Lo fa correre dappertutto adescandolo con vantaggi illusori.

17. Non illuderti che il nemico possa non venire, ma tieniti sempre pronto ad affrontarlo. Non illuderti che il nemico non ti attacchi, ma fai piuttosto in modo di renderti inattaccabile. È una regola fondamentale dell’Arte della Guerra.

18. Cinque qualità pericolose possono riscontrarsi nel carattere di un

generale. Sono queste:

19. Se è troppo temerario, può venire ucciso.

20. Se tiene troppo alla vita, sarà fatto sicuramente prigioniero.

21. Se è iroso, cede alle provocazioni

22. Se tiene troppo al proprio decoro, è sensibile alle calunnie.

23. Se è di natura compassionevole, puoi farlo vivere nel tormento.

24. Questi cinque tratti caratteriali per un generale sono difetti. Per le operazioni militare sono catastrofi.

25. La rovina dell'esercito e la morte del generale stesso sono il risultato di tali difetti. Pensaci bene.

Capitolo 9

Spostamenti, Movimento delle Truppe

1. Quando prendi posizione e studi il nemico, chiudi i passi fra le montagne e occupa le valli.

2. Accampati in un terreno sopraelevato, sul versante del sole, dal lato dove più fitte nascono le piante.

3. Impegna il combattimento in discesa; non attaccare mai in salita.

4. Questo si deve fare nello scontro sulle montagne.

5. Se fra te e il nemico c'è un fiume, non rimanergli vicino. Lo scontro non deve avvenire in acqua.

6. Sarà più vantaggioso per te se lascerai attraversare metà delle sue forze e poi attaccherai.

7. Non affrontare il nemico vicino al fiume. Prendi posizione su un terreno elevato, dalla parte del sole. Non prendere mai posizione a valle delle correnti.

8. Questo si deve fare nello scontro su terreni presso un fiume.

9. Attraversa rapidamente i terreni allagati. Non attardarti. Se incontri il nemico in mezzo a un terreno allagato, attestati su un suolo solido, con vegetazione. Abbi gli alberi sempre alle spalle.

10. Questo si deve fare nello scontro su terreni allagati.

11. Sull'altopiano, occupa una posizione in cui tu possa manovrare facilmente. Abbi le alture alla tua destra e il campo di battaglia di fronte: davanti a te c'è la morte, dietro la vita.

“Abbi le alture alla tua destra e il campo di battaglia di fronte”: a quell'epoca, il lato destro di un esercito era il più vulnerabile alle frecce, dato che lo scudo si portava con la sinistra.

12. Questo si deve fare nello scontro sull'altopiano.

13. In genere, tali regole portano vantaggio se seguite nelle quattro situazioni citate. Utilizzandole, l'imperatore Giallo vinse quattro sovrani.

Commento di Ciang Yu (960 – 1079 (?) d.C. - Letterato): "L'imperatore Giallo fu il primo a scrivere di arte militare: per questo Sunzi lo ricorda."

14. Gli eserciti preferiscono i terreni sopraelevati a quelli in basso; amano la luce del sole, e non apprezzano l'ombra. Tale regola è sempre valida.

15. Nell'Occupare una posizione salda, il generale esperto ha cura della salute delle sue truppe. Un esercito senza malattie è invincibile. Così si dice.

16. Nelle vicinanze di terrapieni o colline o dighe o argini, devi sempre attestarti sul lato soleggiato, avendoli a destra e un po' indietro.

17. Queste regole per sfruttare la natura del terreno pongono il tuo esercito in vantaggio.

18. Quando la pioggia cade a monte del fiume, e le acque scendono spumeggiando, chi desidera passare a guado deve aspettare che le acque si abbassino.

19. Dove ci sono ostacoli naturali come torrenti impetuosi, avvallamenti, trappole, strapiombi, strettoie e gole, escine subito. Non attardarti.

20. Tieniti lontano da tutti questi luoghi, ma attiraci il nemico. Abbili di fronte, e il nemico li abbia alle spalle.

21. Quando ai fianchi dell'esercito vi sono strettoie pericolose, o stagni

coperti di erbe acquatiche dai quali spuntano canne e giunchi, o foreste dal sottobosco spesso e intricato, devi esplorare il terreno con precauzione, perché è in luoghi del genere che si tendono imboscate e si annidano spie.

22. Se il nemico è vicino e non muove, e tu sei in posizione sottostante, significa che dispone di una posizione favorevole. Se è lontano e ti incita al combattimento, vuole attirarti in una trappola. Se si trova su un terreno più facile e si fa vedere, significa che occupa una posizione che offre un palese vantaggio.

23. I rami degli alberi si muovono: significa che il nemico sta avanzando.

24. Se nel sottobosco trovi numerose postazioni, ricorda che sono lì per ingannarti.

25. Uccelli che volano via in fretta segnalano che il nemico ti sta tendendo un'imboscata. Animali selvatici che fuggono spaventati segnalano che il nemico sta cercando di assalirti di sorpresa.

26. Colone di polvere, che si alzano verso il cielo, indicano l'avvicinarsi dei carri nemico. Quando invece la polvere si allarga in una nube orizzontale, indica che il nemico sta cercando di assalirti di sorpresa.

27. Polvere che si alza in punti diversi: vuol dire che il nemico sta raccogliendo legna per fare fuoco. Tante piccole nuvole di polvere sparse: vuol dire che il nemico si sta accampando.

28. Il nemico che invia ambasciatori a trattare con umiltà, mentre continua i preparativi di guerra, sta per attaccare.

29. Se gli ambasciatori sono falsi e arroganti, e il nemico fa le mostre di avanzare, vuol dire che prepara la ritirata.

30. Se gli ambasciatori vengono a fare discorsi concilianti, il nemico desidera una tregua.

31. Se gli ambasciatori, senza accordo preventivo, offrono la pace, il nemico

sta tramando un complotto.

32. I carri leggeri escono per primi e prendono posizione sui fianchi: vuol dire che il nemico si sta preparando ad attaccare.

33. Le truppe del nemico marciano schierate e i carri avanzano come in parata: sta aspettando rinforzi.

34. Metà delle forze del nemico avanza e metà indietreggia: sta cercando di attirarti in un tranello.

35. I suoi uomini, in piedi, si appoggiano alle armi: è segno che sono affamati.

36. I portatori d'acqua devono per primi: è segno che le sue truppe soffrono la sete.

37. Quando il nemico vede una posizione vantaggiosa, ma non avanza per farla sua, vuol dire che è stremato.

38. Quando si vedono uccelli raggrupparsi sul luogo dove è accampato il nemico, vuol dire che l'accampamento è vuoto.

39. Quando il nemico è rumoroso anche di notte, vuol dire che il nemico è spaventato.

40. Quando le sue truppe non sono schierate in ordine, vuol dire che il generale non ha autorevolezza.

41. Quando le sue bandiere e i suoi stendardi si agitano di continuo, vuol dire che il nemico è in scompiglio.

42. Se gli ufficiali sono irritabili, significa che sono sfiniti.

43. Il nemico abbatte i cavalli e ne dà la carne ai soldati come rancio: ha

esaurito i vettovagliamenti. Le sue truppe non appendono più le pentole sul fuoco né ritornano agli accuartieramenti: si prepara un'azione disperata.

44. I soldati mormorano, trascurano le consegne, parlottano fra loro: la fiducia nel generale è venuta a mancare.

45. Ricompense troppo frequenti: il generale ha esaurito tutte le sue risorse. Punizioni troppo frequenti: il generale è in estreme difficoltà.\n\nPer quello che riguarda le punizioni corporali, all'epoca, si ricorreva, a seconda dell'entità dell'infrazione, a quelle che erano definite le "cinque mutilazioni punitive".\n\nCinque diversi gradi di punizione:\n\n1) Sfregiatura del viso mediante marchi infuocato che identificava la colpa commessa; \n\n2) Taglio del naso; \n\n3) Taglio dei piedi (o solo delle dita); \n\n4) Castrazione per gli uomini, e reclusione a vita per le donne; \n\n5) Morte\n\nLa pena della morte poteva essere eseguita tramite\n\na) Decapitazione; \n\nb) Squartamento con i carri; \n\nc) Bollitura; \n\nd) Messa in salamoia; \n\ne) Ecc... .

46. Gli ufficiali che maltrattano gli uomini, ma poi ne hanno paura, sono incapaci di mantenere la disciplina.

47. Se l'esercito nemico ti fronteggia bellicoso, ma non ingaggia battaglia, né se ne va, sarà bene che tu stia in guardia e analizzi a fondo la situazione.

48. In guerra, disporre unicamente di un esercito numeroso non rappresenta di per sé un vantaggio. Ricordati di non agire mai facendo affidamento soltanto sulla semplice forza del numero.

49. Per sottomettere un nemico, devi valutare te stesso, valutare lui, e ottenere il sostegno del popolo. Questo è tutto.

50. Chi, senza sostegno e senza strategia, attacca un nemico sottovalutandone la forza, sarà sicuramente fatto prigioniero.

51. Non devi punire le truppe prima di averne conquistato la lealtà: non ti ubbidiranno più. E le truppe indisciplinate sono difficili da utilizzare.

52. Se le truppe sono leali, ma non vengono punite quando è giusto,

ugualmente non potrai utilizzarle.

53. Ammaestra le truppe con competenza e giustizia, e compattale con le virtù marziali: ti avvicinerai alla vittoria.

54. La disciplina si ottiene con l'addestramento. Truppe bene addestrate ti saranno obbedienti; in caso contrario, non eseguiranno i tuoi ordini.

55. Quando i comandanti ispirano fiducia e vengono osservati, i rapporti tra generale ed esercito possono dirsi soddisfacenti.

56. I comandanti che rispondono al bene del popolo sono eseguiti; quelli che non rispondono al bene del popolo sono ignorati. Quando c'è armonia fra governanti e sudditi i comandi sono accolti con soddisfazione.

Capitolo 10

Terreno

1. In conformità alla loro natura, i diversi terreni possono essere: accessibili, a trappola, non risolutivi, limitati, accidentati, aperti.

2. Un terreno che può essere attraversato in ogni parte con pari facilità, è accessibile. In questo terreno, attestati per primo su posizioni elevate e soleggiate, comode anche per il trasporto delle salmerie: sarai avvantaggiato.

3. Un terreno in cui si entra con facilità, ma si esce con difficoltà, è a trappola. Per sua natura agevola l'attacco a un nemico impreparato: ma se il nemico è pronto e tu non lo vinci, ti sarà difficile tornare indietro. E questo è lo svantaggio.

4. Un terreno sul quale avanzai con difficoltà sia tu che il nemico, è non risolutivo. Su tale terreno, anche se il nemico ti offre un vantaggio, non avanzare. Invece, indietreggia e induci metà delle forze nemiche a venire avanti. Poi vai all'attacco, e vincerai.

5. Un terreno circondato da ostacoli naturali, come montagne, è limitato. Quando occupi per primo un terreno limitato, bloccane i passi e poi attendi il nemico, Se invece il nemico l'ha occupato per primo e ne ha bloccato le strade, non seguirlo. Solo se il nemico non ha già bloccato tutte le strade, puoi seguirlo.

6. Un terreno pieno di alture e di difficile transitabilità è accidentato. Se lo occupi per primo, attestati su un'altura soleggiata, e aspetta il nemico. Se invece è il nemico che si è attestato su un simile terreno, non attaccare. Ritirati e invoglialo a seguirti.

7. Un terreno sul quale la forza dell'attacco è pari per noi e per il nemico è aperto. Su questo terreno sfidare al combattimento è rischioso e combattere non è vantaggioso.

8. Quelle elencate sono le regole riguardanti i sei diversi tipi di terreno. È responsabilità massima del generale conoscere a fondo il terreno, che deve studiare con la maggior cura possibile.

9. Sei comportamenti delle truppe non possono essere attribuiti a cause naturali: ammucciarsi, esitare, disunirsi, disperdersi, essere nel caos, essere sconfitte. Questi comportamenti dipendono da errori del generale.

10. Se lo slancio è pari, ma gli uomini sono impiegati in ragione di dieci contro uno, le truppe sono ammassate.

11. Se le truppe sono forti ma gli ufficiali sono deboli, l'esercito è esitante.

12. Quando gli ufficiali sono forti ma le truppe sono deboli, l'esercito è disunisce.

13. Quando gli ufficiali superiori si dimostrano troppo irruenti incapaci di controllarsi, e affrontano il nemico gettandosi nella mischia senza valutare l'opportunità di impegnare battaglia, e i generali non sanno decidere, l'esercito si disperde.

14. Quando il generale è debole di carattere e non è autoritario, quando le sue direttive non sono chiare; quando ufficiali e truppa non sono coordinati; quando trascurano l'ordine degli schieramenti, l'esercito è nel caos.

15. Quando il generale è incapace di valutare la consistenza del nemico, e impegna una piccola forza per affrontarne una grande, o truppe deboli per contrastare truppe più forti, o affida incarichi a subalterni, il risultato è la sconfitta.

16. Allorché prevale una delle sei considerazioni su esposte, l'esercito è avviato alla sconfitta. È massima responsabilità del generale valutarle con cura.

17. La natura del terreno può essere di grande aiuto in battaglia. Ma dipende soltanto dal comandante saper giudicare il nemico, calcolare le distanze e valutare i rischi. Conoscendo questi fattori, vincerai; trascurandoli, sarai

sconfitto.

18. Se in base alle regole dell'Arte della Guerra scorgi vittoria certa, attacca anche contro il parere del sovrano. Se in base alle regole dell'Arte della Guerra non scorgi vittoria certa, non attaccare anche se il sovrano è di parere favorevole.

19. Il generale che va per la sua strada senza cercare successi personali, che si ritira senza temere il disonore, che agisce sempre per il bene del popolo e del sovrano, rappresenta il tesoro più prezioso dello stato.

20. Un tale generale ha cura dei suoi uomini come di bimbi, ed essi lo seguono anche in fondo all'abisso. Li tratta con lo stesso affetto dei propri figli, ed essi sono pronti a dare spontaneamente la vita per lui.

21. Se un generale si mostra indulgente con le sue truppe, ma è al tempo stesso incapace di impiegarle, se le ama, ma è incapace di far rispettare i suoi ordini; se le truppe sono indisciplinate, e lui non sa mantenerne il controllo: allora si comporta come un padre che trasforma i figli in ragazzi viziati, e le sue truppe sono inutilizzabili

22. Se vedo che le mie truppe hanno la possibilità di colpire il nemico, ma ignora dove il nemico sia vulnerabile, le mie possibilità di vittoria sono dimezzate.

23. Se vedo dove il nemico è vulnerabile all'attacco, ma ignoro se le mie truppe abbiano la possibilità di batterlo, le mie probabilità di vittoria sono dimezzate.

24. Se vedo dove il nemico può essere attaccato e so che le mie truppe hanno la possibilità di farlo, ma se non so giudicare se la conformazione del terreno sia svantaggiosa, le mie probabilità di vittoria sono dimezzate.

25. Per questo un generale esperto, quando si muove, non commette errori. Quando attacca, ha risorse illimitate.

26. Per questo si dice: Conosci il tuo nemico e conosci te stesso: la tua

vittoria non sarà compromessa. Conosci il terreno e il cielo: la tua vittoria sarà totale.

Capitolo 11

Territorio, i Nove Campi di Battaglia

1. Secondo le regole dell'Arte della Guerra, ci sono nove tipi di territorio: dispersivo, di frontiera, conteso, comunicante, focale, grave, difficile, circondato e mortale.

2. Quando le forze dello stesso Stato si combattono a vicenda, questo è territorio dispersivo.

3. Quando entri in un paese nemico, ma non in profondità, ti trovi su territorio di frontiera.

4. Un territorio che, se conquistato, porterebbe vantaggio tanto per te che per il nemico, è territorio conteso.

5. Un territorio al quale possono accedere con la stessa facilità sia te che il nemico è territorio comunicante.

6. Quando uno Stato è racchiuso fra tre altri Stati che se lo contendono, il suo territorio è focale. Chi ne assume per primo il controllo riuscirà anche a conquistare Tutto sotto il Cielo.

7. Un esercito penetrato a fondo su suolo nemico, lasciandosi alle spalle città e villaggi, si trova su territorio grave.

8. Chi deve superare montagne, foreste e regioni sconosciute, marciare lungo gole, paludi, acquitrini, o luoghi dove è difficile procedere si trova su territorio difficile.

9. Dove l'accesso è difficile, l'uscita tortuosa, e anche una piccola forza nemica può batterne una molto più grande, è territorio circondato.

10. Dove puoi sopravvivere soltanto a condizione di combattere col coraggio della disperazione, è territorio mortale.

11. Dunque: su territorio dispersivo, non combattere. Su terreno di frontiera, non fermarti.

12. Se il nemico occupa un territorio conteso, non attaccare. Su territorio comunicante, non disperderti.

13. Su territorio focale, stringi alleanze con gli stati vicini. Su territorio grave, saccheggia.

14. Su territorio difficile, procedi più in fretta che puoi. Su territorio circondato, inventa stratagemmi. Su territorio mortale, combatti.

15. Se mi trovo su territorio dispersivo, verificherò la determinazione del mio esercito.

16. Se mi trovo su territorio di confine, rinsalderò i collegamenti fra tutte le mie forze.

17. Se mi trovo su territorio conteso, baderò che la retroguardia mi segua sempre.

18. Se mi trovo su territorio comunicante, porrò particolare attenzione a organizzare le mie difese.

19. Se mi trovo su territorio focale, stringerò alleanze.

20. Se mi trovo su territorio grave, mi preoccuperò che l'afflusso delle provvigioni sia ininterrotto.

21. Se mi trovo su territorio difficile, percorrerò le strade con la massima celerità.

22. Se mi trovo su territorio circondato, bloccherò tutte le entrate e uscite possibili.

23. Se mi trovo su territorio mortale, chiarisco a tutti che non c'è alcuna via di scampo: perché è nella natura dei soldati saper resistere quando sono circondati, combattere fino alla morte quando non c'è alternativa, e obbedire ciecamente quando non c'è speranza.

24. Il generale esperto deve analizzare con molta cura le variazioni tattiche da applicare nei nove tipi di territorio, i vantaggi che possono derivare dagli spiegamenti a schiere chiuse o distanziate, e le considerazioni legate alla natura del terreno.

25. Anticamente, coloro che avevano fama di esperti della guerra rendevano impossibile al nemico riunire l'avanguardia e la retroguardia; ai suoi schieramenti maggiori e minori di coordinarsi; alle truppe forti di soccorrere quelle deboli e alle superiori e subordinate di sostenersi a vicenda.

26. Quando le forze nemiche si disperdevano, facevano in modo di gettarle in uno stato di confusione.

27. Concentravano le truppe e marciavano quando vedevano che era vantaggioso farlo; quando non era vantaggioso, sostavano.

28. Se mi chiedesse: Come devo comportarmi contro un esercito nemico ben ordinato che è sul punto di attaccare? Risponderei: Impossessati di qualche cosa che sia caro al tuo nemico, ed egli gli si piegherà ai tuoi desideri.

29. Essenza della guerra è la velocità. Permettere di avvantaggiarsi sul nemico impreparato, giungendo da strada impreviste e colpendolo dove non ha eretto difese.

30. Le considerazioni fondamentali che si applicano a una forza d'invasione sono le seguenti. Quanto più profondamente penetri in territorio nemico, con tanta maggior forza devi agire: fino al punto che chi difende quel territorio non può più battersi.

31. Saccheggia le campagne fertili per rifornire il tuo esercito di abbondanti provvigioni, e cura che le tue truppe siano sempre ben nutrite.

32. Non affaticarti senza motivo, serba la tua salute, risparmia le energie, raduna le forze. Definisci i tuoi piani e dirigi i movimenti dell'esercito rendendo imperscrutabile la tua strategia.

33. Porta i tuoi uomini su posizioni elevate senza via d'uscita, e vedranno la morte: pronti a morire, cosa non riusciranno a fare? È nelle situazioni disperate che ufficiali e soldati dimenticano la paura e danno il meglio di sé. Senza vie di fuga, difendono il terreno coi denti. Impegnati a fondo, si battono a fondo. Senza alternative, lottano fino all'estremo.

34. In circostanze simili le truppe restano vigili senza bisogno di essere sollecitate. Reggono la posizione senza necessità di schierarle. Rimangono compatte senza che si debba esortarle. Mantengono la disciplina senza minacce.

35. I miei ufficiali non hanno ricchezze in soprannumero, perché disdegnano i beni terreni. Non si aspettano di vivere lunga vita, ma non perché non amino la vita.

36. Il giorno in cui l'esercito riceve l'ordine di mettersi in marcia, le lacrime di chi sta seduto scendono a bagnare il suo colletto; le lacrime di chi sta disteso corrono lungo le guance.

37. Ma se poni le tue truppe in una situazione senza uscita, daranno sicuramente prova di coraggio immortale, come quello di Ciuan Ciu e Z'ao Kuei.

38. Ricorda, le truppe più valorose devono essere impiegate come fa il serpente detto Reazione Simultanea, che sta sul Monte Ci'ang: quando lo colpisci alla testa, ti attacca con la coda; quando lo colpisci alla coda, ti attacca con la testa; quando lo colpisci a metà corpo, testa e coda ti attaccano insieme.

39. Se mi chiedessi: Ma le truppe sarebbero in grado di agire rapide come la vipera? Io risponderei: Sì, lo sarebbero. Perché anche le genti di Wu e Yueh,

che si detestano a vicenda, se si trovassero insieme su una barca in preda al vento, collaborerebbero per la salvezza comune, come la mano destra fa con la sinistra.

40. Imbrigliare i cavalli e affossare le ruote dei carri, non aiuta molto.

Commento di Tu Mu (803-853 d. C. – Letterato, poeta, funzionario della Corte Imperiale): "I cavalli vengono imbrigliati per mantenere ferma la prima linea, si interrano le ruote dei carri per immobilizzarli [...]."

41. Compatta gli uomini, armonizzane lo spirito: è il Tao dell'organizzazione. Vinci impiegando le forze dirette e quelle laterali. Sfrutta la conoscenza del terreno.

42. Il generale esperto fa del suo esercito un tutto armonico. In questo modo, comandare molti uomini è come comandarne uno, che deve fare ciò che vuoi tu.

43. Mantenersi sereno e impassibile, imparziale e sicuro di sé, è un dovere per il generale.

44. Lascia ufficiali e truppa all'oscuro dei piani che hai in mente.

45. Proibisci la divinazione e le pratiche superstiziose, e libera l'esercito dalle incertezze. Fino al momento della morte, non penserà più a lasciarti.

46. Adegua i tuoi metodi e modifica i tuoi piani così in segreto che nessuno riesca a sapere che cosa stai facendo.

47. Cambia la disposizione degli accampamenti e utilizza strade fuori mano, per rendere impossibile al nemico di prevedere le tue mosse.

48. Presa la sua decisione, il generale fa come chi, dopo essere salito, butta via la scala.

49. Fa penetrare il suo esercito in profondità entro il territorio ostile e quando lì, fa scattare il grilletto della balestra

50. Fa bruciare le barche dell'esercito, fa distruggere le attrezzature per il rancio, spinge gli uomini come un gregge di pecore, ora in una direzione ora in un'altra: e nessuno immagina dove andrà.

51. Il generale organizza le schiere, e le guida fra mille pericoli: questo è il suo compito. Esamina le opportunità offerte dai diversi terreni, i vantaggi di avanzata e ritirata, i sentimenti degli uomini e il loro stato di salute.

52. Se si ignorano le intenzioni degli Stati vicini, non si possono organizzare alleanze. Se non si conosce la natura delle montagne, delle foreste, delle gole più pericolose, degli acquitrini e delle paludi, non si può guidare l'avanzata di un esercito. Se non ci si serve di guide che conoscono i luoghi, non si può approfittare dei vantaggi offerti dal territorio. Un generale all'oscuro anche di una sola di queste tre cose, non può comandare l'esercito.

53. Quando un generale esperto attacca uno Stato potente, deve impedire agli abitanti di concentrare le forze. Terrorizza il nemico, e gli impedisce di unirsi agli alleati.

54. Perciò, se non stringi alleanze e non rafforzi il tuo dominio, ma ti accontenti di allargare la tua influenza personale minacciando i nemici, il tuo Stato e la tua città diventeranno vulnerabili.

55. Corrompi tutto quel che c'è di meglio nel nemico con offerte, con doni, con promesse. Distruggi la fiducia nei suoi ufficiali inducendo i migliori di essi ad azioni vergognose e vili, e non mancare di divulgarle.

56. Stringi relazioni segrete con quel che c'è di meno raccomandabili tra i nemici e moltiplica il numero di questi agenti.

57. Crea discordanze nello Stato avversario, semina la discordia fra i capi eccitandone la gelosia e la diffidenza, provoca l'indisciplina, suscita motivi di scontento creando difficoltà all'arrivo dei viveri e delle provvigioni. \n\nCon il termine "discordanze" Sunzi indica l'utilizzo di quella che, ai giorni nostri, potremmo definire "guerra psicologica". \nSempre secondo Sunzi, esistono le "sei discordanze", che si possono applicare per minare la stabilità sociale, e sono: \n1) I plebei che contestano i nobili; \n2) I giovani che si pongono al disopra degli anziani; \n3) I parenti lontani che si intromettono fra i parenti

vicini; \n4) I nuovi amici che si intromettono fra i vecchi amici; \n5) I piccoli che soverchiano i grandi; \n6) I disonesti che rovinano i probi.\n\nPer quanto riguarda il termine “Amici”, si fa riferimento a nuove alleanze tra Stati, che compromettono le vecchie alleanze.\n

58. Rendi tenero e sensibile il cuore delle truppe con la musica, manda ai nemici giovani donne che li corrompano.

59. Fai in modo che i soldati non siano mai dove dovrebbero essere: assenti quando dovrebbero trovarsi presenti, a riposo quando il loro posto sarebbe in prima linea.

60. Disturba il nemico con falsi allarmi e false informazioni; guadagna alla tua causa gli amministratori e i governanti delle province nemiche. Ecco quel che bisogna fare con destrezza e astuzia per creare difficoltà.

61. Concedi ricompense senza preoccuparti delle usanze comuni. Emanare le tue disposizioni senza tener conto dei precedenti.

62. Manovra l'intero esercito come se fosse un uomo solo. Guidalo senza discutere i tuoi obiettivi. Stimolalo con la prospettiva di guadagni, ma tienigli nascosti i pericoli.

63. Poni i tuoi uomini di fronte al pericolo, vedrai che sopravvivranno. Portali su territorio mortale, e vivranno. È nel pericolo estremo che si può volgere la sconfitta in vittoria.

64. Ricorda: la cosa più complicata nelle operazioni militari sta nel conformare la propria strategia alle intenzioni del nemico.

65. Concentrati sul nemico, e anche da una distanza di mille li potrai ucciderne il generale. Questo significa essere abili nell'Arte della Guerra.

66. Dichiarata guerra, chiudi i valichi, rompi le tavolette, respingi gli inviati del nemico. Le decisioni belliche vanno prese soltanto dal quartier generale.

“rompi le tavolette”: era uso all'epoca, che le amministrazioni locali dessero ai viaggiatori di passaggio delle tavolette di legno o terracotta, che i guardiani dei passaggi e delle vie d'accesso controllavano.

Erano, a tutti gli effetti, dei lasciapassare. Per "Romperere" si intende che più nessun viaggiatore sarebbe potuto entrare o uscire, legalmente, dal paese.

67. Se il nemico ti offre un'occasione di vantaggio, sfruttala subito. Agisci prima di lui, occupando per primo un suo obiettivo.

68. L'Arte della Guerra consiste nell'essere sempre al corrente della situazione del nemico, in modo da poter decidere a ragion veduta sul combattimento.

69. Perciò, all'inizio sii timido come una fanciulla, e ti si apriranno le porte. Poi agisci rapido come la lepre, e nessuno ti terrà dietro.

Capitolo 12

Attacco con il Fuoco

1. Sono cinque i sistemi di attacco con proiettili incendiari: lanciarli contro le persone, i magazzini, gli equipaggiamenti, gli accampamenti e gli arsenali.

2. Per impiegare il fuoco, bisogna disporre di mezzi opportuni e aspettare il clima giusto: arido e ventoso.

3. Gli equipaggiamenti necessari per attuare un attacco col fuoco devono essere sempre pronti e disponibili.

4. Quattro sono i climi adatti e giorni appropriati per poter appiccare il fuoco.

5. "Climi" significa quando è caldo torrido; "giorni" significa quando la luna è in Sagittario o nella costellazione di Alfaraz, I, o in Cien, poiché questi sono i giorni in cui si alza il vento.

6. Ricorda: negli attacchi con il fuoco bisogna essere pronti a rispondere al mutamento delle situazioni.

7. Quando il fuoco divampa nel campo nemico, coordina immediatamente la tua azione dall'esterno. Però, se le truppe nemiche rimangono in ordine, non attaccare ma aspetta il momento opportuno.

8. Quando il fuoco raggiunge l'altezza massima, attacca se puoi. Altrimenti, soprassiedi.

Commento di Tu Mu (803-853 d. C. – Letterato, poeta, funzionario della Corte Imperiale): "In genere si attacca col fuoco non per affidare alle fiamme il compito di distruggere, ma per gettare scompiglio nel nemico prima di andare all'assalto. Perciò, quando le fiamme sono alte attacca. Ma se il fuoco è stato domato e il nemico si è ricomposto, il vantaggio nell'attacco è perso [...]."

9. Se attizzi l'incendio fuori del campo nemico, non aspettare che le fiamme ne abbiano raggiunto l'accampamento. Incendio a tempo opportuno.

10. Se il fuoco divampa con forza sopravvento, non attaccare sottovento.

11. Se il vento soffia durante il giorno, nella notte si placherà.

12. Ricorda: l'esercito deve conoscere le situazioni che si determinano in seguito ai cinque diversi sistemi d'attacco col fuoco, ed essere in grado di cogliere l'occasione opportuna.

13. Chi impiega il fuoco per sostenere i propri attacchi, è sagace: chi impegna le inondazioni, è potente.

14. L'acqua può isolare un nemico, ma non distruggerlo.

Commento di Ciang Yu (960 – 1079 (?) d.C. Letterato): "L'impiego intelligente del fuoco facilita l'attacco. L'acqua divide il nemico, e tu sei più forte di un nemico diviso."

15. Ricorda: vincere le battaglie e raggiungere i propri obiettivi militari, ma trascurare di sfruttarne i risultati, è un fatto molto negativo, e può essere definito "una disastrosa trascuratezza".

16. Non assegnare adeguate ricompense dopo una battaglia vinta o un assedio portato a termine con successo ha effetto negativo, e ti fa considerare avaro.

17. È per questo che c'è il detto: i sovrani illuminati decidono la guerra, e i buoni generali ne realizzano i piani.

18. Agisci soltanto nell'interesse dello Stato. Se non sei più che sicuro di riuscire, non impiegare uomini. Se non sei in pericolo, non combattere.

19. Un Sovrano non può mobilitare un esercito soltanto per uno scatto d'ira, né un generale può combattere soltanto perché mosso dalla collera. Infatti, mentre un uomo in collera può recuperare la calma, e un uomo risentito può rasserenarsi, uno Stato finito in pezzi non può essere ripristinato, né i morti possono essere restituiti alla vita.

20. Il Sovrano illuminato è dunque prudente, e il buon generale lo mette in

guardi contro azioni temerarie. In questo modo lo Stato è sicuro e la forza militare rimane integra.

Capitolo 13

Utilizzo delle Spie

1. Ricorda: quando si mobilita un esercito di centomila uomini per impegnarlo a mille li dallo Stato, le spese che ne derivano per il popolo, costituite dagli esborsi dell'Erario, ammontano a mille pezzi d'oro al giorno. Possono essere necessari anni di guerra per un giorno di vittoria. Ne nascerà un grande turbamento, sia interno che esterno; il popolo sarà sfibrato dalle imposte, e i bilanci di settecentomila famiglie andranno in dissesto.

“centomila uomini”, “settecentomila famiglie”: Anticamente, otto famiglie costituivano una comunità di contadini. Quando un membro, valido, di una di queste famiglie, era arruolato nell'esercito, le restanti sette dovevano lavorare per sostenere la famiglia dell'assente.

2. Non procurarsi informazioni sul nemico, e combattere per anni, per evitare di compensare agenti segreti abili è dunque un'azione che va contro il popolo, è indegna di un generale, di un retto consigliere del sovrano, di una persona che possa raggiungere la vittoria.

3. Infatti, ciò che permette ad un principe illuminato e a un abile generale di sottomettere il nemico e conseguire risultati straordinari, è la capacità di previsione.

4. Ma la “capacità di previsione” non è un dono degli Dei, né si ottiene interrogando spiriti e fantasmi, né con ragionamenti o calcoli. Si ottiene impiegando uomini che ci informano sulla situazione del nemico.

5. Per questo ci sono cinque tipi di agenti segreti: l'agente locale, l'agente infiltrato, l'agente doppio, l'agente sacrificato e l'agente sopravvissuto.

6. Quando questi cinque tipi di agenti lavorano in modo coordinato, e nessuno riesce a scoprirne l'azione, costituiscono la “rete divina” e formano il tesoro di un sovrano.

7. Gli agenti locali sono reclutati nel territorio del nemico.

8. Gli agenti infiltrati sono reclutati tra i funzionari del nemico.

9. Gli agenti doppi sono spie nemiche reclutate da noi.

10. Gli agenti sacrificati sono nostre spie che diffondono false informazioni tra le spie nemiche.

“diffondono false informazioni”: si tratta di spie a cui vengono date, consapevolmente, false informazioni, e poi inviate in missione e fatte cadere in mano al nemico. Quando queste spie, alla fine, riveleranno ciò che sanno, daranno al nemico, senza saperlo, delle false informazioni che saranno certamente prese per vere.

11. Gli agenti sopravvissuti sono quelli che riescono a tornare indietro recando informazioni.

“tornare indietro recando informazioni”: si tratta di persone intime al nemico, nei stadi più alti dello Stato Maggiore. Appena vengono a sapere qualcosa di vitale, vanno subito a riferire le loro scoperte, a prezzo della vita, se scoperti dai loro stessi compagni.

12. Fra tutti coloro che nell'esercito hanno incarichi vicino al comandante, nessuno gli è più intimo dell'agente segreto. Fra tutte le ricompense, le più generose sono quelle destinate all'agente segreto. Non c'è nulla di più riservato di quanto concerne le operazioni segrete.

13. Chi non si è avveduto e intelligente, umano e giusto, non può utilizzare correttamente l'agente segreto. Da agenti privi di intelligenza, non si ottengono informazioni utili.

14. Arte difficile! Davvero difficile! Non c'è circostanza in cui lo spionaggio non sia usato.

15. Se i piani riguardanti le operazioni segrete sono divulgati, l'agente che ha parlato si è condannato a morte da solo, insieme con tutti quelli con cui si è confidato.

16. Se vi sono esercito che desideri sconfiggere, città che desideri attaccare, nemici che desideri assassinare, devi prima conoscere l'identità dei comandanti, degli ufficiali di Stato Maggiore, degli alleati che vigilano agli ingressi. È compito dei tuoi agenti segreti riportarti informazioni dettagliate su ogni cosa.

17. Devi individuare gli agenti nemici venuti a spiarcì, e tentare di comprarli perché passino al tuo servizio. Affida loro le istruzioni opportune e seguine con cura il comportamento. È così che si reclutano e poi si utilizzano gli agenti doppi.

18. È soltanto per mezzo degli agenti doppi, delle loro informazioni e col loro suggerimento, che gli agenti locali e gli agenti infiltrati vengono reclutati e impiegati.

19. È sempre tramite l'agente doppio che l'agente sacrificato, fornito di false informazioni, viene inviato al nemico per fargliele conoscere.

20. È ancora per mezzo dell'agente doppio che si possono utilizzare, al momento opportuno, gli agenti sopravvissuti.

21. Il comandante deve avere la conoscenza completa delle attività di questi cinque tipi di agenti, conoscenza che gli viene fornita dagli agenti doppi. Per questa ragione deve trattarli con massima generosità.

22. Nel tempo antico, lo sviluppo di Yin fu dovuto a I Chi, che aveva prima servito nel Hsia; Chou conquistò il potere grazie a Lu Wang Yu, un funzionario di Yin.

Commento di Ciang Yu (960 – 1079 (?) d.C. Letterato): "I Chi era un ministro di Hsia che passò a Yin; Lu Wang Yu era un ministro di Yin che passò a Chou."

23. Perciò, soltanto un sovrano illuminato e un abile generale, capaci di utilizzare per le operazioni segrete gli uomini più intelligenti, possono essere certi del successo. In guerra le operazioni segrete sono essenziali: prima di fare qualsiasi mossa ci si deve basare su di esse.

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We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth...
For my part, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst;
and to provide for it.
~ Patrick Henry ~

The Art of War

The Oldest Military Treatise In The World

By

Sun Tzu

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SUN TZU ON THE ART OF WAR:

THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

Translated from the Chinese with Introduction and Critical Notes

BY LIONEL GILES, M.A.

Assistant in the Department of Oriental Printed Books and MSS. in the British Museum

First Published in 1910

To my brother Captain Valentine Giles, R.G. in the hope that a work 2400 years old may yet contain lessons worth consideration by the soldier of today this translation is affectionately dedicated.

Preface

When Lionel Giles began his translation of Sun Tzu's ART OF WAR, the work was virtually unknown in Europe. Its introduction to Europe began in 1782 when a French Jesuit Father living in China, Joseph Amiot, acquired a copy of it, and translated it into French. It was not a good translation because, according to Dr. Giles, "[I]t contains a great deal that Sun Tzu did not write, and very little indeed of what he did."

The first translation into English was published in 1905 in Tokyo by Capt. E. F. Calthrop, R.F.A. However, this translation is, in the words of Dr. Giles, "excessively bad." He goes further in this criticism: "It is not merely a question of downright blunders, from which none can hope to be wholly exempt. Omissions were frequent; hard passages were wilfully distorted or slurred over. Such offenses are less pardonable. They would not be tolerated in any edition of a Latin or Greek classic, and a similar standard of honesty ought to be insisted upon in translations from Chinese."

In 1908 a new edition of Capt. Calthrop's translation was published in London. It was an improvement on the first -- omissions filled up and numerous mistakes corrected -- but new errors were created in the process. Dr. Giles, in justifying his translation, wrote: "It was not undertaken out of any inflated estimate of my own powers; but I could not help feeling that Sun Tzu deserved a better fate than had befallen him, and I knew that, at any rate, I could hardly fail to improve on the work of my predecessors."

Clearly, Dr. Giles' work established much of the groundwork for the work of later translators who published their own editions. Of the later editions of the ART OF WAR I have examined; two feature Giles' edited translation and notes, the other two present the same basic information from the ancient Chinese commentators found in the Giles edition. Of these four, Giles' 1910 edition is the most scholarly and presents the reader an incredible amount of information concerning Sun Tzu's text, much more than any other translation.

The Giles' edition of the ART OF WAR, as stated above, was a scholarly work. Dr. Giles was a leading sinologue at the time and an assistant in the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts in the British Museum. Apparently he wanted to produce a definitive edition, superior to anything else that existed and perhaps something that would become a standard translation. It was the best translation available for 50 years. But apparently there was not much interest in Sun Tzu in English-speaking countries since the it took the start of the Second World War to renew interest in his work. Several people published unsatisfactory English translations of Sun Tzu. In 1944, Dr. Giles' translation was edited and published in the United States in a series of military science books. But it wasn't until 1963 that a good English translation (by Samuel B. Griffith and still in print) was published that was an equal to Giles' translation. While this translation is more lucid than Dr. Giles' translation, it lacks his copious notes that make his so interesting.

Dr. Giles produced a work primarily intended for scholars of the Chinese civilization and language. It contains the Chinese text of Sun Tzu, the English translation, and voluminous notes along with numerous footnotes. Unfortunately, some of his notes and footnotes contain Chinese characters; some are completely Chinese. Thus, a conversion to a Latin alphabet etext was difficult.

I did the conversion in complete ignorance of Chinese (except for what I learned while doing the conversion). Thus, I faced the difficult task of paraphrasing it while retaining as much of the important text as I could. Every paraphrase represents a loss; thus I did what I could to retain as much of the text as possible.

Because the 1910 text contains a Chinese concordance, I was able to transliterate proper names, books, and the like at the risk of making the text more obscure. However, the text, on the whole, is quite satisfactory for the casual reader, a transformation made possible by conversion to an etext. However, I come away from this task with the feeling of loss because I know that someone with a background in Chinese can do a better job than I did; any such attempt would be welcomed.

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INTRODUCTION

Sun Wu and his Book

Ssu-ma Ch`ien gives the following biography of Sun Tzu: [1]

Sun Tzu Wu was a native of the Ch`i State. His ART OF WAR brought him to the notice of Ho Lu, [2] King of Wu. Ho Lu said to him: "I have carefully perused your 13 chapters. May I submit your theory of managing soldiers to a slight test?"

Sun Tzu replied: "You may."

Ho Lu asked: "May the test be applied to women?" The answer was again in the affirmative, so arrangements were made to bring 180 ladies out of the Palace. Sun Tzu divided them into two companies, and placed one of the King's favorite concubines at the head of each. He then bade them all take spears in their hands, and addressed them thus: "I presume you know the difference between front and back, right hand and left hand?"

The girls replied: Yes.

Sun Tzu went on: "When I say "Eyes front," you must look straight ahead. When I say "Left turn," you must face towards your left hand. When I say "Right turn," you must face towards your right hand. When I say "About turn," you must face right round towards your back."

Again the girls assented. The words of command having been thus explained, he set up the halberds and battle-axes in order to begin the drill. Then, to the sound of drums, he gave the order "Right turn." But the girls only burst out laughing. Sun Tzu said: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame."

So he started drilling them again, and this time gave the order "Left turn," whereupon the girls once more burst into fits of laughter. Sun Tzu: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the general is to blame. But if his orders ARE clear, and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers."

So saying, he ordered the leaders of the two companies to be beheaded. Now the king of Wu was watching the scene from the top of a raised pavilion; and when he saw that his favorite concubines were about to be executed, he was greatly alarmed and hurriedly sent down the following message: "We are now quite satisfied as to our general's ability to handle troops. If We are bereft of these two concubines, our meat and drink will lose their savor. It is our wish that they shall not be beheaded."

Sun Tzu replied: "Having once received His Majesty's commission to be the general of his forces, there are certain commands of His Majesty which, acting in that capacity, I am unable to accept."

Accordingly, he had the two leaders beheaded, and straightway installed the pair next in order as leaders in their place. When this had been done, the drum was sounded for the drill once more; and the girls went through all the evolutions, turning to the right or to the left, marching ahead or wheeling back, kneeling or standing, with perfect accuracy and precision, not venturing to utter a sound. Then Sun Tzu sent a messenger to the King saying: "Your soldiers, Sire, are now properly drilled and disciplined, and ready for your majesty's inspection. They can be put to any use that their sovereign may desire; bid them go through fire and water, and they will not disobey." But the King replied: "Let our general cease drilling and return to camp. As for us, We have no wish to come down and inspect the troops."

Thereupon Sun Tzu said: "The King is only fond of words, and cannot translate them into deeds." After that, Ho Lu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and finally appointed him general. In the west, he defeated the Ch`u State and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the States of Ch`i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad amongst the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the King.

About Sun Tzu himself this is all that Ssu-ma Ch`ien has to tell us in this chapter. But he proceeds to give a biography of his descendant, Sun Pin, born about a hundred years after his famous ancestor's death, and also the outstanding military genius of his time. The historian speaks of him too as Sun Tzu, and in his preface we read: "Sun Tzu had his feet cut off and yet continued to discuss the art of war." [3] It seems likely, then, that "Pin" was a nickname bestowed on him after his mutilation, unless the story was invented in order to account for the name. The crowning incident of his career, the crushing defeat of his treacherous rival P`ang Chuan, will be found briefly related in Chapter V. ss. 19, note.

To return to the elder Sun Tzu. He is mentioned in two other passages of the SHIH CHI: --

In the third year of his reign [512 B.C.] Ho Lu, king of Wu, took the field with Tzu-hsu [i.e. Wu Yuan] and Po P`ei, and attacked Ch`u. He captured the town of Shu and slew the two prince's sons who had formerly been generals of Wu. He was then meditating a descent on Ying [the capital]; but the general Sun Wu said: "The army is exhausted. It is not yet possible. We must wait".... [After further successful fighting,] "in the ninth year [506 B.C.], King Ho Lu addressed Wu Tzu-hsu and Sun Wu, saying: "Formerly, you declared that it was not yet possible for us to enter Ying. Is the time ripe now?" The two men replied: "Ch`u's general Tzu-ch`ang, [4] is grasping and covetous, and the princes of T`ang and Ts`ai both have a grudge against him. If Your Majesty has resolved to make a grand attack, you must win over T`ang and Ts`ai, and then you may succeed." Ho Lu followed this advice, [beat Ch`u in five pitched battles and marched into Ying.] [5]

This is the latest date at which anything is recorded of Sun Wu. He does not appear to have survived his patron, who died from the effects of a wound in 496. In another chapter there occurs this passage: [6]

From this time onward, a number of famous soldiers arose, one after the other: Kao-fan, [7] who was employed by the Chin State; Wang-tzu, [8] in the service of Ch`i; and Sun Wu, in the service of Wu. These men developed and threw light upon the principles of war.

It is obvious enough that Ssu-ma Ch`ien at least had no doubt about the reality of Sun Wu as an historical personage; and with one exception, to be noticed presently, he is by far the most important authority on the period in question. It will not be necessary, therefore, to say much of such a work as the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU, which is supposed to have been written by Chao Yeh of the 1st century A.D. The attribution is somewhat doubtful; but even if it were otherwise, his account would be of little value, based as it is on the SHIH CHI and expanded with romantic details. The story of Sun Tzu will be found, for what it is worth, in chapter 2. The only new points in it worth noting are: (1) Sun Tzu was first recommended to Ho Lu by Wu Tzu-hsu. (2) He is called a native of Wu. (3) He had previously lived a retired life, and his contemporaries were unaware of his ability.

The following passage occurs in the Huai-nan Tzu: "When sovereign and ministers show perversity of mind, it is impossible even for a Sun Tzu to encounter the foe." Assuming that this work is genuine (and hitherto no doubt has been cast upon it), we have here the earliest direct reference for Sun Tzu, for Huai-nan Tzu died in 122 B.C., many years before the SHIH CHI was given to the world.

Liu Hsiang (80-9 B.C.) says: "The reason why Sun Tzu at the head of 30,000 men beat Ch`u with 200,000 is that the latter were undisciplined."

Teng Ming-shih informs us that the surname "Sun" was bestowed on Sun Wu's grandfather by Duke Ching of Ch`i [547-490 B.C.]. Sun Wu's father Sun P`ing, rose to be a Minister of State in Ch`i, and Sun Wu himself, whose style was Ch`ang-ch`ing, fled to Wu on account of the rebellion which was being fomented by the kindred of T`ien Pao. He had three sons, of whom the second, named Ming, was the father of Sun Pin.

According to this account then, Pin was the grandson of Wu, which, considering that Sun Pin's victory over Wei was gained in 341 B.C., may be dismissed as chronological impossible. Whence these data were obtained by Teng Ming-shih I do not know, but of course no reliance whatever can be placed in them.

An interesting document which has survived from the close of the Han period is the short preface written by the Great Ts`ao Ts`ao, or Wei Wu Ti, for his edition of Sun Tzu. I shall give it in full: --

I have heard that the ancients used bows and arrows to their advantage. [10] The SHU CHU mentions "the army" among the "eight objects of government." The I CHING says: "'army' indicates firmness and justice; the experienced leader will have good fortune." The SHIH CHING says: "The King rose majestic in his wrath, and he marshaled his troops." The Yellow Emperor, T`ang the Completer and Wu Wang all used spears and battle-axes in order to succor their generation.

The SSU-MA FA says: "If one man slay another of set purpose, he himself may rightfully be slain." He who relies solely on warlike measures shall be exterminated; he who relies solely on peaceful measures shall perish. Instances of this are Fu Ch`ai [11] on the one hand and Yen Wang on the other. [12] In military matters, the Sage's rule is normally to keep the peace, and to move his forces only when occasion requires. He will not use armed force unless driven to it by necessity.

Many books have I read on the subject of war and fighting; but the work composed by Sun Wu is the profoundest of them all. [Sun Tzu was a native of the Ch`i state, his personal name was Wu. He wrote the ART OF WAR in 13 chapters for Ho Lu, King of Wu. Its principles were tested on women, and he was subsequently made a general. He led an army westwards, crushed the Ch`u state and entered Ying the capital. In the north, he kept Ch`i and Chin in awe. A hundred years and more after his time, Sun Pin lived. He was a descendant of Wu.] [13] In his treatment of deliberation and planning, the importance of rapidity in taking the field, [14] clearness of conception, and depth of design, Sun Tzu stands beyond the reach of carping criticism.

My contemporaries, however, have failed to grasp the full meaning of his instructions, and while putting into practice the smaller details in which his work

abounds, they have overlooked its essential purport. That is the motive which has led me to outline a rough explanation of the whole.

One thing to be noticed in the above is the explicit statement that the 13 chapters were specially composed for King Ho Lu. This is supported by the internal evidence of I. ss. 15, in which it seems clear that some ruler is addressed.

In the bibliographic section of the HAN SHU, there is an entry which has given rise to much discussion: "The works of Sun Tzu of Wu in 82 P`IEN (or chapters), with diagrams in 9 CHUAN." It is evident that this cannot be merely the 13 chapters known to Ssu-ma Ch`ien, or those we possess today. Chang Shou-chieh refers to an edition of Sun Tzu's ART OF WAR of which the "13 chapters" formed the first CHUAN, adding that there were two other CHUAN besides. This has brought forth a theory, that the bulk of these 82 chapters consisted of other writings of Sun Tzu -- we should call them apocryphal -- similar to the WEN TA, of which a specimen dealing with the Nine Situations [15] is preserved in the T`UNG TIEN, and another in Ho Shin's commentary. It is suggested that before his interview with Ho Lu, Sun Tzu had only written the 13 chapters, but afterwards composed a sort of exegesis in the form of question and answer between himself and the King. Pi I-hsun, the author of the SUN TZU HSU LU, backs this up with a quotation from the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU: "The King of Wu summoned Sun Tzu, and asked him questions about the art of war. Each time he set forth a chapter of his work, the King could not find words enough to praise him." As he points out, if the whole work was expounded on the same scale as in the above-mentioned fragments, the total number of chapters could not fail to be considerable. Then the numerous other treatises attributed to Sun Tzu might be included. The fact that the HAN CHIH mentions no work of Sun Tzu except the 82 P`IEN, whereas the Sui and T`ang bibliographies give the titles of others in addition to the "13 chapters," is good proof, Pi I-hsun thinks, that all of these were contained in the 82 P`IEN. Without pinning our faith to the accuracy of details supplied by the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU, or admitting the genuineness of any of the treatises cited by Pi I-hsun, we may see in this theory a probable solution of the mystery. Between Ssu-ma Ch`ien and Pan Ku there was plenty of time for a luxuriant crop of forgeries to have grown up under the magic name of Sun Tzu, and the 82 P`IEN may very well represent a collected edition of these lumped together with the original work. It is also possible, though less likely, that some of them existed in the time of the earlier historian and were purposely ignored by him. [16]

Tu Mu's conjecture seems to be based on a passage which states: "Wei Wu Ti strung together Sun Wu's Art of War," which in turn may have resulted from a misunderstanding of the final words of Ts`ao King's preface. This, as Sun Hsing-yen points out, is only a modest way of saying that he made an explanatory paraphrase, or in other words, wrote a commentary on it. On the

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whole, this theory has met with very little acceptance. Thus, the SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU says: "The mention of the 13 chapters in the SHIH CHI shows that they were in existence before the HAN CHIH, and that latter accretions are not to be considered part of the original work. Tu Mu's assertion can certainly not be taken as proof."

There is every reason to suppose, then, that the 13 chapters existed in the time of Ssu-ma Ch`ien practically as we have them now. That the work was then well known he tells us in so many words. "Sun Tzu's 13 Chapters and Wu Ch`i's Art of War are the two books that people commonly refer to on the subject of military matters. Both of them are widely distributed, so I will not discuss them here." But as we go further back, serious difficulties begin to arise. The salient fact which has to be faced is that the TSO CHUAN, the greatest contemporary record, makes no mention whatsoever of Sun Wu, either as a general or as a writer. It is natural, in view of this awkward circumstance, that many scholars should not only cast doubt on the story of Sun Wu as given in the SHIH CHI, but even show themselves frankly skeptical as to the existence of the man at all. The most powerful presentment of this side of the case is to be found in the following disposition by Yeh Shui-hsin: [17] --

It is stated in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history that Sun Wu was a native of the Ch`i State, and employed by Wu; and that in the reign of Ho Lu he crushed Ch`u, entered Ying, and was a great general.

But in Tso's Commentary no Sun Wu appears at all. It is true that Tso's Commentary need not contain absolutely everything that other histories contain. But Tso has not omitted to mention vulgar plebeians and hireling ruffians such as Ying K`ao-shu, [18] Ts`ao Kuei, [19], Chu Chih-wu and Chuan She-chu [20]. In the case of Sun Wu, whose fame and achievements were so brilliant, the omission is much more glaring. Again, details are given, in their due order, about his contemporaries Wu Yuan and the Minister P`ei. [21] Is it credible that Sun Wu alone should have been passed over?

In point of literary style, Sun Tzu's work belongs to the same school as KUAN TZU, [22] LIU T`AO, [23] and the YUEH YU [24] and may have been the production of some private scholar living towards the end of the "Spring and Autumn" or the beginning of the "Warring States" period. [25] The story that his precepts were actually applied by the Wu State, is merely the outcome of big talk on the part of his followers. From the flourishing period of the Chou dynasty [26] down to the time of the "Spring and Autumn," all military commanders were statesmen as well, and the class of professional generals, for conducting external campaigns, did not then exist. It was not until the period of the "Six States" [27] that this custom changed. Now although Wu was an uncivilized State, it is conceivable that Tso should have left unrecorded the fact that Sun Wu was a great general and yet held no civil office? What we are told, therefore, about Jang-chu [28] and Sun Wu, is not authentic matter,

but the reckless fabrication of theorizing pundits. The story of Ho Lu's experiment on the women, in particular, is utterly preposterous and incredible.

Yeh Shui-hsin represents Ssu-ma Ch`ien as having said that Sun Wu crushed Ch`u and entered Ying. This is not quite correct. No doubt the impression left on the reader's mind is that he at least shared in these exploits. The fact may or may not be significant; but it is nowhere explicitly stated in the SHIH CHI either that Sun Tzu was general on the occasion of the taking of Ying, or that he even went there at all. Moreover, as we know that Wu Yuan and Po P`ei both took part in the expedition, and also that its success was largely due to the dash and enterprise of Fu Kai, Ho Lu's younger brother, it is not easy to see how yet another general could have played a very prominent part in the same campaign.

Ch`en Chen-sun of the Sung dynasty has the note: --

Military writers look upon Sun Wu as the father of their art. But the fact that he does not appear in the TSO CHUAN, although he is said to have served under Ho Lu King of Wu, makes it uncertain what period he really belonged to.

He also says: --

The works of Sun Wu and Wu Ch`i may be of genuine antiquity.

It is noticeable that both Yeh Shui-hsin and Ch`en Chen-sun, while rejecting the personality of Sun Wu as he figures in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history, are inclined to accept the date traditionally assigned to the work which passes under his name. The author of the HSU LU fails to appreciate this distinction, and consequently his bitter attack on Ch`en Chen-sun really misses its mark. He makes one of two points, however, which certainly tell in favor of the high antiquity of our "13 chapters." "Sun Tzu," he says, "must have lived in the age of Ching Wang [519-476], because he is frequently plagiarized in subsequent works of the Chou, Ch`in and Han dynasties." The two most shameless offenders in this respect are Wu Ch`i and Huai-nan Tzu, both of them important historical personages in their day. The former lived only a century after the alleged date of Sun Tzu, and his death is known to have taken place in 381 B.C. It was to him, according to Liu Hsiang, that Tseng Shen delivered the TSO CHUAN, which had been entrusted to him by its author. [29] Now the fact that quotations from the ART OF WAR, acknowledged or otherwise, are to be found in so many authors of different epochs, establishes a very strong anterior to them all, -- in other words, that Sun Tzu's treatise was already in existence towards the end of the 5th century B.C. Further proof of Sun Tzu's antiquity is furnished by the archaic or wholly obsolete meanings attaching to a number of the words he uses.

A list of these, which might perhaps be extended, is given in the HSU LU; and though some of the interpretations are doubtful, the main argument is hardly affected thereby. Again, it must not be forgotten that Yeh Shui-hsin, a scholar and critic of the first rank, deliberately pronounces the style of the 13 chapters to belong to the early part of the fifth century. Seeing that he is actually engaged in an attempt to disprove the existence of Sun Wu himself, we may be sure that he would not have hesitated to assign the work to a later date had he not honestly believed the contrary. And it is precisely on such a point that the judgment of an educated Chinaman will carry most weight. Other internal evidence is not far to seek. Thus in XIII. ss. 1, there is an unmistakable allusion to the ancient system of land-tenure which had already passed away by the time of Mencius, who was anxious to see it revived in a modified form. [30] The only warfare Sun Tzu knows is that carried on between the various feudal princes, in which armored chariots play a large part. Their use seems to have entirely died out before the end of the Chou dynasty. He speaks as a man of Wu, a state which ceased to exist as early as 473 B.C. On this I shall touch presently.

But once refer the work to the 5th century or earlier, and the chances of its being other than a bona fide production are sensibly diminished. The great age of forgeries did not come until long after. That it should have been forged in the period immediately following 473 is particularly unlikely, for no one, as a rule, hastens to identify himself with a lost cause. As for Yeh Shui-hsin's theory, that the author was a literary recluse, that seems to me quite untenable. If one thing is more apparent than another after reading the maxims of Sun Tzu, it is that their essence has been distilled from a large store of personal observation and experience. They reflect the mind not only of a born strategist, gifted with a rare faculty of generalization, but also of a practical soldier closely acquainted with the military conditions of his time. To say nothing of the fact that these sayings have been accepted and endorsed by all the greatest captains of Chinese history, they offer a combination of freshness and sincerity, acuteness and common sense, which quite excludes the idea that they were artificially concocted in the study. If we admit, then, that the 13 chapters were the genuine production of a military man living towards the end of the "CH'UN CH'IU" period, are we not bound, in spite of the silence of the TSO CHUAN, to accept Ssu-ma Ch'ien's account in its entirety? In view of his high repute as a sober historian, must we not hesitate to assume that the records he drew upon for Sun Wu's biography were false and untrustworthy? The answer, I fear, must be in the negative. There is still one grave, if not fatal, objection to the chronology involved in the story as told in the SHIH CHI, which, so far as I am aware, nobody has yet pointed out. There are two passages in Sun Tzu in which he alludes to contemporary affairs. The first in in VI. ss. 21: --

Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.

The other is in XI. ss. 30: --

Asked if an army can be made to imitate the SHUAI-JAN, I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies; yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and are caught by a storm, they will come to each other's assistance just as the left hand helps the right.

These two paragraphs are extremely valuable as evidence of the date of composition. They assign the work to the period of the struggle between Wu and Yueh. So much has been observed by Pi I-hsun. But what has hitherto escaped notice is that they also seriously impair the credibility of Ssu-ma Ch`ien's narrative. As we have seen above, the first positive date given in connection with Sun Wu is 512 B.C. He is then spoken of as a general, acting as confidential adviser to Ho Lu, so that his alleged introduction to that monarch had already taken place, and of course the 13 chapters must have been written earlier still. But at that time, and for several years after, down to the capture of Ying in 506, Ch`u and not Yueh, was the great hereditary enemy of Wu. The two states, Ch`u and Wu, had been constantly at war for over half a century, [31] whereas the first war between Wu and Yueh was waged only in 510, [32] and even then was no more than a short interlude sandwiched in the midst of the fierce struggle with Ch`u. Now Ch`u is not mentioned in the 13 chapters at all. The natural inference is that they were written at a time when Yueh had become the prime antagonist of Wu, that is, after Ch`u had suffered the great humiliation of 506. At this point, a table of dates may be found useful.

B.C.

- 514 Accession of Ho Lu.
- 512 Ho Lu attacks Ch`u, but is dissuaded from entering Ying, the capital. SHI CHI mentions Sun Wu as general.
- 511 Another attack on Ch`u.
- 510 Wu makes a successful attack on Yueh. This is the first war between the two states.
- 509 Ch`u invades Wu, but is signally defeated at Yu-chang.
- 506 Ho Lu attacks Ch`u with the aid of T`ang and Ts`ai. Decisive battle of Po-chu, and capture of Ying. Last mention of Sun Wu in SHIH CHI.
- 505 Yueh makes a raid on Wu in the absence of its army. Wu is beaten by Ch`in and evacuates Ying.
- 504 Ho Lu sends Fu Ch`ai to attack Ch`u.
- 497 Kou Chien becomes King of Yueh.
- 496 Wu attacks Yueh, but is defeated by Kou Chien at Tsui-li. Ho Lu is killed.
- 494 Fu Ch`ai defeats Kou Chien in the great battle of Fu-chaio, and enters the capital of Yueh.

- 485 Kou Chien renders homage to Wu. Death of Wu Tzu-hsu.
- 482 Kou Chien invades Wu in the absence of Fu Ch`ai.
- 478 Further attacks by Yueh on Wu.
- 475 Kou Chien lays siege to the capital of Wu.
- 473 Final defeat and extinction of Wu.

The sentence quoted above from VI. ss. 21 hardly strikes me as one that could have been written in the full flush of victory. It seems rather to imply that, for the moment at least, the tide had turned against Wu, and that she was getting the worst of the struggle. Hence we may conclude that our treatise was not in existence in 505, before which date Yueh does not appear to have scored any notable success against Wu. Ho Lu died in 496, so that if the book was written for him, it must have been during the period 505-496, when there was a lull in the hostilities, Wu having presumably exhausted by its supreme effort against Ch`u.

On the other hand, if we choose to disregard the tradition connecting Sun Wu's name with Ho Lu, it might equally well have seen the light between 496 and 494, or possibly in the period 482-473, when Yueh was once again becoming a very serious menace. [33] We may feel fairly certain that the author, whoever he may have been, was not a man of any great eminence in his own day. On this point the negative testimony of the TSO CHUAN far outweighs any shred of authority still attaching to the SHIH CHI, if once its other facts are discredited. Sun Hsing-yen, however, makes a feeble attempt to explain the omission of his name from the great commentary. It was Wu Tzu-hsu, he says, who got all the credit of Sun Wu's exploits, because the latter (being an alien) was not rewarded with an office in the State.

How then did the Sun Tzu legend originate? It may be that the growing celebrity of the book imparted by degrees a kind of factitious renown to its author. It was felt to be only right and proper that one so well versed in the science of war should have solid achievements to his credit as well. Now the capture of Ying was undoubtedly the greatest feat of arms in Ho Lu's reign; it made a deep and lasting impression on all the surrounding states, and raised Wu to the short-lived zenith of her power. Hence, what more natural, as time went on, than that the acknowledged master of strategy, Sun Wu, should be popularly identified with that campaign, at first perhaps only in the sense that his brain conceived and planned it; afterwards, that it was actually carried out by him in conjunction with Wu Yuan, [34] Po P`ei and Fu Kai?

It is obvious that any attempt to reconstruct even the outline of Sun Tzu's life must be based almost wholly on conjecture. With this necessary proviso, I should say that he probably entered the service of Wu about the time of Ho Lu's accession, and gathered experience, though only in the capacity of a subordinate officer, during the intense military activity which marked the first half of the prince's reign. [35] If he rose to be a general at all, he certainly

was never on an equal footing with the three above mentioned. He was doubtless present at the investment and occupation of Ying, and witnessed Wu's sudden collapse in the following year. Yueh's attack at this critical juncture, when her rival was embarrassed on every side, seems to have convinced him that this upstart kingdom was the great enemy against whom every effort would henceforth have to be directed.

Sun Wu was thus a well-seasoned warrior when he sat down to write his famous book, which according to my reckoning must have appeared towards the end, rather than the beginning of Ho Lu's reign. The story of the women may possibly have grown out of some real incident occurring about the same time. As we hear no more of Sun Wu after this from any source, he is hardly likely to have survived his patron or to have taken part in the death-struggle with Yueh, which began with the disaster at Tsui-li.

If these inferences are approximately correct, there is a certain irony in the fate which decreed that China's most illustrious man of peace should be contemporary with her greatest writer on war.

The Text of Sun Tzu

I have found it difficult to glean much about the history of Sun Tzu's text. The quotations that occur in early authors go to show that the "13 chapters" of which Ssu-ma Ch`ien speaks were essentially the same as those now extant. We have his word for it that they were widely circulated in his day, and can only regret that he refrained from discussing them on that account.

Sun Hsing-yen says in his preface: --

During the Ch`in and Han dynasties Sun Tzu's ART OF WAR was in general use amongst military commanders, but they seem to have treated it as a work of mysterious import, and were unwilling to expound it for the benefit of posterity. Thus it came about that Wei Wu was the first to write a commentary on it.

As we have already seen, there is no reasonable ground to suppose that Ts`ao Kung tampered with the text. But the text itself is often so obscure, and the number of editions which appeared from that time onward so great, especially during the T`ang and Sung dynasties, that it would be surprising if numerous corruptions had not managed to creep in. Towards the middle of the Sung period, by which time all the chief commentaries on Sun Tzu were in existence, a certain Chi T`ien-pao published a work in 15 CHUAN entitled "Sun Tzu with the collected commentaries of ten writers." There was another text, with

variant readings put forward by Chu Fu of Ta-hsing, which also had supporters among the scholars of that period; but in the Ming editions, Sun Hsing-yen tells us, these readings were for some reason or other no longer put into circulation.

Thus, until the end of the 18th century, the text in sole possession of the field was one derived from Chi T`ien-pao's edition, although no actual copy of that important work was known to have survived. That, therefore, is the text of Sun Tzu which appears in the War section of the great Imperial encyclopedia printed in 1726, the KU CHIN T`U SHU CHI CH`ENG.

Another copy at my disposal of what is practically the same text, with slight variations, is that contained in the "Eleven philosophers of the Chou and Ch`in dynasties" [1758]. And the Chinese printed in Capt. Calthrop's first edition is evidently a similar version which has filtered through Japanese channels. So things remained until Sun Hsing-yen [1752-1818], a distinguished antiquarian and classical scholar, who claimed to be an actual descendant of Sun Wu, [36] accidentally discovered a copy of Chi T`ien-pao's long-lost work, when on a visit to the library of the Hua-yin temple. [37] Appended to it was the I SHUO of Cheng Yu-Hsien, mentioned in the T`UNG CHIH, and also believed to have perished. This is what Sun Hsing-yen designates as the "original edition (or text)" -- a rather misleading name, for it cannot by any means claim to set before us the text of Sun Tzu in its pristine purity. Chi T`ien-pao was a careless compiler, and appears to have been content to reproduce the somewhat debased version current in his day, without troubling to collate it with the earliest editions then available. Fortunately, two versions of Sun Tzu, even older than the newly discovered work, were still extant, one buried in the T`UNG TIEN, Tu Yu's great treatise on the Constitution, the other similarly enshrined in the T`AI P`ING YU LAN encyclopedia. In both the complete text is to be found, though split up into fragments, intermixed with other matter, and scattered piecemeal over a number of different sections. Considering that the YU LAN takes us back to the year 983, and the T`UNG TIEN about 200 years further still, to the middle of the T`ang dynasty, the value of these early transcripts of Sun Tzu can hardly be overestimated. Yet the idea of utilizing them does not seem to have occurred to anyone until Sun Hsing-yen, acting under Government instructions, undertook a thorough recension of the text.

This is his own account: --

Because of the numerous mistakes in the text of Sun Tzu which his editors had handed down, the Government ordered that the ancient edition [of Chi T`ien-pao] should be used, and that the text should be revised and corrected throughout. It happened that Wu Nien-hu, the Governor Pi Kua, and Hsi, a graduate of the second degree, had all devoted themselves to this study,

probably surpassing me therein. Accordingly, I have had the whole work cut on blocks as a textbook for military men.

The three individuals here referred to had evidently been occupied on the text of Sun Tzu prior to Sun Hsing-yen's commission, but we are left in doubt as to the work they really accomplished. At any rate, the new edition, when ultimately produced, appeared in the names of Sun Hsing-yen and only one co-editor Wu Jen-shi. They took the "original edition" as their basis, and by careful comparison with older versions, as well as the extant commentaries and other sources of information such as the I SHUO, succeeded in restoring a very large number of doubtful passages, and turned out, on the whole, what must be accepted as the closes approximation we are ever likely to get to Sun Tzu's original work. This is what will hereafter be denominated the "standard text."

The copy which I have used belongs to a reissue dated 1877. it is in 6 PEN, forming part of a well-printed set of 23 early philosophical works in 83 PEN. [38] It opens with a preface by Sun Hsing-yen (largely quoted in this introduction), vindicating the traditional view of Sun Tzu's life and performances, and summing up in remarkably concise fashion the evidence in its favor. This is followed by Ts`ao Kung's preface to his edition, and the biography of Sun Tzu from the SHIH CHI, both translated above. Then come, firstly, Cheng Yu-hsien's I SHUO, [39] with author's preface, and next, a short miscellany of historical and bibliographical information entitled SUN TZU HSU LU, compiled by Pi I-hsun. As regards the body of the work, each separate sentence is followed by a note on the text, if required, and then by the various commentaries appertaining to it, arranged in chronological order. These we shall now proceed to discuss briefly, one by one.

The Commentators

Sun Tzu can boast an exceptionally long distinguished roll of commentators, which would do honor to any classic. Ou-yang Hsiu remarks on this fact, though he wrote before the tale was complete, and rather ingeniously explains it by saying that the artifices of war, being inexhaustible, must therefore be susceptible of treatment in a great variety of ways.

1. TS`AO TS`AO or Ts`ao Kung, afterwards known as Wei Wu Ti [A.D. 155-220]. There is hardly any room for doubt that the earliest commentary on Sun Tzu actually came from the pen of this extraordinary man, whose biography in the SAN KUO CHIH reads like a romance. One of the greatest military geniuses that the world has seen, and Napoleonic in the scale of his operations, he was especially famed for the marvelous rapidity of his marches, which has found expression in the line "Talk of Ts`ao Ts`ao, and Ts`ao Ts`ao will

appear." Ou-yang Hsiu says of him that he was a great captain who "measured his strength against Tung Cho, Lu Pu and the two Yuan, father and son, and vanquished them all; whereupon he divided the Empire of Han with Wu and Shu, and made himself king. It is recorded that whenever a council of war was held by Wei on the eve of a far-reaching campaign, he had all his calculations ready; those generals who made use of them did not lose one battle in ten; those who ran counter to them in any particular saw their armies incontinently beaten and put to flight." Ts`ao Kung's notes on Sun Tzu, models of austere brevity, are so thoroughly characteristic of the stern commander known to history, that it is hard indeed to conceive of them as the work of a mere LITTERATEUR. Sometimes, indeed, owing to extreme compression, they are scarcely intelligible and stand no less in need of a commentary than the text itself. [40]

2. MENG SHIH. The commentary which has come down to us under this name is comparatively meager, and nothing about the author is known. Even his personal name has not been recorded. Chi T`ien-pao's edition places him after Chia Lin, and Ch`ao Kung-wu also assigns him to the T`ang dynasty, [41] but this is a mistake. In Sun Hsing-yen's preface, he appears as Meng Shih of the Liang dynasty [502-557]. Others would identify him with Meng K`ang of the 3rd century. He is named in one work as the last of the "Five Commentators," the others being Wei Wu Ti, Tu Mu, Ch`en Hao and Chia Lin.

3. LI CH`UAN of the 8th century was a well-known writer on military tactics. One of his works has been in constant use down to the present day. The T`UNG CHIH mentions "Lives of famous generals from the Chou to the T`ang dynasty" as written by him. [42] According to Ch`ao Kung-wu and the T`IEN-I-KO catalogue, he followed a variant of the text of Sun Tzu which differs considerably from those now extant. His notes are mostly short and to the point, and he frequently illustrates his remarks by anecdotes from Chinese history.

4. TU YU (died 812) did not publish a separate commentary on Sun Tzu, his notes being taken from the T`UNG TIEN, the encyclopaedic treatise on the Constitution which was his life-work. They are largely repetitions of Ts`ao Kung and Meng Shih, besides which it is believed that he drew on the ancient commentaries of Wang Ling and others. Owing to the peculiar arrangement of T`UNG TIEN, he has to explain each passage on its merits, apart from the context, and sometimes his own explanation does not agree with that of Ts`ao Kung, whom he always quotes first. Though not strictly to be reckoned as one of the "Ten Commentators," he was added to their number by Chi T`ien-pao, being wrongly placed after his grandson Tu Mu.

5. TU MU (803-852) is perhaps the best known as a poet - a bright star even in the glorious galaxy of the T`ang period. We learn from Ch`ao Kung-wu that although he had no practical experience of war, he was extremely fond of

discussing the subject, and was moreover well read in the military history of the CH`UN CH`IU and CHAN KUO eras. His notes, therefore, are well worth attention. They are very copious, and replete with historical parallels. The gist of Sun Tzu's work is thus summarized by him: "Practice benevolence and justice, but on the other hand make full use of artifice and measures of expediency." He further declared that all the military triumphs and disasters of the thousand years which had elapsed since Sun Tzu's death would, upon examination, be found to uphold and corroborate, in every particular, the maxims contained in his book. Tu Mu's somewhat spiteful charge against Ts`ao Kung has already been considered elsewhere.

6. CH`EN HAO appears to have been a contemporary of Tu Mu. Ch`ao Kung-wu says that he was impelled to write a new commentary on Sun Tzu because Ts`ao Kung's on the one hand was too obscure and subtle, and that of Tu Mu on the other too long-winded and diffuse. Ou-yang Hsiu, writing in the middle of the 11th century, calls Ts`ao Kung, Tu Mu and Ch`en Hao the three chief commentators on Sun Tzu, and observes that Ch`en Hao is continually attacking Tu Mu's shortcomings. His commentary, though not lacking in merit, must rank below those of his predecessors.

7. CHIA LIN is known to have lived under the T`ang dynasty, for his commentary on Sun Tzu is mentioned in the T`ang Shu and was afterwards republished by Chi Hsieh of the same dynasty together with those of Meng Shih and Tu Yu. It is of somewhat scanty texture, and in point of quality, too, perhaps the least valuable of the eleven.

8. MEI YAO-CH`EN (1002-1060), commonly known by his "style" as Mei Sheng-yu, was, like Tu Mu, a poet of distinction. His commentary was published with a laudatory preface by the great Ou-yang Hsiu, from which we may cull the following: --

Later scholars have misread Sun Tzu, distorting his words and trying to make them square with their own one-sided views. Thus, though commentators have not been lacking, only a few have proved equal to the task. My friend Sheng-yu has not fallen into this mistake. In attempting to provide a critical commentary for Sun Tzu's work, he does not lose sight of the fact that these sayings were intended for states engaged in internecine warfare; that the author is not concerned with the military conditions prevailing under the sovereigns of the three ancient dynasties, [43] nor with the nine punitive measures prescribed to the Minister of War. [44] Again, Sun Wu loved brevity of diction, but his meaning is always deep. Whether the subject be marching an army, or handling soldiers, or estimating the enemy, or controlling the forces of victory, it is always systematically treated; the sayings are bound together in strict logical sequence, though this has been obscured by commentators who have probably failed to grasp their meaning. In his own commentary, Mei Sheng-yu has brushed aside all the obstinate prejudices of these critics, and has tried to

bring out the true meaning of Sun Tzu himself. In this way, the clouds of confusion have been dispersed and the sayings made clear. I am convinced that the present work deserves to be handed down side by side with the three great commentaries; and for a great deal that they find in the sayings, coming generations will have constant reason to thank my friend Sheng-yu.

Making some allowance for the exuberance of friendship, I am inclined to endorse this favorable judgment, and would certainly place him above Ch`en Hao in order of merit.

9. WANG HSI, also of the Sung dynasty, is decidedly original in some of his interpretations, but much less judicious than Mei Yao-ch`en, and on the whole not a very trustworthy guide. He is fond of comparing his own commentary with that of Ts`ao Kung, but the comparison is not often flattering to him. We learn from Ch`ao Kung-wu that Wang Hsi revised the ancient text of Sun Tzu, filling up lacunae and correcting mistakes. [45]

10. HO YEN-HSI of the Sung dynasty. The personal name of this commentator is given as above by Cheng Ch`iao in the TUNG CHIH, written about the middle of the twelfth century, but he appears simply as Ho Shih in the YU HAI, and Ma Tuan-lin quotes Ch`ao Kung-wu as saying that his personal name is unknown. There seems to be no reason to doubt Cheng Ch`iao's statement, otherwise I should have been inclined to hazard a guess and identify him with one Ho Ch`u-fei, the author of a short treatise on war, who lived in the latter part of the 11th century. Ho Shih's commentary, in the words of the T`IEN-I-KO catalogue, "contains helpful additions" here and there, but is chiefly remarkable for the copious extracts taken, in adapted form, from the dynastic histories and other sources.

11. CHANG YU. The list closes with a commentator of no great originality perhaps, but gifted with admirable powers of lucid exposition. His commentary is based on that of Ts`ao Kung, whose terse sentences he contrives to expand and develop in masterly fashion. Without Chang Yu, it is safe to say that much of Ts`ao Kung's commentary would have remained cloaked in its pristine obscurity and therefore valueless. His work is not mentioned in the Sung history, the T`UNG K`AO, or the YU HAI, but it finds a niche in the T`UNG CHIH, which also names him as the author of the "Lives of Famous Generals." [46]

It is rather remarkable that the last-named four should all have flourished within so short a space of time. Ch`ao Kung-wu accounts for it by saying: "During the early years of the Sung dynasty the Empire enjoyed a long spell of peace, and men ceased to practice the art of war. but when [Chao] Yuan-hao's rebellion came [1038-42] and the frontier generals were defeated time after time, the Court made strenuous inquiry for men skilled in war, and military

topics became the vogue amongst all the high officials. Hence it is that the commentators of Sun Tzu in our dynasty belong mainly to that period. [47]

Besides these eleven commentators, there are several others whose work has not come down to us. The SUI SHU mentions four, namely Wang Ling (often quoted by Tu Yu as Wang Tzu); Chang Tzu-shang; Chia Hsu of Wei; [48] and Shen Yu of Wu. The T`ANG SHU adds Sun Hao, and the T`UNG CHIH Hsiao Chi, while the T`U SHU mentions a Ming commentator, Huang Jun-yu. It is possible that some of these may have been merely collectors and editors of other commentaries, like Chi T`ien-pao and Chi Hsieh, mentioned above.

Appreciations of Sun Tzu

Sun Tzu has exercised a potent fascination over the minds of some of China's greatest men. Among the famous generals who are known to have studied his pages with enthusiasm may be mentioned Han Hsin (d. 196 B.C.), [49] Feng I (d. 34 A.D.), [50] Lu Meng (d. 219), [51] and Yo Fei (1103-1141). [52] The opinion of Ts`ao Kung, who disputes with Han Hsin the highest place in Chinese military annals, has already been recorded. [53] Still more remarkable, in one way, is the testimony of purely literary men, such as Su Hsun (the father of Su Tung-p`o), who wrote several essays on military topics, all of which owe their chief inspiration to Sun Tzu.

The following short passage by him is preserved in the YU HAI: [54] -- Sun Wu's saying, that in war one cannot make certain of conquering, [55] is very different indeed from what other books tell us. [56] Wu Ch`i was a man of the same stamp as Sun Wu: they both wrote books on war, and they are linked together in popular speech as "Sun and Wu." But Wu Ch`i's remarks on war are less weighty, his rules are rougher and more crudely stated, and there is not the same unity of plan as in Sun Tzu's work, where the style is terse, but the meaning fully brought out.

The following is an extract from the "Impartial Judgments in the Garden of Literature" by Cheng Hou: --

Sun Tzu's 13 chapters are not only the staple and base of all military men's training, but also compel the most careful attention of scholars and men of letters. His sayings are terse yet elegant, simple yet profound, perspicuous and eminently practical. Such works as the LUN YU, the I CHING and the great Commentary, [57] as well as the writings of Mencius, Hsun K`uang and Yang Chu, all fall below the level of Sun Tzu.

Chu Hsi, commenting on this, fully admits the first part of the criticism, although he dislikes the audacious comparison with the venerated classical

works. Language of this sort, he says, "encourages a ruler's bent towards unrelenting warfare and reckless militarism."

Apologies for War

Accustomed as we are to think of China as the greatest peace-loving nation on earth, we are in some danger of forgetting that her experience of war in all its phases has also been such as no modern State can parallel. Her long military annals stretch back to a point at which they are lost in the mists of time. She had built the Great Wall and was maintaining a huge standing army along her frontier centuries before the first Roman legionary was seen on the Danube. What with the perpetual collisions of the ancient feudal States, the grim conflicts with Huns, Turks and other invaders after the centralization of government, the terrific upheavals which accompanied the overthrow of so many dynasties, besides the countless rebellions and minor disturbances that have flamed up and flickered out again one by one, it is hardly too much to say that the clash of arms has never ceased to resound in one portion or another of the Empire.

No less remarkable is the succession of illustrious captains to whom China can point with pride. As in all countries, the greatest are fond of emerging at the most fateful crises of her history. Thus, Po Ch`i stands out conspicuous in the period when Ch`in was entering upon her final struggle with the remaining independent states. The stormy years which followed the break-up of the Ch`in dynasty are illuminated by the transcendent genius of Han Hsin. When the House of Han in turn is tottering to its fall, the great and baleful figure of Ts`ao Ts`ao dominates the scene. And in the establishment of the T`ang dynasty, one of the mightiest tasks achieved by man, the superhuman energy of Li Shih-min (afterwards the Emperor T`ai Tsung) was seconded by the brilliant strategy of Li Ching. None of these generals need fear comparison with the greatest names in the military history of Europe.

In spite of all this, the great body of Chinese sentiment, from Lao Tzu downwards, and especially as reflected in the standard literature of Confucianism, has been consistently pacific and intensely opposed to militarism in any form. It is such an uncommon thing to find any of the literati defending warfare on principle, that I have thought it worth while to collect and translate a few passages in which the unorthodox view is upheld. The following, by Ssu-ma Ch`ien, shows that for all his ardent admiration of Confucius, he was yet no advocate of peace at any price: --

Military weapons are the means used by the Sage to punish violence and cruelty, to give peace to troublous times, to remove difficulties and dangers,

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and to succor those who are in peril. Every animal with blood in its veins and horns on its head will fight when it is attacked. How much more so will man, who carries in his breast the faculties of love and hatred, joy and anger! When he is pleased, a feeling of affection springs up within him; when angry, his poisoned sting is brought into play. That is the natural law which governs his being.... What then shall be said of those scholars of our time, blind to all great issues, and without any appreciation of relative values, who can only bark out their stale formulas about "virtue" and "civilization," condemning the use of military weapons? They will surely bring our country to impotence and dishonor and the loss of her rightful heritage; or, at the very least, they will bring about invasion and rebellion, sacrifice of territory and general enfeeblement. Yet they obstinately refuse to modify the position they have taken up. The truth is that, just as in the family the teacher must not spare the rod, and punishments cannot be dispensed with in the State, so military chastisement can never be allowed to fall into abeyance in the Empire. All one can say is that this power will be exercised wisely by some, foolishly by others, and that among those who bear arms some will be loyal and others rebellious. [58]

The next piece is taken from Tu Mu's preface to his commentary on Sun Tzu:
--

War may be defined as punishment, which is one of the functions of government. It was the profession of Chung Yu and Jan Ch`iu, both disciples of Confucius. Nowadays, the holding of trials and hearing of litigation, the imprisonment of offenders and their execution by flogging in the market- place, are all done by officials. But the wielding of huge armies, the throwing down of fortified cities, the hauling of women and children into captivity, and the beheading of traitors -- this is also work which is done by officials. The objects of the rack and of military weapons are essentially the same. There is no intrinsic difference between the punishment of flogging and cutting off heads in war. For the lesser infractions of law, which are easily dealt with, only a small amount of force need be employed: hence the use of military weapons and wholesale decapitation. In both cases, however, the end in view is to get rid of wicked people, and to give comfort and relief to the good.... Chi-sun asked Jan Yu, saying: "Have you, Sir, acquired your military aptitude by study, or is it innate?" Jan Yu replied: "It has been acquired by study." [59] "How can that be so," said Chi-sun, "seeing that you are a disciple of Confucius?" "It is a fact," replied Jan Yu; "I was taught by Confucius. It is fitting that the great Sage should exercise both civil and military functions, though to be sure my instruction in the art of fighting has not yet gone very far."

Now, who the author was of this rigid distinction between the "civil" and the "military," and the limitation of each to a separate sphere of action, or in what year of which dynasty it was first introduced, is more than I can say. But, at any rate, it has come about that the members of the governing class are quite afraid of enlarging on military topics, or do so only in a shamefaced manner. If

any are bold enough to discuss the subject, they are at once set down as eccentric individuals of coarse and brutal propensities. This is an extraordinary instance in which, through sheer lack of reasoning, men unhappily lose sight of fundamental principles.

When the Duke of Chou was minister under Ch`eng Wang, he regulated ceremonies and made music, and venerated the arts of scholarship and learning; yet when the barbarians of the River Huai revolted, [60] he sallied forth and chastised them. When Confucius held office under the Duke of Lu, and a meeting was convened at Chia-ku, [61] he said: "If pacific negotiations are in progress, warlike preparations should have been made beforehand." He rebuked and shamed the Marquis of Ch`i, who cowered under him and dared not proceed to violence. How can it be said that these two great Sages had no knowledge of military matters?

We have seen that the great Chu Hsi held Sun Tzu in high esteem. He also appeals to the authority of the Classics: --

Our Master Confucius, answering Duke Ling of Wei, said: "I have never studied matters connected with armies and battalions." [62] Replying to K`ung Wen-tzu, he said: I have not been instructed about buff-coats and weapons." But if we turn to the meeting at Chia-ku, we find that he used armed force against the men of Lai, so that the marquis of Ch`i was overawed. Again, when the inhabitants of Pi revolted, he ordered his officers to attack them, whereupon they were defeated and fled in confusion.

He once uttered the words: "If I fight, I conquer." [63] And Jan Yu also said: "The Sage exercises both civil and military functions." [64] Can it be a fact that Confucius never studied or received instruction in the art of war? We can only say that he did not specially choose matters connected with armies and fighting to be the subject of his teaching.

Sun Hsing-yen, the editor of Sun Tzu, writes in similar strain: --

Confucius said: "I am unversed in military matters." [65] He also said: "If I fight, I conquer." Confucius ordered ceremonies and regulated music. Now war constitutes one of the five classes of State ceremonial, [66] and must not be treated as an independent branch of study. Hence, the words "I am unversed in" must be taken to mean that there are things which even an inspired Teacher does not know. Those who have to lead an army and devise stratagems, must learn the art of war. But if one can command the services of a good general like Sun Tzu, who was employed by Wu Tzu-hsu, there is no need to learn it oneself. Hence the remark added by Confucius: "If I fight, I conquer."

The men of the present day, however, willfully interpret these words of Confucius in their narrowest sense, as though he meant that books on the art

of war were not worth reading. With blind persistency, they adduce the example of Chao Kua, who pored over his father's books to no purpose, [67] as a proof that all military theory is useless. Again, seeing that books on war have to do with such things as opportunism in designing plans, and the conversion of spies, they hold that the art is immoral and unworthy of a sage. These people ignore the fact that the studies of our scholars and the civil administration of our officials also require steady application and practice before efficiency is reached. The ancients were particularly chary of allowing mere novices to botch their work. [68] Weapons are baneful [69] and fighting perilous; and useless unless a general is in constant practice, he ought not to hazard other men's lives in battle. [70] Hence it is essential that Sun Tzu's 13 chapters should be studied.

Hsiang Liang used to instruct his nephew Chi [71] in the art of war. Chi got a rough idea of the art in its general bearings, but would not pursue his studies to their proper outcome, the consequence being that he was finally defeated and overthrown.

He did not realize that the tricks and artifices of war are beyond verbal computation. Duke Hsiang of Sung and King Yen of Hsu were brought to destruction by their misplaced humanity. The treacherous and underhand nature of war necessitates the use of guile and stratagem suited to the occasion. There is a case on record of Confucius himself having violated an extorted oath, [72] and also of his having left the Sung State in disguise. [73] Can we then recklessly arraign Sun Tzu for disregarding truth and honesty?

Bibliography

The following are the oldest Chinese treatises on war, after Sun Tzu. The notes on each have been drawn principally from the SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU CHIEN MING MU LU, ch. 9, fol. 22 sqq.

1. WU TZU, in 1 CHUAN or 6 chapters. By Wu Ch`i (d. 381 B.C.). A genuine work. See SHIH CHI, ch. 65.
2. SSU-MA FA, in 1 CHUAN or 5 chapters. Wrongly attributed to Ssu-ma Jang-chu of the 6th century B.C. Its date, however, must be early, as the customs of the three ancient dynasties are constantly to be met within its pages. See SHIH CHI, ch. 64. The SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU (ch. 99, f. 1) remarks that the oldest three treatises on war, SUN TZU, WU TZU and SSU-MA FA, are, generally speaking, only concerned with things strictly military - the art of producing, collecting, training and drilling troops, and

the correct theory with regard to measures of expediency, laying plans, transport of goods and the handling of soldiers - in strong contrast to later works, in which the science of war is usually blended with metaphysics, divination and magical arts in general.

3. LIU T`AO, in 6 CHUAN, or 60 chapters. Attributed to Lu Wang (or Lu Shang, also known as T`ai Kung) of the 12th century B.C. [74] But its style does not belong to the era of the Three Dynasties. Lu Te-ming (550-625 A.D.) mentions the work, and enumerates the headings of the six sections so that the forgery cannot have been later than Sui dynasty.

4. WEI LIAO TZU, in 5 CHUAN. Attributed to Wei Liao (4th cent. B.C.), who studied under the famous Kuei-ku Tzu. The work appears to have been originally in 31 chapters, whereas the text we possess contains only 24. Its matter is sound enough in the main, though the strategical devices differ considerably from those of the Warring States period. It is been furnished with a commentary by the well-known Sung philosopher Chang Tsai.

5. SAN LUEH, in 3 CHUAN. Attributed to Huang-shih Kung, a legendary personage who is said to have bestowed it on Chang Liang (d. 187 B.C.) in an interview on a bridge. But here again, the style is not that of works dating from the Ch`in or Han period. The Han Emperor Kuang Wu [25-57 A.D.] apparently quotes from it in one of his proclamations; but the passage in question may have been inserted later on, in order to prove the genuineness of the work. We shall not be far out if we refer it to the Northern Sung period [420-478 A.D.], or somewhat earlier.

6. LI WEI KUNG WEN TUI, in 3 sections. Written in the form of a dialogue between T`ai Tsung and his great general Li Ching, it is usually ascribed to the latter. Competent authorities consider it a forgery, though the author was evidently well versed in the art of war.

7. LI CHING PING FA (not to be confounded with the foregoing) is a short treatise in 8 chapters, preserved in the T`ung Tien, but not published separately. This fact explains its omission from the SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU.

8. WU CH`I CHING, in 1 CHUAN. Attributed to the legendary minister Feng Hou, with exegetical notes by Kung-sun Hung of the Han dynasty (d. 121 B.C.), and said to have been eulogized by the celebrated general Ma Lung (d. 300 A.D.). Yet the earliest mention of it is in the SUNG CHIH. Although a forgery, the work is well put together.

Considering the high popular estimation in which Chu-ko Liang has always been held, it is not surprising to find more than one work on war ascribed to his pen. Such are (1) the SHIH LIU TS`E (1 CHUAN), preserved in the YUNG LO TA TIEN; (2) CHIANG YUAN (1 CHUAN); and (3) HSIN SHU (1 CHUAN), which

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steals wholesale from Sun Tzu. None of these has the slightest claim to be considered genuine.

Most of the large Chinese encyclopedias contain extensive sections devoted to the literature of war. The following references may be found useful: --

T`UNG TIEN (circa 800 A.D.), ch. 148-162.

T`AI P`ING YU LAN (983), ch. 270-359.

WEN HSIEN TUNG K`AO (13th cent.), ch. 221.

YU HAI (13th cent.), ch. 140, 141.

SAN TS`AI T`U HUI (16th cent).

KUANG PO WU CHIH (1607), ch. 31, 32.

CH`IEN CH`IO LEI SHU (1632), ch. 75.

YUAN CHIEN LEI HAN (1710), ch. 206-229.

KU CHIN T`U SHU CHI CH`ENG (1726), section XXX, esp. ch. 81-90.

HSU WEN HSIEN T`UNG K`AO (1784), ch. 121-134.

HUANG CH`AO CHING SHIH WEN PIEN (1826), ch. 76, 77.

The bibliographical sections of certain historical works also deserve mention:

--

CH`IEN HAN SHU, ch. 30.

SUI SHU, ch. 32-35.

CHIU T`ANG SHU, ch. 46, 47.

HSIN T`ANG SHU, ch. 57,60.

SUNG SHIH, ch. 202-209.

T`UNG CHIH (circa 1150), ch. 68.

To these of course must be added the great Catalogue of the Imperial Library:

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SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU TSUNG MU T`I YAO (1790), ch. 99, 100.

Footnotes

1. SHI CHI, ch. 65.

2. He reigned from 514 to 496 B.C.

3. SHI CHI, ch. 130.

4. The appellation of Nang Wa.

5. SHI CHI, ch. 31.

6. SHI CHI, ch. 25.

7. The appellation of Hu Yen, mentioned in ch. 39 under the year 637.

8. Wang-tzu Ch`eng-fu, ch. 32, year 607.

9. The mistake is natural enough. Native critics refer to a work of the Han dynasty, which says: "Ten LI outside the WU gate [of the city of Wu, now Soochow in Kiangsu] there is a great mound, raised to commemorate the entertainment of Sun Wu of Ch`i, who excelled in the art of war, by the King of Wu."

10. "They attached strings to wood to make bows, and sharpened wood to make arrows. The use of bows and arrows is to keep the Empire in awe."

11. The son and successor of Ho Lu. He was finally defeated and overthrown by Kou chien, King of Yueh, in 473 B.C. See post.

12. King Yen of Hsu, a fabulous being, of whom Sun Hsing-yen says in his preface: "His humanity brought him to destruction."

13. The passage I have put in brackets is omitted in the T`U SHU, and may be an interpolation. It was known, however to Chang Shou-chieh of the T`ang dynasty, and appears in the T`AI P`ING YU LAN.

14. Ts`ao Kung seems to be thinking of the first part of chap. II, perhaps especially of ss. 8.

15. See chap. XI.

16. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that WU TZU, which is not in 6 chapters, has 48 assigned to it in the HAN CHIH. Likewise, the CHUNG YUNG is credited with 49 chapters, though now only in one only. In the case of very short works, one is tempted to think that P`IEN might simply mean "leaves."

17. Yeh Shih of the Sung dynasty [1151-1223].

18. He hardly deserves to be bracketed with assassins.

19. See Chapter 7, ss. 27 and Chapter 11, ss. 28.

20. See Chapter 11, ss. 28. Chuan Chu is the abbreviated form of his name.

21. I.e. Po P`ei. See ante.

22. The nucleus of this work is probably genuine, though large additions have been made by later hands. Kuan chung died in 645 B.C.

23. See infra, beginning of INTRODUCTION.

24. I do not know what this work, unless it be the last chapter of another work. Why that chapter should be singled out, however, is not clear.

25. About 480 B.C.

26. That is, I suppose, the age of Wu Wang and Chou Kung.

27. In the 3rd century B.C.

28. Ssu-ma Jang-chu, whose family name was T`ien, lived in the latter half of the 6th century B.C., and is also believed to have written a work on war. See SHIH CHI, ch. 64, and infra at the beginning of the INTRODUCTION.

29. See Legge's Classics, vol. V, Prolegomena p. 27. Legge thinks that the TSO CHUAN must have been written in the 5th century, but not before 424 B.C.

30. See MENCIUS III. 1. iii. 13-20.

31. When Wu first appears in the CH`UN CH`IU in 584, it is already at variance with its powerful neighbor. The CH`UN CH`IU first mentions Yueh in 537, the TSO CHUAN in 601.

32. This is explicitly stated in the TSO CHUAN, XXXII, 2.
33. There is this to be said for the later period, that the feud would tend to grow more bitter after each encounter, and thus more fully justify the language used in XI. ss. 30.
34. With Wu Yuan himself the case is just the reverse: -- a spurious treatise on war has been fathered on him simply because he was a great general. Here we have an obvious inducement to forgery. Sun Wu, on the other hand, cannot have been widely known to fame in the 5th century.
35. From TSO CHUAN: "From the date of King Chao's accession [515] there was no year in which Ch`u was not attacked by Wu."
36. Preface ad fin: "My family comes from Lo-an, and we are really descended from Sun Tzu. I am ashamed to say that I only read my ancestor's work from a literary point of view, without comprehending the military technique. So long have we been enjoying the blessings of peace!"
37. Hoa-yin is about 14 miles from T`ung-kuan on the eastern border of Shensi. The temple in question is still visited by those about the ascent of the Western Sacred Mountain. It is mentioned in a text as being "situated five LI east of the district city of Hua-yin. The temple contains the Hua-shan tablet inscribed by the T`ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung [713-755]."
38. See my "Catalogue of Chinese Books" (Luzac & Co., 1908), no. 40.
39. This is a discussion of 29 difficult passages in Sun Tzu.
40. Cf. Catalogue of the library of Fan family at Ningpo: "His commentary is frequently obscure; it furnishes a clue, but does not fully develop the meaning."
41. WEN HSIEN T`UNG K`AO, ch. 221.
42. It is interesting to note that M. Pelliot has recently discovered chapters 1, 4 and 5 of this lost work in the "Grottos of the Thousand Buddhas." See B.E.F.E.O., t. VIII, nos. 3-4, p. 525.
43. The Hsia, the Shang and the Chou. Although the last-named was nominally existent in Sun Tzu's day, it retained hardly a vestige of power, and the old military organization had practically gone by the board. I can suggest no other explanation of the passage.
44. See CHOU LI, xxix. 6-10.
45. T`UNG K`AO, ch. 221.
46. This appears to be still extant. See Wylie's "Notes," p. 91 (new edition).
47. T`UNG K`AO, loc. cit.
48. A notable person in his day. His biography is given in the SAN KUO CHIH, ch. 10.
49. See XI. ss. 58, note.
50. HOU HAN SHU, ch. 17 ad init.
51. SAN KUO CHIH, ch. 54.
52. SUNG SHIH, ch. 365 ad init.
53. The few Europeans who have yet had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with Sun Tzu are not behindhand in their praise. In this connection, I may perhaps be excused for quoting from a letter from Lord Roberts, to whom the sheets of the present work were submitted previous to publication:

"Many of Sun Wu's maxims are perfectly applicable to the present day, and no. 11 [in Chapter VIII] is one that the people of this country would do well to take to heart."

54. Ch. 140.

55. See IV. ss. 3.

56. The allusion may be to Mencius VI. 2. ix. 2.

57. The TSO CHUAN.

58. SHIH CHI, ch. 25, fol. I.

59. Cf. SHIH CHI, ch 47.

60. See SHU CHING, preface ss. 55.

61. See SHIH CHI, ch. 47.

62. Lun Yu, XV. 1.

63. I failed to trace this utterance.

64. Supra.

65. Supra.

66. The other four being worship, mourning, entertainment of guests, and festive rites. See SHU CHING, ii. 1. III. 8, and CHOU LI, IX. fol. 49.

67. See XIII. ss. 11, note.

68. This is a rather obscure allusion to the TSO CHUAN, where Tzu-ch`an says: "If you have a piece of beautiful brocade, you will not employ a mere learner to make it up."

69. Cf. TAO TE CHING, ch. 31.

70. Sun Hsing-yen might have quoted Confucius again. See LUN YU, XIII. 29, 30.

71. Better known as Hsiang Yu [233-202 B.C.].

72. SHIH CHI, ch. 47.

73. SHIH CHI, ch. 38.

74. See XIII. ss. 27, note. Further details on T`ai Kung will be found in the SHIH CHI, ch. 32 ad init. Besides the tradition which makes him a former minister of Chou Hsin, two other accounts of him are there given, according to which he would appear to have been first raised from a humble private station by Wen Wang.

I. LAYING PLANS

[Ts`ao Kung, in defining the meaning of the Chinese for the title of this chapter, says it refers to the deliberations in the temple selected by the general for his temporary use, or as we should say, in his tent. See. ss. 26.]

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State. 2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected. 3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

4. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline.

[It appears from what follows that Sun Tzu means by "Moral Law" a principle of harmony, not unlike the Tao of Lao Tzu in its moral aspect. One might be tempted to render it by "morale," were it not considered as an attribute of the ruler in ss. 13.]

5, 6. The MORAL LAW causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, Undismayed by any danger.

[Tu Yu quotes Wang Tzu as saying: "Without constant practice, the officers will be nervous and undecided when mustering for battle; without constant practice, the general will be wavering and irresolute when the crisis is at hand."]

7. HEAVEN signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

[The commentators, I think, make an unnecessary mystery of two words here. Meng Shih refers to "the hard and the soft, waxing and waning" of Heaven. Wang Hsi, however, may be right in saying that what is meant is "the general economy of Heaven," including the five elements, the four seasons, wind and clouds, and other phenomena.]

8. EARTH comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death. 9. The COMMANDER stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.

[The five cardinal virtues of the Chinese are (1) humanity or benevolence; (2) uprightness of mind; (3) self-respect, self-control, or "proper feeling;" (4) wisdom; (5) sincerity or good faith. Here "wisdom" and "sincerity" are put before "humanity or benevolence," and the two military virtues of "courage" and "strictness" substituted for "uprightness of mind" and "self-respect, self-control, or 'proper feeling.'"]

10. By METHOD AND DISCIPLINE are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.

12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise: -- 13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law?

[I.e., "is in harmony with his subjects." Cf. ss. 5.]

(2) Which of the two generals has most ability? (3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?

[See ss. 7,8]

(4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?

[Tu Mu alludes to the remarkable story of Ts`ao Ts`ao (A.D. 155-220), who was such a strict disciplinarian that once, in accordance with his own severe regulations against injury to standing crops, he condemned himself to death for having allowed his horse to shy into a field of corn! However, in lieu of losing his head, he was persuaded to satisfy his sense of justice by cutting off his hair. Ts`ao Ts`ao's own comment on the present passage is characteristically curt: "when you lay down a law, see that it is not disobeyed; if it is disobeyed the offender must be put to death."]

(5) Which army is stronger?

[Morally as well as physically. As Mei Yao-ch`en puts it, freely rendered, "ESPIRIT DE CORPS and 'big battalions.'"]

(6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained?

[Tu Yu quotes Wang Tzu as saying: "Without constant practice, the officers will be nervous and undecided when mustering for battle; without constant practice, the general will be wavering and irresolute when the crisis is at hand."]

(7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

[On which side is there the most absolute certainty that merit will be properly rewarded and misdeeds summarily punished?]

14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.

15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: -- let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat: --let such a one be Dismissed!

[The form of this paragraph reminds us that Sun Tzu's treatise was composed expressly for the benefit of his patron Ho Lu, king of the Wu State.]

16. While heading the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.

17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.

[Sun Tzu, as a practical soldier, will have none of the "bookish theoretic." He cautions us here not to pin our faith to abstract principles; "for," as Chang Yu puts it, "while the main laws of strategy can be stated clearly enough for the benefit of all and sundry, you must be guided by the actions of the enemy in attempting to secure a favorable position in actual warfare." On the eve of the battle of Waterloo, Lord Uxbridge, commanding the cavalry, went to the Duke of Wellington in order to learn what his plans and calculations were for the morrow, because, as he explained, he might suddenly find himself Commander-in-chief and would be unable to frame new plans in a critical moment. The Duke listened quietly and then said: "Who will attack the first tomorrow -- I or Bonaparte?" "Bonaparte," replied Lord Uxbridge. "Well," continued the Duke, "Bonaparte has not given me any idea of his projects; and as my plans will depend upon his, how can you expect me to tell you what mine are?" [1]]

18. All warfare is based on deception.

[The truth of this pithy and profound saying will be admitted by every soldier. Col. Henderson tells us that Wellington, great in so many military qualities, was especially distinguished by "the extraordinary skill with which he concealed his movements and deceived both friend and foe."]

19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.

20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

[All commentators, except Chang Yu, say, "When he is in disorder, crush him." It is more natural to suppose that Sun Tzu is still illustrating the uses of deception in war.]

21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.

22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.

[Wang Tzu, quoted by Tu Yu, says that the good tactician plays with his adversary as a cat plays with a mouse, first feigning weakness and immobility, and then suddenly pouncing upon him.]

23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest.

[This is probably the meaning though Mei Yao-ch`en has the note: "while we are taking our ease, wait for the enemy to tire himself out." The YU LAN has "Lure him on and tire him out."]

If his forces are united, separate them.

[Less plausible is the interpretation favored by most of the commentators: "If sovereign and subject are in accord, put division between them."]

24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.

25. These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.

26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought.

[Chang Yu tells us that in ancient times it was customary for a temple to be set apart for the use of a general who was about to take the field, in order that he might there elaborate his plan of campaign.]

The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

[1] "Words on Wellington," by Sir. W. Fraser.

II. WAGING WAR

[Ts`ao Kung has the note: "He who wishes to fight must first count the cost," which prepares us for the discovery that the subject of the chapter is not what we might expect from the title, but is primarily a consideration of ways and means.]

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers,

[The "swift chariots" were lightly built and, according to Chang Yu, used for the attack; the "heavy chariots" were heavier, and designed for purposes of defense. Li Ch`uan, it is true, says that the latter were light, but this seems hardly probable. It is interesting to note the analogies between early Chinese warfare and that of the Homeric Greeks. In each case, the war-chariot was the important factor, forming as it did the nucleus round which was grouped a certain number of foot-soldiers. With regard to the numbers given here, we are informed that each swift chariot was accompanied by 75 footmen, and each heavy chariot by 25 footmen, so that the whole army would be divided up into a thousand battalions, each consisting of two chariots and a hundred men.]

with provisions enough to carry them a thousand LI,

[2.78 modern LI go to a mile. The length may have varied slightly since Sun Tzu's time.]

the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armor, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.

2. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.

3. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.

4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue. 5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.

[This concise and difficult sentence is not well explained by any of the commentators. Ts`ao Kung, Li Ch`uan, Meng Shih, Tu Yu, Tu Mu and Mei Yao-ch`en have notes to the effect that a general, though naturally stupid, may nevertheless conquer through sheer force of rapidity. Ho Shih says: "Haste may be stupid, but at any rate it saves expenditure of energy and treasure; protracted operations may be very clever, but they bring calamity in their train." Wang Hsi evades the difficulty by remarking: "Lengthy operations mean an army growing old, wealth being expended, an empty exchequer and distress

among the people; true cleverness insures against the occurrence of such calamities." Chang Yu says: "So long as victory can be attained, stupid haste is preferable to clever dilatoriness." Now Sun Tzu says nothing whatever, except possibly by implication, about ill-considered haste being better than ingenious but lengthy operations. What he does say is something much more guarded, namely that, while speed may sometimes be injudicious, tardiness can never be anything but foolish -- if only because it means impoverishment to the nation. In considering the point raised here by Sun Tzu, the classic example of Fabius Cunctator will inevitably occur to the mind. That general deliberately measured the endurance of Rome against that of Hannibal's isolated army, because it seemed to him that the latter was more likely to suffer from a long campaign in a strange country. But it is quite a moot question whether his tactics would have proved successful in the long run. Their reversal it is true, led to Cannae; but this only establishes a negative presumption in their favor.]

6. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.

7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.

[That is, with rapidity. Only one who knows the disastrous effects of a long war can realize the supreme importance of rapidity in bringing it to a close. Only two commentators seem to favor this interpretation, but it fits well into the logic of the context, whereas the rendering, "He who does not know the evils of war cannot appreciate its benefits," is distinctly pointless.]

8. The skillful soldier does not raise a second levy, neither are his supply-wagons loaded more than twice.

[Once war is declared, he will not waste precious time in waiting for reinforcements, nor will he return his army back for fresh supplies, but crosses the enemy's frontier without delay. This may seem an audacious policy to recommend, but with all great strategists, from Julius Caesar to Napoleon Bonaparte, the value of time -- that is, being a little ahead of your opponent -- has counted for more than either numerical superiority or the nicest calculations with regard to commissariat.]

9. Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy. Thus the army will have food enough for its needs.

[The Chinese word translated here as "war material" literally means "things to be used", and is meant in the widest sense. It includes all the impedimenta of an army, apart from provisions.]

10. Poverty of the State exchequer causes an army to be maintained by contributions from a distance. Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be impoverished.

[The beginning of this sentence does not balance properly with the next, though obviously intended to do so. The arrangement, moreover, is so awkward that I cannot help suspecting some corruption in the text. It never seems to occur to Chinese commentators that an emendation may be necessary for the sense, and we get no help from them there. The Chinese words Sun Tzu used to indicate the cause of the people's impoverishment clearly have reference to some system by which the husbandmen sent their contributions of corn to the army direct. But why should it fall on them to maintain an army in this way, except because the State or Government is too poor to do so?]

11. On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's substance to be drained away.

[Wang Hsi says high prices occur before the army has left its own territory. Ts`ao Kung understands it of an army that has already crossed the frontier.]

12. When their substance is drained away, the peasantry will be afflicted by heavy exactions.

13, 14. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three-tenths of their income will be dissipated;

[Tu Mu and Wang Hsi agree that the people are not mulcted not of 3/10, but of 7/10, of their income. But this is hardly to be extracted from our text. Ho Shih has a characteristic tag: "The PEOPLE being regarded as the essential part of the State, and FOOD as the people's heaven, is it not right that those in authority should value and be careful of both?"]

while government expenses for broken chariots, worn-out horses, breast-plates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draught-oxen and heavy wagons, will amount to four-tenths of its total revenue.

15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single PICUL of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store.

[Because twenty cartloads will be consumed in the process of transporting one cartload to the front. A PICUL is a unit of measure equal to 133.3 pounds (65.5 kilograms).]

16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

[Tu Mu says: "Rewards are necessary in order to make the soldiers see the advantage of beating the enemy; thus, when you capture spoils from the enemy, they must be used as rewards, so that all your men may have a keen desire to fight, each on his own account."]

17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.

18. This is called, using the conquered foe to augment one's own strength.

19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.

[As Ho Shih remarks: "War is not a thing to be trifled with." Sun Tzu here reiterates the main lesson which this chapter is intended to enforce."]

20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.

III. ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

1. Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

[The equivalent to an army corps, according to Ssu-ma Fa, consisted nominally of 12500 men; according to Ts`ao Kung, the equivalent of a regiment contained 500 men, the equivalent to a detachment consists from any number between 100 and 500, and the equivalent of a company contains from 5 to 100 men. For the last two, however, Chang Yu gives the exact figures of 100 and 5 respectively.]

2. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

[Here again, no modern strategist but will approve the words of the old Chinese general. Moltke's greatest triumph, the capitulation of the huge French army at Sedan, was won practically without bloodshed.]

3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans;

[Perhaps the word "balk" falls short of expressing the full force of the Chinese word, which implies not an attitude of defense, whereby one might be content to foil the enemy's stratagems one after another, but an active policy of counter-attack. Ho Shih puts this very clearly in his note: "When the enemy has made a plan of attack against us, we must anticipate him by delivering our own attack first."]

the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces;

[Isolating him from his allies. We must not forget that Sun Tzu, in speaking of hostilities, always has in mind the numerous states or principalities into which the China of his day was split up.]

the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field;

[When he is already at full strength.]

and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

4. The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided.

[Another sound piece of military theory. Had the Boers acted upon it in 1899, and refrained from dissipating their strength before Kimberley, Mafeking, or even Ladysmith, it is more than probable that they would have been masters of the situation before the British were ready seriously to oppose them.]

The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months;

[It is not quite clear what the Chinese word, here translated as "mantlets", described. Ts`ao Kung simply defines them as "large shields," but we get a better idea of them from Li Ch`uan, who says they were to protect the heads of those who were assaulting the city walls at close quarters. This seems to suggest a sort of Roman TESTUDO, ready made. Tu Mu says they were wheeled vehicles used in repelling attacks, but this is denied by Ch`en Hao. See supra II. 14. The name is also applied to turrets on city walls. Of the "movable shelters" we get a fairly clear description from several commentators. They were wooden missile-proof structures on four wheels, propelled from within, covered over with raw hides, and used in sieges to convey

parties of men to and from the walls, for the purpose of filling up the encircling moat with earth. Tu Mu adds that they are now called "wooden donkeys."]

and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more.

[These were great mounds or ramparts of earth heaped up to the level of the enemy's walls in order to discover the weak points in the defense, and also to destroy the fortified turrets mentioned in the preceding note.]

5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants,

[This vivid simile of Ts'ao Kung is taken from the spectacle of an army of ants climbing a wall. The meaning is that the general, losing patience at the long delay, may make a premature attempt to storm the place before his engines of war are ready.]

with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.

[We are reminded of the terrible losses of the Japanese before Port Arthur, in the most recent siege which history has to record.]

6. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.

[Chia Lin notes that he only overthrows the Government, but does no harm to individuals. The classical instance is Wu Wang, who after having put an end to the Yin dynasty was acclaimed "Father and mother of the people."]

7. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete.

[Owing to the double meanings in the Chinese text, the latter part of the sentence is susceptible of quite a different meaning: "And thus, the weapon not being blunted by use, its keenness remains perfect."]

This is the method of attacking by stratagem. 8. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him;

[Straightway, without waiting for any further advantage.]

if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.

[Tu Mu takes exception to the saying; and at first sight, indeed, it appears to violate a fundamental principle of war. Ts'ao Kung, however, gives a clue to Sun Tzu's meaning: "Being two to the enemy's one, we may use one part of our army in the regular way, and the other for some special diversion." Chang Yu thus further elucidates the point: "If our force is twice as numerous as that of the enemy, it should be split up into two divisions, one to meet the enemy in front, and one to fall upon his rear; if he replies to the frontal attack, he may be crushed from behind; if to the rearward attack, he may be crushed in front." This is what is meant by saying that 'one part may be used in the regular way, and the other for some special diversion.' Tu Mu does not understand that dividing one's army is simply an irregular, just as concentrating it is the regular, strategical method, and he is too hasty in calling this a mistake."]

9. If equally matched, we can offer battle;

[Li Ch`uan, followed by Ho Shih, gives the following paraphrase: "If attackers and attacked are equally matched in strength, only the able general will fight."]

if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy;

[The meaning, "we can WATCH the enemy," is certainly a great improvement on the above; but unfortunately there appears to be no very good authority for the variant. Chang Yu reminds us that the saying only applies if the other factors are equal; a small difference in numbers is often more than counterbalanced by superior energy and discipline.]

if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.

10. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force.

11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.

[As Li Ch`uan tersely puts it: "Gap indicates deficiency; if the general's ability is not perfect (i.e. if he is not thoroughly versed in his profession), his army will lack strength."]

12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army: --

13. (1) By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.

[Li Ch`uan adds the comment: "It is like tying together the legs of a thoroughbred, so that it is unable to gallop." One would naturally think of "the ruler" in this passage as being at home, and trying to direct the movements of his army from a distance. But the commentators understand just the reverse, and quote the saying of T`ai Kung: "A kingdom should not be governed from without, and army should not be directed from within." Of course it is true that, during an engagement, or when in close touch with the enemy, the general should not be in the thick of his own troops, but a little distance apart. Otherwise, he will be liable to misjudge the position as a whole, and give wrong orders.]

14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.

[Ts`ao Kung's note is, freely translated: "The military sphere and the civil sphere are wholly distinct; you can't handle an army in kid gloves." And Chang Yu says: "Humanity and justice are the principles on which to govern a state, but not an army; opportunism and flexibility, on the other hand, are military rather than civil virtues to assimilate the governing of an army"--to that of a State, understood.]

15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination,

[That is, he is not careful to use the right man in the right place.]

through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This shakes the confidence of the soldiers.

[I follow Mei Yao-ch`en here. The other commentators refer not to the ruler, as in SS. 13, 14, but to the officers he employs. Thus Tu Yu says: "If a general is ignorant of the principle of adaptability, he must not be entrusted with a position of authority." Tu Mu quotes: "The skillful employer of men will employ the wise man, the brave man, the covetous man, and the stupid man. For the wise man delights in establishing his merit, the brave man likes to show his courage in action, the covetous man is quick at seizing advantages, and the stupid man has no fear of death."]

16. But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes. This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away.

17. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory: (1) He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.

[Chang Yu says: If he can fight, he advances and takes the offensive; if he cannot fight, he retreats and remains on the defensive. He will invariably conquer who knows whether it is right to take the offensive or the defensive.]

(2) He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

[This is not merely the general's ability to estimate numbers correctly, as Li Ch`uan and others make out. Chang Yu expounds the saying more satisfactorily: "By applying the art of war, it is possible with a lesser force to defeat a greater, and vice versa. The secret lies in an eye for locality, and in not letting the right moment slip. Thus Wu Tzu says: 'With a superior force, make for easy ground; with an inferior one, make for difficult ground.'"]

(3) He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks. (4) He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared. (5) He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

[Tu Yu quotes Wang Tzu as saying: "It is the sovereign's function to give broad instructions, but to decide on battle it is the function of the general." It is needless to dilate on the military disasters which have been caused by undue interference with operations in the field on the part of the home government. Napoleon undoubtedly owed much of his extraordinary success to the fact that he was not hampered by central authority.]

18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat.

[Li Ch`uan cites the case of Fu Chien, prince of Ch`in, who in 383 A.D. marched with a vast army against the Chin Emperor. When warned not to despise an enemy who could command the services of such men as Hsieh An and Huan Ch`ung, he boastfully replied: "I have the population of eight provinces at my back, infantry and horsemen to the number of one million; why, they could dam up the Yangtze River itself by merely throwing their whips into the stream. What danger have I to fear?" Nevertheless, his forces were soon after disastrously routed at the Fei River, and he was obliged to beat a hasty retreat.]

If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

[Chang Yu said: "Knowing the enemy enables you to take the offensive, knowing yourself enables you to stand on the defensive." He adds: "Attack is the secret of defense; defense is the planning of an attack." It would be hard to find a better epitome of the root-principle of war.]

IV. TACTICAL DISPOSITIONS

[Ts`ao Kung explains the Chinese meaning of the words for the title of this chapter: "marching and countermarching on the part of the two armies with a view to discovering each other's condition." Tu Mu says: "It is through the dispositions of an army that its condition may be discovered. Conceal your dispositions, and your condition will remain secret, which leads to victory,; show your dispositions, and your condition will become patent, which leads to defeat." Wang Hsi remarks that the good general can "secure success by modifying his tactics to meet those of the enemy."]

1. Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.

2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.

[That is, of course, by a mistake on the enemy's part.]

3. Thus the good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat, but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.

[Chang Yu says this is done, "By concealing the disposition of his troops, covering up his tracks, and taking unremitting precautions."]

4. Hence the saying: One may KNOW how to conquer without being able to DO it.

5. Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.

[I retain the sense found in a similar passage in ss. 1-3, in spite of the fact that the commentators are all against me. The meaning they give, "He who cannot conquer takes the defensive," is plausible enough.]

6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.

7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth;

[Literally, "hides under the ninth earth," which is a metaphor indicating the utmost secrecy and concealment, so that the enemy may not know his whereabouts."]

he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven.

[Another metaphor, implying that he falls on his adversary like a thunderbolt, against which there is no time to prepare. This is the opinion of most of the commentators.]

Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.

8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.

[As Ts`ao Kung remarks, "the thing is to see the plant before it has germinated," to foresee the event before the action has begun. Li Ch`uan alludes to the story of Han Hsin who, when about to attack the vastly superior army of Chao, which was strongly entrenched in the city of Ch`eng-an, said to his officers: "Gentlemen, we are going to annihilate the enemy, and shall meet again at dinner." The officers hardly took his words seriously, and gave a very dubious assent. But Han Hsin had already worked out in his mind the details of a clever stratagem, whereby, as he foresaw, he was able to capture the city and inflict a crushing defeat on his adversary."]

9. Neither is it the acme of excellence if you fight and conquer and the whole Empire says, "Well done!"

[True excellence being, as Tu Mu says: "To plan secretly, to move surreptitiously, to foil the enemy's intentions and balk his schemes, so that at last the day may be won without shedding a drop of blood." Sun Tzu reserves his approbation for things that "the world's coarse thumb And finger fail to plumb."]

10. To lift an autumn hair is no sign of great strength;

["Autumn" hair" is explained as the fur of a hare, which is finest in autumn, when it begins to grow afresh. The phrase is a very common one in Chinese writers.]

to see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.

[Ho Shih gives as real instances of strength, sharp sight and quick hearing: Wu Huo, who could lift a tripod weighing 250 stone; Li Chu, who at a distance of a hundred paces could see objects no bigger than a mustard seed; and Shih K`uang, a blind musician who could hear the footsteps of a mosquito.]

11. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.

[The last half is literally "one who, conquering, excels in easy conquering." Mei Yao-ch`en says: "He who only sees the obvious, wins his battles with difficulty; he who looks below the surface of things, wins with ease."]

12. Hence his victories bring him neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage.

[Tu Mu explains this very well: "Inasmuch as his victories are gained over circumstances that have not come to light, the world as large knows nothing of them, and he wins no reputation for wisdom; inasmuch as the hostile state submits before there has been any bloodshed, he receives no credit for courage."]

13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes.

[Ch`en Hao says: "He plans no superfluous marches, he devises no futile attacks." The connection of ideas is thus explained by Chang Yu: "One who seeks to conquer by sheer strength, clever though he may be at winning pitched battles, is also liable on occasion to be vanquished; whereas he who can look into the future and discern conditions that are not yet manifest, will never make a blunder and therefore invariably win."]

Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.

14. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.

[A "counsel of perfection" as Tu Mu truly observes. "Position" need not be confined to the actual ground occupied by the troops. It includes all the arrangements and preparations which a wise general will make to increase the safety of his army.]

15. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.

[Ho Shih thus expounds the paradox: "In warfare, first lay plans which will ensure victory, and then lead your army to battle; if you will not begin with stratagem but rely on brute strength alone, victory will no longer be assured."]

16. The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.

17. In respect of military method, we have, firstly, Measurement; secondly, Estimation of quantity; thirdly, Calculation; fourthly, Balancing of chances; fifthly, Victory.

18. Measurement owes its existence to Earth; Estimation of quantity to Measurement; Calculation to Estimation of quantity; Balancing of chances to Calculation; and Victory to Balancing of chances.

[It is not easy to distinguish the four terms very clearly in the Chinese. The first seems to be surveying and measurement of the ground, which enable us to form an estimate of the enemy's strength, and to make calculations based on the data thus obtained; we are thus led to a general weighing-up, or comparison of the enemy's chances with our own; if the latter turn the scale, then victory ensues. The chief difficulty lies in third term, which in the Chinese some commentators take as a calculation of NUMBERS, thereby making it nearly synonymous with the second term. Perhaps the second term should be thought of as a consideration of the enemy's general position or condition, while the third term is the estimate of his numerical strength. On the other hand, Tu Mu says: "The question of relative strength having been settled, we can bring the varied resources of cunning into play." Ho Shih seconds this interpretation, but weakens it. However, it points to the third term as being a calculation of numbers.]

19. A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound's weight placed in the scale against a single grain.

[Literally, "a victorious army is like an I (20 oz.) weighed against a SHU (1/24 oz.); a routed army is a SHU weighed against an I." The point is simply the enormous advantage which a disciplined force, flushed with victory, has over one demoralized by defeat." Legge, in his note on Mencius, I. 2. ix. 2, makes the I to be 24 Chinese ounces, and corrects Chu Hsi's statement that it equaled 20 oz. only. But Li Ch`uan of the T`ang dynasty here gives the same figure as Chu Hsi.]

20. The onrush of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep.

V. ENERGY

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1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.

[That is, cutting up the army into regiments, companies, etc., with Subordinate officers in command of each. Tu Mu reminds us of Han Hsin's famous reply to the first Han Emperor, who once said to him: "How large an army do you think I could lead?" "Not more than 100,000 men, your Majesty." "And you?" asked the Emperor. "Oh!" he answered, "the more the better."]

2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

3. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken - this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.

[We now come to one of the most interesting parts of Sun Tzu's treatise, the discussion of the CHENG and the CH`I." As it is by no means easy to grasp the full significance of these two terms, or to render them consistently by good English equivalents; it may be as well to tabulate some of the commentators' remarks on the subject before proceeding further. Li Ch`uan: "Facing the enemy is CHENG, making lateral diversion is CH`I. Chia Lin: "In presence of the enemy, your troops should be arrayed in normal fashion, but in order to secure victory abnormal maneuvers must be employed." Mei Yao-ch`en: "CH`I is active, CHENG is passive; passivity means waiting for an opportunity, activity brings the victory itself." Ho Shih: "We must cause the enemy to regard our straightforward attack as one that is secretly designed, and vice versa; thus CHENG may also be CH`I, and CH`I may also be CHENG." He instances the famous exploit of Han Hsin, who when marching ostensibly against Lin-chin (now Chao-i in Shensi), suddenly threw a large force across the Yellow River in wooden tubs, utterly disconcerting his opponent. [Ch`ien Han Shu, ch. 3.] Here, we are told, the march on Lin-chin was CHENG, and the surprise maneuver was CH`I." Chang Yu gives the following summary of opinions on the words: "Military writers do not agree with regard to the meaning of CH`I and CHENG. Wei Liao Tzu [4th cent. B.C.] says: 'Direct warfare favors frontal attacks, indirect warfare attacks from the rear.' Ts`ao Kung says: 'Going straight out to join battle is a direct operation; appearing on the enemy's rear is an indirect maneuver.' Li Wei-kung [6th and 7th cent. A.D.] says: 'In war, to march straight ahead is CHENG; turning movements, on the other hand, are CH`I.' These writers simply regard CHENG as CHENG, and CH`I as CH`I; they do not note that the two are mutually interchangeable and run into each other like the two sides of a circle [see infra, ss. 11]. A comment on the T`ang Emperor T`ai Tsung goes to the root of the matter: 'A CH`I maneuver may be CHENG, if we make the enemy look upon it as CHENG; then our real attack will be CH`I, and vice versa. The whole secret lies in confusing the enemy, so that he cannot

fathom our real intent.'" To put it perhaps a little more clearly: any attack or other operation is CHENG, on which the enemy has had his attention fixed; whereas that is CH`I," which takes him by surprise or comes from an unexpected quarter. If the enemy perceives a movement which is meant to be CH`I," it immediately becomes CHENG."]

4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg - this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.

5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.

[Chang Yu says: "Steadily develop indirect tactics, either by pounding the enemy's flanks or falling on his rear." A brilliant example of "indirect tactics" which decided the fortunes of a campaign was Lord Roberts' night march round the Peiwar Kotal in the second Afghan war. [1]

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.

[Tu Yu and Chang Yu understand this of the permutations of CH`I and CHENG." But at present Sun Tzu is not speaking of CHENG at all, unless, indeed, we suppose with Cheng Yu-hsien that a clause relating to it has fallen out of the text. Of course, as has already been pointed out, the two are so inextricably interwoven in all military operations, that they cannot really be considered apart. Here we simply have an expression, in figurative language, of the almost infinite resource of a great leader.]

7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.

9 There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack - the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle - you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

[The Chinese here is tricky and a certain key word in the context it is used defies the best efforts of the translator. Tu Mu defines this word as "the measurement or estimation of distance." But this meaning does not quite fit the illustrative simile in ss. 15. Applying this definition to the falcon, it seems to me to denote that instinct of SELF RESTRAINT which keeps the bird from swooping on its quarry until the right moment, together with the power of judging when the right moment has arrived. The analogous quality in soldiers is the highly important one of being able to reserve their fire until the very instant at which it will be most effective. When the "Victory" went into action at Trafalgar at hardly more than drifting pace, she was for several minutes exposed to a storm of shot and shell before replying with a single gun. Nelson coolly waited until he was within close range, when the broadside he brought to bear worked fearful havoc on the enemy's nearest ships.]

14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

[The word "decision" would have reference to the measurement of distance mentioned above, letting the enemy get near before striking. But I cannot help thinking that Sun Tzu meant to use the word in a figurative sense comparable to our own idiom "short and sharp." Cf. Wang Hsi's note, which after describing the falcon's mode of attack, proceeds: "This is just how the 'psychological moment' should be seized in war."]

15. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

[None of the commentators seem to grasp the real point of the simile of energy and the force stored up in the bent cross-bow until released by the finger on the trigger.]

16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "The subdivisions of the army having been previously fixed, and the various signals agreed upon, the separating and joining, the dispersing and collecting which will take place in the course of a battle, may give the appearance of disorder when no real disorder is possible. Your formation may be without head or tail, your dispositions all topsy-turvy, and

yet a rout of your forces quite out of the question."]

17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

[In order to make the translation intelligible, it is necessary to tone down the sharply paradoxical form of the original. Ts`ao Kung throws out a hint of the meaning in his brief note: "These things all serve to destroy formation and conceal one's condition." But Tu Mu is the first to put it quite plainly: "If you wish to feign confusion in order to lure the enemy on, you must first have perfect discipline; if you wish to display timidity in order to entrap the enemy, you must have extreme courage; if you wish to parade your weakness in order to make the enemy over-confident, you must have exceeding strength."]

18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision;

[See supra, ss. 1.]

concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy:

[The commentators strongly understand a certain Chinese word here differently than anywhere else in this chapter. Thus Tu Mu says: "seeing that we are favorably circumstanced and yet make no move, the enemy will believe that we are really afraid."]

masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

[Chang Yu relates the following anecdote of Kao Tsu, the first Han Emperor: "Wishing to crush the Hsiung-nu, he sent out spies to report on their condition. But the Hsiung-nu, forewarned, carefully concealed all their able-bodied men and well-fed horses, and only allowed infirm soldiers and emaciated cattle to be seen. The result was that spies one and all recommended the Emperor to deliver his attack. Lou Ching alone opposed them, saying: "When two countries go to war, they are naturally inclined to make an ostentatious display of their strength. Yet our spies have seen nothing but old age and infirmity. This is surely some ruse on the part of the enemy, and it would be unwise for us to attack." The Emperor, however, disregarding this advice, fell into the trap and found himself surrounded at Po-teng."]

19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act.

[Ts`ao Kung's note is "Make a display of weakness and want." Tu Mu says: "If our force happens to be superior to the enemy's, weakness may be simulated in

order to lure him on; but if inferior, he must be led to believe that we are strong, in order that he may keep off. In fact, all the enemy's movements should be determined by the signs that we choose to give him." Note the following anecdote of Sun Pin, a descendent of Sun Wu: In 341 B.C., the Ch`i State being at war with Wei, sent T`ien Chi and Sun Pin against the general P`ang Chuan, who happened to be a deadly personal enemy of the later. Sun Pin said: "The Ch`I State has a reputation for cowardice, and therefore our adversary despises us. Let us turn this circumstance to account." Accordingly, when the army had crossed the border into Wei territory, he gave orders to show 100,000 fires on the first night, 50,000 on the next, and the night after only 20,000. P`ang Chuan pursued them hotly, saying to himself: "I knew these men of Ch`i were cowards: their numbers have already fallen away by more than half." In his retreat, Sun Pin came to a narrow defile, with he calculated that his pursuers would reach after dark. Here he had a tree stripped of its bark, and inscribed upon it the words: "Under this tree shall P`ang Chuan die." Then, as night began to fall, he placed a strong body of archers in ambush near by, with orders to shoot directly they saw a light. Later on, P`ang Chuan arrived at the spot, and noticing the tree, struck a light in order to read what was written on it. His body was immediately riddled by a volley of arrows, and his whole army thrown into confusion. [The above is Tu Mu's version of the story; the SHIH CHI, less dramatically but probably with more historical truth, makes P`ang Chuan cut his own throat with an exclamation of despair, after the rout of his army.]]

He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.

20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

[With an emendation suggested by Li Ching, this then reads, "He lies in wait with the main body of his troops."]

21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals.

[Tu Mu says: "He first of all considers the power of his army in the bulk; afterwards he takes individual talent into account, and uses each man according to his capabilities. He does not demand perfection from the untalented."]

Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.

[Ts`au Kung calls this "the use of natural or inherent power."]

23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.

[The chief lesson of this chapter, in Tu Mu's opinion, is the paramount importance in war of rapid evolutions and sudden rushes. "Great results," he adds, "can thus be achieved with small forces."]

[1] "Forty-one Years in India," chapter 46.

VI. WEAK POINTS AND STRONG

[Chang Yu attempts to explain the sequence of chapters as follows: "Chapter IV, on Tactical Dispositions, treated of the offensive and the defensive; chapter V, on Energy, dealt with direct and indirect methods. The good general acquaints himself first with the theory of attack and defense, and then turns his attention to direct and indirect methods. He studies the art of varying and combining these two methods before proceeding to the subject of weak and strong points. For the use of direct or indirect methods arises out of attack and defense, and the perception of weak and strong points depends again on the above methods. Hence the present chapter comes immediately after the chapter on Energy."]

1. Sun Tzu said: Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.

2. Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him.

[One mark of a great soldier is that he fight on his own terms or fights not at all. [1]]

3. By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.

[In the first case, he will entice him with a bait; in the second, he will strike at some important point which the enemy will have to defend.]

4. If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him;

[This passage may be cited as evidence against Mei Yao- Ch`en's interpretation of I. ss. 23.]

if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly encamped, he can force him to move.

5. Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.

6. An army may march great distances without distress, if it marches through country where the enemy is not.

[Ts`ao Kung sums up very well: "Emerge from the void [q.d. like "a bolt from the blue"], strike at vulnerable points, shun places that are defended, attack in unexpected quarters."]

7. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack places which are undefended.

[Wang Hsi explains "undefended places" as "weak points; that is to say, where the general is lacking in capacity, or the soldiers in spirit; where the walls are not strong enough, or the precautions not strict enough; where relief comes too late, or provisions are too scanty, or the defenders are variance amongst themselves."]

You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold positions that cannot be attacked.

[I.e., where there are none of the weak points mentioned above. There is rather a nice point involved in the interpretation of this later clause. Tu Mu, Ch`en Hao, and Mei Yao-ch`en assume the meaning to be: "In order to make your defense quite safe, you must defend EVEN those places that are not likely to be attacked;" and Tu Mu adds: "How much more, then, those that will be attacked." Taken thus, however, the clause balances less well with the preceding--always a consideration in the highly antithetical style which is natural to the Chinese. Chang Yu, therefore, seems to come nearer the mark in saying: "He who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven [see IV. ss. 7], making it impossible for the enemy to guard against him. This being so, the places that I shall attack are precisely those that the enemy cannot defend.... He who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth, making it impossible for the enemy to estimate his whereabouts. This being so, the places that I shall hold are precisely those that the enemy cannot attack."]

8. Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.

[An aphorism which puts the whole art of war in a nutshell.]

9. O divine art of subtlety and secrecy! Through you we learn to be invisible, through you inaudible; and hence we can hold the enemy's fate in our hands.

[Literally, "without form or sound," but it is said of course with reference to the enemy.]

10. You may advance and be absolutely irresistible, if you make for the enemy's weak points; you may retire and be safe from pursuit if your movements are more rapid than those of the enemy.

11. If we wish to fight, the enemy can be forced to an engagement even though he be sheltered behind a high rampart and a deep ditch. All we need do is attack some other place that he will be obliged to relieve.

[Tu Mu says: "If the enemy is the invading party, we can cut his line of communications and occupy the roads by which he will have to return; if we are the invaders, we may direct our attack against the sovereign himself." It is clear that Sun Tzu, unlike certain generals in the late Boer war, was no believer in frontal attacks.]

12. If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from engaging us even though the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground. All we need do is to throw something odd and unaccountable in his way.

[This extremely concise expression is intelligibly paraphrased by Chia Lin: "even though we have constructed neither wall nor ditch." Li Ch`uan says: "we puzzle him by strange and unusual dispositions;" and Tu Mu finally clinches the meaning by three illustrative anecdotes--one of Chu-ko Liang, who when occupying Yang-p`ing and about to be attacked by Ssu-ma I, suddenly struck his colors, stopped the beating of the drums, and flung open the city gates, showing only a few men engaged in sweeping and sprinkling the ground. This unexpected proceeding had the intended effect; for Ssu-ma I, suspecting an ambush, actually drew off his army and retreated. What Sun Tzu is advocating here, therefore, is nothing more nor less than the timely use of "bluff."]

13. By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided.

[The conclusion is perhaps not very obvious, but Chang Yu (after Mei Yao-ch`en) rightly explains it thus: "If the enemy's dispositions are visible, we can make

for him in one body; whereas, our own dispositions being kept secret, the enemy will be obliged to divide his forces in order to guard against attack from every quarter."]

14. We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few.

15. And if we are able thus to attack an inferior force with a superior one, our opponents will be in dire straits.

16. The spot where we intend to fight must not be made known; for then the enemy will have to prepare against a possible attack at several different points;

[Sheridan once explained the reason of General Grant's victories by saying that "while his opponents were kept fully employed wondering what he was going to do, HE was thinking most of what he was going to do himself."]

and his forces being thus distributed in many directions, the numbers we shall have to face at any given point will be proportionately few. 17. For should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak.

[In Frederick the Great's INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS GENERALS we read: "A defensive war is apt to betray us into too frequent detachment. Those generals who have had but little experience attempt to protect every point, while those who are better acquainted with their profession, having only the capital object in view, guard against a decisive blow, and acquiesce in small misfortunes to avoid greater."]

18. Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations against us.

[The highest generalship, in Col. Henderson's words, is "to compel the enemy to disperse his army, and then to concentrate superior force against each fraction in turn."]

19. Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight.

[What Sun Tzu evidently has in mind is that nice calculation of distances and that masterly employment of strategy which enable a general to divide his army for the purpose of a long and rapid march, and afterwards to effect a junction

at precisely the right spot and the right hour in order to confront the enemy in overwhelming strength. Among many such successful junctions which military history records, one of the most dramatic and decisive was the appearance of Blucher just at the critical moment on the field of Waterloo.]

20. But if neither time nor place be known, then the left wing will be impotent to succor the right, the right equally impotent to succor the left, the van unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to support the van. How much more so if the furthest portions of the army are anything under a hundred LI apart, and even the nearest are separated by several LI!

[The Chinese of this last sentence is a little lacking in precision, but the mental picture we are required to draw is probably that of an army advancing towards a given rendezvous in separate columns, each of which has orders to be there on a fixed date. If the general allows the various detachments to proceed at haphazard, without precise instructions as to the time and place of meeting, the enemy will be able to annihilate the army in detail. Chang Yu's note may be worth quoting here: "If we do not know the place where our opponents mean to concentrate or the day on which they will join battle, our unity will be forfeited through our preparations for defense, and the positions we hold will be insecure. Suddenly happening upon a powerful foe, we shall be brought to battle in a flurried condition, and no mutual support will be possible between wings, vanguard or rear, especially if there is any great distance between the foremost and hindmost divisions of the army."]

21. Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.

[Alas for these brave words! The long feud between the two states ended in 473 B.C. with the total defeat of Wu by Kou Chien and its incorporation in Yueh. This was doubtless long after Sun Tzu's death. With his present assertion compare IV. ss. 4. Chang Yu is the only one to point out the seeming discrepancy, which he thus goes on to explain: "In the chapter on Tactical Dispositions it is said, 'One may KNOW how to conquer without being able to DO it,' whereas here we have the statement that 'victory' can be achieved.' The explanation is, that in the former chapter, where the offensive and defensive are under discussion, it is said that if the enemy is fully prepared, one cannot make certain of beating him. But the present passage refers particularly to the soldiers of Yueh who, according to Sun Tzu's calculations, will be kept in ignorance of the time and place of the impending struggle. That is why he says here that victory can be achieved."]

22. Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success.

[An alternative reading offered by Chia Lin is: "Know beforehand all plans conducive to our success and to the enemy's failure."

23. Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity.

[Chang Yu tells us that by noting the joy or anger shown by the enemy on being thus disturbed, we shall be able to conclude whether his policy is to lie low or the reverse. He instances the action of Cho-ku Liang, who sent the scornful present of a woman's head-dress to Ssu-ma I, in order to goad him out of his Fabian tactics.]

Force him to reveal himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots.

24. Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient.

[Cf. IV. ss. 6.]

25. In making tactical dispositions, the highest pitch you can attain is to conceal them;

[The piquancy of the paradox evaporates in translation. Concealment is perhaps not so much actual invisibility (see supra ss. 9) as "showing no sign" of what you mean to do, of the plans that are formed in your brain.]

conceal your dispositions, and you will be safe from the prying of the subtlest spies, from the machinations of the wisest brains.

[Tu Mu explains: "Though the enemy may have clever and capable officers, they will not be able to lay any plans against us."]

26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics-- that is what the multitude cannot comprehend.

27. All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.

[I.e., everybody can see superficially how a battle is won; what they cannot see is the long series of plans and combinations which has preceded the battle.]

28. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

[As Wang Hsi sagely remarks: "There is but one root- principle underlying victory, but the tactics which lead up to it are infinite in number." With this compare Col. Henderson: "The rules of strategy are few and simple. They may

be learned in a week. They may be taught by familiar illustrations or a dozen diagrams. But such knowledge will no more teach a man to lead an army like Napoleon than a knowledge of grammar will teach him to write like Gibbon."

29. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards.

30. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.

[Like water, taking the line of least resistance.]

31. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.

32. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.

33. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.

34. The five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) are not always equally predominant;

[That is, as Wang Hsi says: "they predominate alternately."]

the four seasons make way for each other in turn.

[Literally, "have no invariable seat."]

There are short days and long; the moon has its periods of waning and waxing.

[Cf. V. ss. 6. The purport of the passage is simply to illustrate the want of fixity in war by the changes constantly taking place in Nature. The comparison is not very happy, however, because the regularity of the phenomena which Sun Tzu mentions is by no means paralleled in war.]

[1] See Col. Henderson's biography of Stonewall Jackson, 1902 ed., vol. II, p. 490.

VII. MANEUVERING

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign.
2. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonize the different elements thereof before pitching his camp.

["Chang Yu says: "the establishment of harmony and confidence between the higher and lower ranks before venturing into the field;" and he quotes a saying of Wu Tzu (chap. 1 ad init.): "Without harmony in the State, no military expedition can be undertaken; without harmony in the army, no battle array can be formed." In an historical romance Sun Tzu is represented as saying to Wu Yuan: "As a general rule, those who are waging war should get rid of all the domestic troubles before proceeding to attack the external foe."]

3. After that, comes tactical maneuvering, than which there is nothing more difficult.

[I have departed slightly from the traditional interpretation of Ts`ao Kung, who says: "From the time of receiving the sovereign's instructions until our encampment over against the enemy, the tactics to be pursued are most difficult." It seems to me that the tactics or maneuvers can hardly be said to begin until the army has sallied forth and encamped, and Ch`ien Hao's note gives color to this view: "For levying, concentrating, harmonizing and entrenching an army, there are plenty of old rules which will serve. The real difficulty comes when we engage in tactical operations." Tu Yu also observes that "the great difficulty is to be beforehand with the enemy in seizing favorable position."]

The difficulty of tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain.

[This sentence contains one of those highly condensed and somewhat enigmatical expressions of which Sun Tzu is so fond. This is how it is explained by Ts`ao Kung: "Make it appear that you are a long way off, then cover the distance rapidly and arrive on the scene before your opponent." Tu Mu says: "Hoodwink the enemy, so that he may be remiss and leisurely while you are dashing along with utmost speed." Ho Shih gives a slightly different turn: "Although you may have difficult ground to traverse and natural obstacles to encounter this is a drawback which can be turned into actual advantage by celerity of movement." Signal examples of this saying are afforded by the two famous passages across the Alps--that of Hannibal, which laid Italy at his mercy, and that of Napoleon two thousand years later, which resulted in the great victory of Marengo.]

4. Thus, to take a long and circuitous route, after enticing the enemy out of the way, and though starting after him, to contrive to reach the goal before him, shows knowledge of the artifice of DEVIATION.

[Tu Mu cites the famous march of Chao She in 270 B.C. to relieve the town of O-yu, which was closely invested by a Ch`in army. The King of Chao first consulted Lien P`o on the advisability of attempting a relief, but the latter thought the distance too great, and the intervening country too rugged and difficult. His Majesty then turned to Chao She, who fully admitted the hazardous nature of the march, but finally said: "We shall be like two rats fighting in a whole--and the pluckier one will win!" So he left the capital with his army, but had only gone a distance of 30 LI when he stopped and began throwing up entrenchments. For 28 days he continued strengthening his fortifications, and took care that spies should carry the intelligence to the enemy. The Ch`in general was overjoyed, and attributed his adversary's tardiness to the fact that the beleaguered city was in the Han State, and thus not actually part of Chao territory. But the spies had no sooner departed than Chao She began a forced march lasting for two days and one night, and arrive on the scene of action with such astonishing rapidity that he was able to occupy a commanding position on the "North hill" before the enemy had got wind of his movements. A crushing defeat followed for the Ch`in forces, who were obliged to raise the siege of O-yu in all haste and retreat across the border.]

5. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, most dangerous.

[I adopt the reading of the T`UNG TIEN, Cheng Yu-hsien and the T`U SHU, since they appear to apply the exact nuance required in order to make sense. The commentators using the standard text take this line to mean that maneuvers may be profitable, or they may be dangerous: it all depends on the ability of the general.]

6. If you set a fully equipped army in march in order to snatch an advantage, the chances are that you will be too late. On the other hand, to detach a flying column for the purpose involves the sacrifice of its baggage and stores.

[Some of the Chinese text is unintelligible to the Chinese commentators, who paraphrase the sentence. I submit my own rendering without much enthusiasm, being convinced that there is some deep-seated corruption in the text. On the whole, it is clear that Sun Tzu does not approve of a lengthy march being undertaken without supplies. Cf. *infra*, ss. 11.]

7. Thus, if you order your men to roll up their buff-coats, and make forced marches without halting day or night, covering double the usual distance at a stretch,

[The ordinary day's march, according to Tu Mu, was 30 LI; but on one occasion, when pursuing Liu Pei, Ts`ao Ts`ao is said to have covered the incredible distance of 300 _li_ within twenty-four hours.]

doing a hundred LI in order to wrest an advantage, the leaders of all your three divisions will fall into the hands of the enemy.

8. The stronger men will be in front, the jaded ones will fall behind, and on this plan only one-tenth of your army will reach its destination.

[The moral is, as Ts`ao Kung and others point out: Don't march a hundred LI to gain a tactical advantage, either with or without impedimenta. Maneuvers of this description should be confined to short distances. Stonewall Jackson said: "The hardships of forced marches are often more painful than the dangers of battle." He did not often call upon his troops for extraordinary exertions. It was only when he intended a surprise, or when a rapid retreat was imperative, that he sacrificed everything for speed. [1]]

9. If you march fifty LI in order to outmaneuver the enemy, you will lose the leader of your first division, and only half your force will reach the goal.

[Literally, "the leader of the first division will be TORN AWAY."]

10. If you march thirty LI with the same object, two-thirds of your army will arrive.

[In the T`UNG TIEN is added: "From this we may know the difficulty of maneuvering."]

11. We may take it then that an army without its baggage- train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost.

[I think Sun Tzu meant "stores accumulated in depots." But Tu Yu says "fodder and the like," Chang Yu says "Goods in general," and Wang Hsi says "fuel, salt, foodstuffs, etc."]

12. We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.

13. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.

14. We shall be unable to turn natural advantage to account unless we make use of local guides.

[ss. 12-14 are repeated in chap. XI. ss. 52.]

15. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed.

[In the tactics of Turenne, deception of the enemy, especially as to the numerical strength of his troops, took a very prominent position. [2]]

16. Whether to concentrate or to divide your troops, must be decided by circumstances.

17. Let your rapidity be that of the wind,

[The simile is doubly appropriate, because the wind is not only swift but, as Mei Yao-ch`en points out, "invisible and leaves no tracks."]

your compactness that of the forest.

[Meng Shih comes nearer to the mark in his note: "When slowly marching, order and ranks must be preserved"--so as to guard against surprise attacks. But natural forest do not grow in rows, whereas they do generally possess the quality of density or compactness.]

18. In raiding and plundering be like fire,

[Cf. SHIH CHING, IV. 3. iv. 6: "Fierce as a blazing fire which no man can check."]

is immovability like a mountain.

[That is, when holding a position from which the enemy is trying to dislodge you, or perhaps, as Tu Yu says, when he is trying to entice you into a trap.]

19. Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

[Tu Yu quotes a saying of T`ai Kung which has passed into a proverb: "You cannot shut your ears to the thunder or your eyes to the lighting--so rapid are they." Likewise, an attack should be made so quickly that it cannot be parried.]

20. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men;

[Sun Tzu wishes to lessen the abuses of indiscriminate plundering by insisting that all booty shall be thrown into a common stock, which may afterwards be fairly divided amongst all.]

when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery.

[Ch`en Hao says "quarter your soldiers on the land, and let them sow and plant it." It is by acting on this principle, and harvesting the lands they invaded, that

the Chinese have succeeded in carrying out some of their most memorable and triumphant expeditions, such as that of Pan Ch`ao who penetrated to the Caspian, and in more recent years, those of Fu-k`ang-an and Tso Tsung-t`ang.]

21. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.

[Chang Yu quotes Wei Liao Tzu as saying that we must not break camp until we have gained the resisting power of the enemy and the cleverness of the opposing general. Cf. the "seven comparisons" in I. ss. 13.]

22. He will conquer who has learnt the artifice of deviation.

[See supra, SS. 3, 4.]

Such is the art of maneuvering.

[With these words, the chapter would naturally come to an end. But there now follows a long appendix in the shape of an extract from an earlier book on War, now lost, but apparently extant at the time when Sun Tzu wrote. The style of this fragment is not noticeable different from that of Sun Tzu himself, but no commentator raises a doubt as to its genuineness.]

23. The Book of Army Management says:

[It is perhaps significant that none of the earlier commentators give us any information about this work. Mei Yao- Ch`en calls it "an ancient military classic," and Wang Hsi, "an old book on war." Considering the enormous amount of fighting that had gone on for centuries before Sun Tzu's time between the various kingdoms and principalities of China, it is not in itself improbable that a collection of military maxims should have been made and written down at some earlier period.]

On the field of battle,

[Implied, though not actually in the Chinese.]

the spoken word does not carry far enough: hence the institution of gongs and drums. Nor can ordinary objects be seen clearly enough: hence the institution of banners and flags.

24. Gongs and drums, banners and flags, are means whereby the ears and eyes of the host may be focused on one particular point.

[Chang Yu says: "If sight and hearing converge simultaneously on the same object, the evolutions of as many as a million soldiers will be like those of a single man."!]

25. The host thus forming a single united body, is it impossible either for the brave to advance alone, or for the cowardly to retreat alone.

[Chuang Yu quotes a saying: "Equally guilty are those who advance against orders and those who retreat against orders." Tu Mu tells a story in this connection of Wu Ch`i, when he was fighting against the Ch`in State. Before the battle had begun, one of his soldiers, a man of matchless daring, sallied forth by himself, captured two heads from the enemy, and returned to camp. Wu Ch`i had the man instantly executed, whereupon an officer ventured to remonstrate, saying: "This man was a good soldier, and ought not to have been beheaded." Wu Ch`i replied: "I fully believe he was a good soldier, but I had him beheaded because he acted without orders."]

This is the art of handling large masses of men.

26. In night-fighting, then, make much use of signal-fires and drums, and in fighting by day, of flags and banners, as a means of influencing the ears and eyes of your army.

[Ch`en Hao alludes to Li Kuang-pi's night ride to Ho-yang at the head of 500 mounted men; they made such an imposing display with torches, that though the rebel leader Shih Ssu-ming had a large army, he did not dare to dispute their passage.]

27. A whole army may be robbed of its spirit;

["In war," says Chang Yu, "if a spirit of anger can be made to pervade all ranks of an army at one and the same time, its onset will be irresistible. Now the spirit of the enemy's soldiers will be keenest when they have newly arrived on the scene, and it is therefore our cue not to fight at once, but to wait until their ardor and enthusiasm have worn off, and then strike. It is in this way that they may be robbed of their keen spirit." Li Ch`uan and others tell an anecdote (to be found in the TSO CHUAN, year 10, ss. 1) of Ts`ao Kuei, a protegee of Duke Chuang of Lu. The latter State was attacked by Ch`i, and the duke was about to join battle at Ch`ang-cho, after the first roll of the enemy's drums, when Ts`ao said: "Not just yet." Only after their drums had beaten for the third time, did he give the word for attack. Then they fought, and the men of Ch`i were utterly defeated. Questioned afterwards by the Duke as to the meaning of his delay, Ts`ao Kuei replied: "In battle, a courageous spirit is everything. Now the first roll of the drum tends to create this spirit, but with the second it is already on the wane, and after the third it is gone altogether. I attacked when their spirit was gone and ours was at its

height. Hence our victory." Wu Tzu (chap. 4) puts "spirit" first among the "four important influences" in war, and continues: "The value of a whole army—a mighty host of a million men—is dependent on one man alone: such is the influence of spirit!"]

a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind.

[Chang Yu says: "Presence of mind is the general's most important asset. It is the quality which enables him to discipline disorder and to inspire courage into the panic-stricken." The great general Li Ching (A.D. 571-649) has a saying: "Attacking does not merely consist in assaulting walled cities or striking at an army in battle array; it must include the art of assailing the enemy's mental equilibrium."]

28. Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning;

[Always provided, I suppose, that he has had breakfast. At the battle of the Trebia, the Romans were foolishly allowed to fight fasting, whereas Hannibal's men had breakfasted at their leisure. See Livy, XXI, liv. 8, lv. 1 and 8.]

by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp.

29. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods.

30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy:--this is the art of retaining self-possession.

31. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished:--this is the art of husbanding one's strength.

32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:--this is the art of studying circumstances.

33. It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill.

34. Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen.

35. Do not swallow bait offered by the enemy.

[Li Ch`uan and Tu Mu, with extraordinary inability to see a metaphor, take these words quite literally of food and drink that have been poisoned by the enemy. Ch`en Hao and Chang Yu carefully point out that the saying has a wider application.]

Do not interfere with an army that is returning home.

[The commentators explain this rather singular piece of advice by saying that a man whose heart is set on returning home will fight to the death against any attempt to bar his way, and is therefore too dangerous an opponent to be tackled. Chang Yu quotes the words of Han Hsin: "Invincible is the soldier who hath his desire and returneth homewards." A marvelous tale is told of Ts`ao Ts`ao's courage and resource in ch. 1 of the SAN KUO CHI: In 198 A.D., he was besieging Chang Hsiu in Jang, when Liu Piao sent reinforcements with a view to cutting off Ts`ao's retreat. The latter was obliged to draw off his troops, only to find himself hemmed in between two enemies, who were guarding each outlet of a narrow pass in which he had engaged himself. In this desperate plight Ts`ao waited until nightfall, when he bored a tunnel into the mountain side and laid an ambush in it. As soon as the whole army had passed by, the hidden troops fell on his rear, while Ts`ao himself turned and met his pursuers in front, so that they were thrown into confusion and annihilated. Ts`ao Ts`ao said afterwards: "The brigands tried to check my army in its retreat and brought me to battle in a desperate position: hence I knew how to overcome them."]

36. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free.

[This does not mean that the enemy is to be allowed to escape. The object, as Tu Mu puts it, is "to make him believe that there is a road to safety, and thus prevent his fighting with the courage of despair." Tu Mu adds pleasantly: "After that, you may crush him."]

Do not press a desperate foe too hard.

[Ch`en Hao quotes the saying: "Birds and beasts when brought to bay will use their claws and teeth." Chang Yu says: "If your adversary has burned his boats and destroyed his cooking-pots, and is ready to stake all on the issue of a battle, he must not be pushed to extremities." Ho Shih illustrates the meaning by a story taken from the life of Yen-ch`ing. That general, together with his colleague Tu Chung-wei was surrounded by a vastly superior army of Khitans in the year 945 A.D. The country was bare and desert-like, and the little Chinese force was soon in dire straits for want of water. The wells they bored ran dry, and the men were reduced to squeezing lumps of mud and sucking out the moisture. Their ranks thinned rapidly, until at last Fu Yen-ch`ing exclaimed: "We are desperate men. Far better to die for our country than to go with fettered hands into captivity!" A strong gale happened to be blowing from the

northeast and darkening the air with dense clouds of sandy dust. To Chung-wei was for waiting until this had abated before deciding on a final attack; but luckily another officer, Li Shou- cheng by name, was quicker to see an opportunity, and said: "They are many and we are few, but in the midst of this sandstorm our numbers will not be discernible; victory will go to the strenuous fighter, and the wind will be our best ally." Accordingly, Fu Yen-ch`ing made a sudden and wholly unexpected onslaught with his cavalry, routed the barbarians and succeeded in breaking through to safety.]

37. Such is the art of warfare.

[1] See Col. Henderson, op. cit. vol. I. p. 426.

[2] For a number of maxims on this head, see "Marshal Turenne" (Longmans, 1907), p. 29.

VIII. VARIATION IN TACTICS

[The heading means literally "The Nine Variations," but as Sun Tzu does not appear to enumerate these, and as, indeed, he has already told us (V SS. 6-11) that such deflections from the ordinary course are practically innumerable, we have little option but to follow Wang Hsi, who says that "Nine" stands for an indefinitely large number. "All it means is that in warfare we ought to vary our tactics to the utmost degree.... I do not know what Ts`ao Kung makes these Nine Variations out to be, but it has been suggested that they are connected with the Nine Situations" - of chapt. XI. This is the view adopted by Chang Yu. The only other alternative is to suppose that something has been lost--a supposition to which the unusual shortness of the chapter lends some weight.]

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign, collects his army and concentrates his forces.

[Repeated from VII. ss. 1, where it is certainly more in place. It may have been interpolated here merely in order to supply a beginning to the chapter.]

2. When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions.

[The last situation is not one of the Nine Situations as given in the beginning of chap. XI, but occurs later on (ibid. ss. 43. q.v.). Chang Yu defines this situation as being situated across the frontier, in hostile territory. Li Ch`uan says it is "country in which there are no springs or wells, flocks or herds,

vegetables or firewood;" Chia Lin, "one of gorges, chasms and precipices, without a road by which to advance."]

In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight.

3. There are roads which must not be followed,

["Especially those leading through narrow defiles," says Li Ch`uan, "where an ambush is to be feared."]

armies which must be not attacked,

[More correctly, perhaps, "there are times when an army must not be attacked." Ch`en Hao says: "When you see your way to obtain a rival advantage, but are powerless to inflict a real defeat, refrain from attacking, for fear of overtaxing your men's strength."]

towns which must be besieged,

[Cf. III. ss. 4 Ts`ao Kung gives an interesting illustration from his own experience. When invading the territory of Hsu-chou, he ignored the city of Hua-pi, which lay directly in his path, and pressed on into the heart of the country. This excellent strategy was rewarded by the subsequent capture of no fewer than fourteen important district cities. Chang Yu says: "No town should be attacked which, if taken, cannot be held, or if left alone, will not cause any trouble." Hsun Ying, when urged to attack Pi-yang, replied: "The city is small and well-fortified; even if I succeed in taking it, it will be no great feat of arms; whereas if I fail, I shall make myself a laughing-stock." In the seventeenth century, sieges still formed a large proportion of war. It was Turenne who directed attention to the importance of marches, countermarches and maneuvers. He said: "It is a great mistake to waste men in taking a town when the same expenditure of soldiers will gain a province." [1]

positions which must not be contested, commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed.

[This is a hard saying for the Chinese, with their reverence for authority, and Wei Liao Tzu (quoted by Tu Mu) is moved to exclaim: "Weapons are baleful instruments, strife is antagonistic to virtue, a military commander is the negation of civil order!" The unpalatable fact remains, however, that even Imperial wishes must be subordinated to military necessity.]

4. The general who thoroughly understands the advantages that accompany variation of tactics knows how to handle his troops.

5. The general who does not understand these, may be well acquainted with the configuration of the country, yet he will not be able to turn his knowledge to practical account.

[Literally, "get the advantage of the ground," which means not only securing good positions, but availing oneself of natural advantages in every possible way. Chang Yu says: "Every kind of ground is characterized by certain natural features, and also gives scope for a certain variability of plan. How it is possible to turn these natural features to account unless topographical knowledge is supplemented by versatility of mind?"]

6. So, the student of war who is unversed in the art of war of varying his plans, even though he be acquainted with the Five Advantages, will fail to make the best use of his men.

[Chia Lin tells us that these imply five obvious and generally advantageous lines of action, namely: "if a certain road is short, it must be followed; if an army is isolated, it must be attacked; if a town is in a parlous condition, it must be besieged; if a position can be stormed, it must be attempted; and if consistent with military operations, the ruler's commands must be obeyed." But there are circumstances which sometimes forbid a general to use these advantages. For instance, "a certain road may be the shortest way for him, but if he knows that it abounds in natural obstacles, or that the enemy has laid an ambush on it, he will not follow that road. A hostile force may be open to attack, but if he knows that it is hard-pressed and likely to fight with desperation, he will refrain from striking," and so on.]

7. Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and of disadvantage will be blended together.

["Whether in an advantageous position or a disadvantageous one," says Ts`ao Kung, "the opposite state should be always present to your mind."]

8. If our expectation of advantage be tempered in this way, we may succeed in accomplishing the essential part of our schemes.

[Tu Mu says: "If we wish to wrest an advantage from the enemy, we must not fix our minds on that alone, but allow for the possibility of the enemy also doing some harm to us, and let this enter as a factor into our calculations."]

9. If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an advantage, we may extricate ourselves from misfortune.

[Tu Mu says: "If I wish to extricate myself from a dangerous position, I must consider not only the enemy's ability to injure me, but also my own ability to gain an advantage over the enemy. If in my counsels these two considerations

are properly blended, I shall succeed in liberating myself.... For instance; if I am surrounded by the enemy and only think of effecting an escape, the nervelessness of my policy will incite my adversary to pursue and crush me; it would be far better to encourage my men to deliver a bold counter-attack, and use the advantage thus gained to free myself from the enemy's toils." See the story of Ts`ao Ts`ao, VII. ss. 35, note.]

10. Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them;

[Chia Lin enumerates several ways of inflicting this injury, some of which would only occur to the Oriental mind:--"Entice away the enemy's best and wisest men, so that he may be left without counselors. Introduce traitors into his country, that the government policy may be rendered futile. Foment intrigue and deceit, and thus sow dissension between the ruler and his ministers. By means of every artful contrivance, cause deterioration amongst his men and waste of his treasure. Corrupt his morals by insidious gifts leading him into excess. Disturb and unsettle his mind by presenting him with lovely women." Chang Yu (after Wang Hsi) makes a different interpretation of Sun Tzu here: "Get the enemy into a position where he must suffer injury, and he will submit of his own accord."]

and make trouble for them,

[Tu Mu, in this phrase, in his interpretation indicates that trouble should be made for the enemy affecting their "possessions," or, as we might say, "assets," which he considers to be "a large army, a rich exchequer, harmony amongst the soldiers, punctual fulfillment of commands." These give us a whip-hand over the enemy.]

and keep them constantly engaged;

[Literally, "make servants of them." Tu Yu says "prevent them from having any rest."]

hold out specious allurements, and make them rush to any given point.

[Meng Shih's note contains an excellent example of the idiomatic use of: "cause them to forget PIEN (the reasons for acting otherwise than on their first impulse), and hasten in our direction."]

11. The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

12. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general: (1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction;

["Bravery without forethought," as Ts`ao Kung analyzes it, which causes a man to fight blindly and desperately like a mad bull. Such an opponent, says Chang Yu, "must not be encountered with brute force, but may be lured into an ambush and slain." Cf. Wu Tzu, chap. IV. ad init.: "In estimating the character of a general, men are wont to pay exclusive attention to his courage, forgetting that courage is only one out of many qualities which a general should possess. The merely brave man is prone to fight recklessly; and he who fights recklessly, without any perception of what is expedient, must be condemned." Ssu-ma Fa, too, make the incisive remark: "Simply going to one's death does not bring about victory."]

(2) cowardice, which leads to capture;

[Ts`ao Kung defines the Chinese word translated here as "cowardice" as being of the man "whom timidity prevents from advancing to seize an advantage," and Wang Hsi adds "who is quick to flee at the sight of danger." Meng Shih gives the closer paraphrase "he who is bent on returning alive," this is, the man who will never take a risk. But, as Sun Tzu knew, nothing is to be achieved in war unless you are willing to take risks. T`ai Kung said: "He who lets an advantage slip will subsequently bring upon himself real disaster." In 404 A.D., Liu Yu pursued the rebel Huan Hsuan up the Yangtze and fought a naval battle with him at the island of Ch`eng-hung. The loyal troops numbered only a few thousands, while their opponents were in great force. But Huan Hsuan, fearing the fate which was in store for him should be overcome, had a light boat made fast to the side of his war-junk, so that he might escape, if necessary, at a moment's notice. The natural result was that the fighting spirit of his soldiers was utterly quenched, and when the loyalists made an attack from windward with fireships, all striving with the utmost ardor to be first in the fray, Huan Hsuan's forces were routed, had to burn all their baggage and fled for two days and nights without stopping. Chang Yu tells a somewhat similar story of Chao Ying-ch`i, a general of the Chin State who during a battle with the army of Ch`u in 597 B.C. had a boat kept in readiness for him on the river, wishing in case of defeat to be the first to get across.]

(3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;

[Tu Mu tells us that Yao Hsing, when opposed in 357 A.D. by Huang Mei, Teng Ch`iang and others shut himself up behind his walls and refused to fight. Teng Ch`iang said: "Our adversary is of a choleric temper and easily provoked; let us make constant sallies and break down his walls, then he will grow angry and come out. Once we can bring his force to battle, it is doomed to be our prey." This plan was acted upon, Yao Hsiang came out to fight, was lured as far as San-yuan by the enemy's pretended flight, and finally attacked and slain.]

(4) a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame;

[This need not be taken to mean that a sense of honor is really a defect in a general. What Sun Tzu condemns is rather an exaggerated sensitiveness to slanderous reports, the thin-skinned man who is stung by opprobrium, however undeserved. Mei Yao- ch`en truly observes, though somewhat paradoxically: "The seek after glory should be careless of public opinion."]

(5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

[Here again, Sun Tzu does not mean that the general is to be careless of the welfare of his troops. All he wishes to emphasize is the danger of sacrificing any important military advantage to the immediate comfort of his men. This is a shortsighted policy, because in the long run the troops will suffer more from the defeat, or, at best, the prolongation of the war, which will be the consequence. A mistaken feeling of pity will often induce a general to relieve a beleaguered city, or to reinforce a hard-pressed detachment, contrary to his military instincts. It is now generally admitted that our repeated efforts to relieve Ladysmith in the South African War were so many strategical blunders which defeated their own purpose. And in the end, relief came through the very man who started out with the distinct resolve no longer to subordinate the interests of the whole to sentiment in favor of a part. An old soldier of one of our generals who failed most conspicuously in this war, tried once, I remember, to defend him to me on the ground that he was always "so good to his men." By this plea, had he but known it, he was only condemning him out of Sun Tzu's mouth.]

13. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war.

14. When an army is overthrown and its leader slain, the cause will surely be found among these five dangerous faults. Let them be a subject of meditation.

[1] "Marshal Turenne," p. 50.

IX. THE ARMY ON THE MARCH

[The contents of this interesting chapter are better indicated in ss. 1 than by this heading.]

1. Sun Tzu said: We come now to the question of encamping the army, and observing signs of the enemy. Pass quickly over mountains, and keep in the neighborhood of valleys.

[The idea is, not to linger among barren uplands, but to keep close to supplies of water and grass. Cf. Wu Tzu, ch. 3: "Abide not in natural ovens," i.e. "the openings of valleys." Chang Yu tells the following anecdote: Wu-tu Ch`iang was a robber captain in the time of the Later Han, and Ma Yuan was sent to exterminate his gang. Ch`iang having found a refuge in the hills, Ma Yuan made no attempt to force a battle, but seized all the favorable positions commanding supplies of water and forage. Ch`iang was soon in such a desperate plight for want of provisions that he was forced to make a total surrender. He did not know the advantage of keeping in the neighborhood of valleys."]

2. Camp in high places,

[Not on high hills, but on knolls or hillocks elevated above the surrounding country.]

facing the sun.

[Tu Mu takes this to mean "facing south," and Ch`en Hao "facing east." Cf. *infra*, SS. 11, 13.

Do not climb heights in order to fight. So much for mountain warfare.

3. After crossing a river, you should get far away from it.

["In order to tempt the enemy to cross after you," according to Ts`ao Kung, and also, says Chang Yu, "in order not to be impeded in your evolutions." The T`UNG TIEN reads, "If THE ENEMY crosses a river," etc. But in view of the next sentence, this is almost certainly an interpolation.]

4. When an invading force crosses a river in its onward march, do not advance to meet it in mid-stream. It will be best to let half the army get across, and then deliver your attack.

[Li Ch`uan alludes to the great victory won by Han Hsin over Lung Chu at the Wei River. Turning to the CH`IEN HAN SHU, ch. 34, fol. 6 verso, we find the battle described as follows: "The two armies were drawn up on opposite sides of the river. In the night, Han Hsin ordered his men to take some ten thousand sacks filled with sand and construct a dam higher up. Then, leading half his army across, he attacked Lung Chu; but after a time, pretending to have failed in his attempt, he hastily withdrew to the other bank. Lung Chu was much elated by this unlooked-for success, and exclaiming: "I felt sure that Han Hsin was really a coward!" he pursued him and began crossing the river in his turn. Han Hsin now sent a party to cut open the sandbags, thus releasing a great volume of water, which swept down and prevented the greater portion of Lung Chu's army from getting across. He then turned upon the force which had been

cut off, and annihilated it, Lung Chu himself being amongst the slain. The rest of the army, on the further bank, also scattered and fled in all directions.]

5. If you are anxious to fight, you should not go to meet the invader near a river which he has to cross.

[For fear of preventing his crossing.]

6. Moor your craft higher up than the enemy, and facing the sun.

[See supra, ss. 2. The repetition of these words in connection with water is very awkward. Chang Yu has the note: "Said either of troops marshaled on the river-bank, or of boats anchored in the stream itself; in either case it is essential to be higher than the enemy and facing the sun." The other commentators are not at all explicit.]

Do not move up-stream to meet the enemy.

[Tu Mu says: "As water flows downwards, we must not pitch our camp on the lower reaches of a river, for fear the enemy should open the sluices and sweep us away in a flood. Chu-ko Wu-hou has remarked that 'in river warfare we must not advance against the stream,' which is as much as to say that our fleet must not be anchored below that of the enemy, for then they would be able to take advantage of the current and make short work of us." There is also the danger, noted by other commentators, that the enemy may throw poison on the water to be carried down to us.]

So much for river warfare.

7. In crossing salt-marshes, your sole concern should be to get over them quickly, without any delay.

[Because of the lack of fresh water, the poor quality of the herbage, and last but not least, because they are low, flat, and exposed to attack.]

8. If forced to fight in a salt-marsh, you should have water and grass near you, and get your back to a clump of trees.

[Li Ch`uan remarks that the ground is less likely to be treacherous where there are trees, while Tu Mu says that they will serve to protect the rear.]

So much for operations in salt-marches.

9. In dry, level country, take up an easily accessible position with rising ground to your right and on your rear,

[Tu Mu quotes T`ai Kung as saying: "An army should have a stream or a marsh on its left, and a hill or tumulus on its right."]

so that the danger may be in front, and safety lie behind. So much for campaigning in flat country. 10. These are the four useful branches of military knowledge

[Those, namely, concerned with (1) mountains, (2) rivers, (3) marshes, and (4) plains. Compare Napoleon's "Military Maxims," no. 1.]

which enabled the Yellow Emperor to vanquish four several sovereigns.

[Regarding the "Yellow Emperor": Mei Yao-ch`en asks, with some plausibility, whether there is an error in the text as nothing is known of Huang Ti having conquered four other Emperors. The SHIH CHI (ch. 1 ad init.) speaks only of his victories over Yen Ti and Ch`ih Yu. In the LIU T`AO it is mentioned that he "fought seventy battles and pacified the Empire." Ts`ao Kung's explanation is, that the Yellow Emperor was the first to institute the feudal system of vassals princes, each of whom (to the number of four) originally bore the title of Emperor. Li Ch`uan tells us that the art of war originated under Huang Ti, who received it from his Minister Feng Hou.]

11. All armies prefer high ground to low.

["High Ground," says Mei Yao-ch`en, "is not only more agreement and salubrious, but more convenient from a military point of view; low ground is not only damp and unhealthy, but also disadvantageous for fighting."]

and sunny places to dark.

12. If you are careful of your men,

[Ts`ao Kung says: "Make for fresh water and pasture, where you can turn out your animals to graze."]

and camp on hard ground, the army will be free from disease of every kind,

[Chang Yu says: "The dryness of the climate will prevent the outbreak of illness."]

and this will spell victory.

13. When you come to a hill or a bank, occupy the sunny side, with the slope on your right rear. Thus you will at once act for the benefit of your soldiers and utilize the natural advantages of the ground.

14. When, in consequence of heavy rains up-country, a river which you wish to ford is swollen and flecked with foam, you must wait until it subsides.

15. Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows,

[The latter defined as "places enclosed on every side by steep banks, with pools of water at the bottom.]

confined places,

[Defined as "natural pens or prisons" or "places surrounded by precipices on three sides--easy to get into, but hard to get out of."]

tangled thickets,

[Defined as "places covered with such dense undergrowth that spears cannot be used."]

quagmires

[Defined as "low-lying places, so heavy with mud as to be impassable for chariots and horsemen."]

and crevasses,

[Defined by Mei Yao-ch`en as "a narrow difficult way between beetling cliffs." Tu Mu's note is "ground covered with trees and rocks, and intersected by numerous ravines and pitfalls." This is very vague, but Chia Lin explains it clearly enough as a defile or narrow pass, and Chang Yu takes much the same view. On the whole, the weight of the commentators certainly inclines to the rendering "defile." But the ordinary meaning of the Chinese in one place is "a crack or fissure" and the fact that the meaning of the Chinese elsewhere in the sentence indicates something in the nature of a defile, make me think that Sun Tzu is here speaking of crevasses.]

should be left with all possible speed and not approached.

16. While we keep away from such places, we should get the enemy to approach them; while we face them, we should let the enemy have them on his rear.

17. If in the neighborhood of your camp there should be any hilly country, ponds surrounded by aquatic grass, hollow basins filled with reeds, or woods with thick undergrowth, they must be carefully routed out and searched; for these are places where men in ambush or insidious spies are likely to be lurking.

[Chang Yu has the note: "We must also be on our guard against traitors who may lie in close covert, secretly spying out our weaknesses and overhearing our instructions."]

18. When the enemy is close at hand and remains quiet, he is relying on the natural strength of his position.

[Here begin Sun Tzu's remarks on the reading of signs, much of which is so good that it could almost be included in a modern manual like Gen. Baden-Powell's "Aids to Scouting."]

19. When he keeps aloof and tries to provoke a battle, he is anxious for the other side to advance.

[Probably because we are in a strong position from which he wishes to dislodge us. "If he came close up to us, says Tu Mu, "and tried to force a battle, he would seem to despise us, and there would be less probability of our responding to the challenge."]

20. If his place of encampment is easy of access, he is tendering a bait.

21. Movement amongst the trees of a forest shows that the enemy is advancing.

[Ts`ao Kung explains this as "felling trees to clear a passage," and Chang Yu says: "Every man sends out scouts to climb high places and observe the enemy. If a scout sees that the trees of a forest are moving and shaking, he may know that they are being cut down to clear a passage for the enemy's march."]

The appearance of a number of screens in the midst of thick grass means that the enemy wants to make us suspicious.

[Tu Yu's explanation, borrowed from Ts`ao Kung's, is as follows: "The presence of a number of screens or sheds in the midst of thick vegetation is a sure sign that the enemy has fled and, fearing pursuit, has constructed these hiding-places in order to make us suspect an ambush." It appears that these "screens" were hastily knotted together out of any long grass which the retreating enemy happened to come across.]

22. The rising of birds in their flight is the sign of an ambush.

[Chang Yu's explanation is doubtless right: "When birds that are flying along in a straight line suddenly shoot upwards, it means that soldiers are in ambush at the spot beneath."]

Startled beasts indicate that a sudden attack is coming.

23. When there is dust rising in a high column, it is the sign of chariots advancing; when the dust is low, but spread over a wide area, it betokens the approach of infantry.

["High and sharp," or rising to a peak, is of course somewhat exaggerated as applied to dust. The commentators explain the phenomenon by saying that horses and chariots, being heavier than men, raise more dust, and also follow one another in the same wheel-track, whereas foot-soldiers would be marching in ranks, many abreast. According to Chang Yu, "every army on the march must have scouts some way in advance, who on sighting dust raised by the enemy, will gallop back and report it to the commander-in-chief." Cf. Gen. Baden-Powell: "As you move along, say, in a hostile country, your eyes should be looking afar for the enemy or any signs of him: figures, dust rising, birds getting up, glitter of arms, etc." [1]]

When it branches out in different directions, it shows that parties have been sent to collect firewood. A few clouds of dust moving to and fro signify that the army is encamping.

[Chang Yu says: "In apportioning the defenses for a cantonment, light horse will be sent out to survey the position and ascertain the weak and strong points all along its circumference. Hence the small quantity of dust and its motion."]

24. Humble words and increased preparations are signs that the enemy is about to advance.

["As though they stood in great fear of us," says Tu Mu. "Their object is to make us contemptuous and careless, after which they will attack us." Chang Yu alludes to the story of T`ien Tan of the Ch`i-mo against the Yen forces, led by Ch`i Chieh. In ch. 82 of the SHIH CHI we read: "T`ien Tan openly said: 'My only fear is that the Yen army may cut off the noses of their Ch`I prisoners and place them in the front rank to fight against us; that would be the undoing of our city.' The other side being informed of this speech, at once acted on the suggestion; but those within the city were enraged at seeing their fellow-countrymen thus mutilated, and fearing only lest they should fall into the enemy's hands, were nerved to defend themselves more obstinately than ever. Once again T`ien Tan sent back converted spies who reported these words to the enemy: "What I dread most is that the men of Yen may dig up the ancestral tombs outside the town, and by inflicting this indignity on our forefathers cause us to become faint-hearted.' Forthwith the besiegers dug up all the graves and burned the corpses lying in them. And the inhabitants of Chi-mo, witnessing the outrage from the city-walls, wept passionately and were all impatient to go out and fight, their fury being increased tenfold. T`ien Tan knew then that his soldiers were ready for any enterprise. But instead of a

sword, he himself too a mattock in his hands, and ordered others to be distributed amongst his best warriors, while the ranks were filled up with their wives and concubines. He then served out all the remaining rations and bade his men eat their fill. The regular soldiers were told to keep out of sight, and the walls were manned with the old and weaker men and with women. This done, envoys were dispatched to the enemy's camp to arrange terms of surrender, whereupon the Yen army began shouting for joy. T`ien Tan also collected 20,000 ounces of silver from the people, and got the wealthy citizens of Chi-mo to send it to the Yen general with the prayer that, when the town capitulated, he would allow their homes to be plundered or their women to be maltreated. Ch`i Chieh, in high good humor, granted their prayer; but his army now became increasingly slack and careless. Meanwhile, T`ien Tan got together a thousand oxen, decked them with pieces of red silk, painted their bodies, dragon-like, with colored stripes, and fastened sharp blades on their horns and well-greased rushes on their tails. When night came on, he lighted the ends of the rushes, and drove the oxen through a number of holes which he had pierced in the walls, backing them up with a force of 5000 picked warriors. The animals, maddened with pain, dashed furiously into the enemy's camp where they caused the utmost confusion and dismay; for their tails acted as torches, showing up the hideous pattern on their bodies, and the weapons on their horns killed or wounded any with whom they came into contact. In the meantime, the band of 5000 had crept up with gags in their mouths, and now threw themselves on the enemy. At the same moment a frightful din arose in the city itself, all those that remained behind making as much noise as possible by banging drums and hammering on bronze vessels, until heaven and earth were convulsed by the uproar. Terror-stricken, the Yen army fled in disorder, hotly pursued by the men of Ch`i, who succeeded in slaying their general Ch`i Chien.... The result of the battle was the ultimate recovery of some seventy cities which had belonged to the Ch`i State."]

Violent language and driving forward as if to the attack are signs that he will retreat.

25. When the light chariots come out first and take up a position on the wings, it is a sign that the enemy is forming for battle.

26. Peace proposals unaccompanied by a sworn covenant indicate a plot.

[The reading here is uncertain. Li Ch`uan indicates "a treaty confirmed by oaths and hostages." Wang Hsi and Chang Yu, on the other hand, simply say "without reason," "on a frivolous pretext."]

27. When there is much running about

[Every man hastening to his proper place under his own regimental banner.]

and the soldiers fall into rank, it means that the critical moment has come.

28. When some are seen advancing and some retreating, it is a lure.

29. When the soldiers stand leaning on their spears, they are faint from want of food.

30. If those who are sent to draw water begin by drinking themselves, the army is suffering from thirst.

[As Tu Mu remarks: "One may know the condition of a whole army from the behavior of a single man."]

31. If the enemy sees an advantage to be gained and makes no effort to secure it, the soldiers are exhausted.

32. If birds gather on any spot, it is unoccupied.

[A useful fact to bear in mind when, for instance, as Ch`en Hao says, the enemy has secretly abandoned his camp.]

Clamor by night betokens nervousness.

33. If there is disturbance in the camp, the general's authority is weak. If the banners and flags are shifted about, sedition is afoot. If the officers are angry, it means that the men are weary.

[Tu Mu understands the sentence differently: "If all the officers of an army are angry with their general, it means that they are broken with fatigue" owing to the exertions which he has demanded from them.]

34. When an army feeds its horses with grain and kills its cattle for food,

[In the ordinary course of things, the men would be fed on grain and the horses chiefly on grass.]

and when the men do not hang their cooking-pots over the camp-fires, showing that they will not return to their tents, you may know that they are determined to fight to the death.

[I may quote here the illustrative passage from the HOU HAN SHU, ch. 71, given in abbreviated form by the P`EI WEN YUN FU: "The rebel Wang Kuo of Liang was besieging the town of Ch`en- ts`ang, and Huang-fu Sung, who was in supreme command, and Tung Cho were sent out against him. The latter pressed for hasty measures, but Sung turned a deaf ear to his counsel. At last the rebels were utterly worn out, and began to throw down their weapons of their

own accord. Sung was not advancing to the attack, but Cho said: 'It is a principle of war not to pursue desperate men and not to press a retreating host.' Sung answered: 'That does not apply here. What I am about to attack is a jaded army, not a retreating host; with disciplined troops I am falling on a disorganized multitude, not a band of desperate men.' Thereupon he advances to the attack unsupported by his colleague, and routed the enemy, Wang Kuo being slain."]

35. The sight of men whispering together in small knots or speaking in subdued tones points to disaffection amongst the rank and file.

36. Too frequent rewards signify that the enemy is at the end of his resources;

[Because, when an army is hard pressed, as Tu Mu says, there is always a fear of mutiny, and lavish rewards are given to keep the men in good temper.]

too many punishments betray a condition of dire distress.

[Because in such case discipline becomes relaxed, and unwonted severity is necessary to keep the men to their duty.]

37. To begin by bluster, but afterwards to take fright at the enemy's numbers, shows a supreme lack of intelligence.

[I follow the interpretation of Ts`ao Kung, also adopted by Li Ch`uan, Tu Mu, and Chang Yu. Another possible meaning set forth by Tu Yu, Chia Lin, Mei Tao-ch`en and Wang Hsi, is: "The general who is first tyrannical towards his men, and then in terror lest they should mutiny, etc." This would connect the sentence with what went before about rewards and punishments.]

38. When envoys are sent with compliments in their mouths, it is a sign that the enemy wishes for a truce.

[Tu Mu says: "If the enemy open friendly relations by sending hostages, it is a sign that they are anxious for an armistice, either because their strength is exhausted or for some other reason." But it hardly needs a Sun Tzu to draw such an obvious inference.]

39. If the enemy's troops march up angrily and remain facing ours for a long time without either joining battle or taking themselves off again, the situation is one that demands great vigilance and circumspection.

[Ts`ao Kung says a maneuver of this sort may be only a ruse to gain time for an unexpected flank attack or the laying of an ambush.]

40. If our troops are no more in number than the enemy, that is amply sufficient; it only means that no direct attack can be made.

[Literally, "no martial advance." That is to say, CHENG tactics and frontal attacks must be eschewed, and stratagem resorted to instead.]

What we can do is simply to concentrate all our available strength, keep a close watch on the enemy, and obtain reinforcements.

[This is an obscure sentence, and none of the commentators succeed in squeezing very good sense out of it. I follow Li Ch`uan, who appears to offer the simplest explanation: "Only the side that gets more men will win." Fortunately we have Chang Yu to expound its meaning to us in language which is lucidity itself: "When the numbers are even, and no favorable opening presents itself, although we may not be strong enough to deliver a sustained attack, we can find additional recruits amongst our sutlers and camp-followers, and then, concentrating our forces and keeping a close watch on the enemy, contrive to snatch the victory. But we must avoid borrowing foreign soldiers to help us." He then quotes from Wei Liao Tzu, ch. 3: "The nominal strength of mercenary troops may be 100,000, but their real value will be not more than half that figure."]

41. He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them.

[Ch`en Hao, quoting from the TSO CHUAN, says: "If bees and scorpions carry poison, how much more will a hostile state! Even a puny opponent, then, should not be treated with contempt."]

42. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.

43. Therefore soldiers must be treated in the first instance with humanity, but kept under control by means of iron discipline.

[Yen Tzu [B.C. 493] said of Ssu-ma Jang-chu: "His civil virtues endeared him to the people; his martial prowess kept his enemies in awe." Cf. Wu Tzu, ch. 4 init.: "The ideal commander unites culture with a warlike temper; the profession of arms requires a combination of hardness and tenderness."]

This is a certain road to victory.

44. If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.

45. If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed,

[Tu Mu says: "A general ought in time of peace to show kindly confidence in his men and also make his authority respected, so that when they come to face the enemy, orders may be executed and discipline maintained, because they all trust and look up to him." What Sun Tzu has said in ss. 44, however, would lead one rather to expect something like this: "If a general is always confident that his orders will be carried out," etc."]

the gain will be mutual.

[Chang Yu says: "The general has confidence in the men under his command, and the men are docile, having confidence in him. Thus the gain is mutual" He quotes a pregnant sentence from Wei Liao Tzu, ch. 4: "The art of giving orders is not to try to rectify minor blunders and not to be swayed by petty doubts." Vacillation and fussiness are the surest means of sapping the confidence of an army.]

[1] "Aids to Scouting," p. 26.

X. TERRAIN

[Only about a third of the chapter, comprising ss. 1-13, deals with "terrain," the subject being more fully treated in ch. XI. The "six calamities" are discussed in SS. 14-20, and the rest of the chapter is again a mere string of desultory remarks, though not less interesting, perhaps, on that account.]

1. Sun Tzu said: We may distinguish six kinds of terrain, to wit: (1) Accessible ground;

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "plentifully provided with roads and means of communications."]

(2) entangling ground;

[The same commentator says: "Net-like country, venturing into which you become entangled."]

(3) temporizing ground;

[Ground which allows you to "stave off" or "delay."]

(4) narrow passes; (5) precipitous heights; (6) positions at a great distance from the enemy.

[It is hardly necessary to point out the faultiness of this classification. A strange lack of logical perception is shown in the Chinaman's unquestioning acceptance of glaring cross-divisions such as the above.]

2. Ground which can be freely traversed by both sides is called **ACCESSIBLE**.

3. With regard to ground of this nature, be before the enemy in occupying the raised and sunny spots, and carefully guard your line of supplies.

[The general meaning of the last phrase is doubtlessly, as Tu Yu says, "not to allow the enemy to cut your communications." In view of Napoleon's dictum, "the secret of war lies in the communications," [1] we could wish that Sun Tzu had done more than skirt the edge of this important subject here and in I. ss. 10, VII. ss. 11. Col. Henderson says: "The line of supply may be said to be as vital to the existence of an army as the heart to the life of a human being. Just as the duelist who finds his adversary's point menacing him with certain death, and his own guard astray, is compelled to conform to his adversary's movements, and to content himself with warding off his thrusts, so the commander whose communications are suddenly threatened finds himself in a false position, and he will be fortunate if he has not to change all his plans, to split up his force into more or less isolated detachments, and to fight with inferior numbers on ground which he has not had time to prepare, and where defeat will not be an ordinary failure, but will entail the ruin or surrender of his whole army." [2]

Then you will be able to fight with advantage. 4. Ground which can be abandoned but is hard to re-occupy is called **ENTANGLING**.

5. From a position of this sort, if the enemy is unprepared, you may sally forth and defeat him. But if the enemy is prepared for your coming, and you fail to defeat him, then, return being impossible, disaster will ensue.

6. When the position is such that neither side will gain by making the first move, it is called **TEMPORIZING** ground.

[Tu Mu says: "Each side finds it inconvenient to move, and the situation remains at a deadlock."]

7. In a position of this sort, even though the enemy should offer us an attractive bait,

[Tu Yu says, "turning their backs on us and pretending to flee." But this is only one of the lures which might induce us to quit our position.]

it will be advisable not to stir forth, but rather to retreat, thus enticing the enemy in his turn; then, when part of his army has come out, we may deliver our attack with advantage.

8. With regard to **NARROW PASSES**, if you can occupy them first, let them be strongly garrisoned and await the advent of the enemy.

[Because then, as Tu Yu observes, "the initiative will lie with us, and by making sudden and unexpected attacks we shall have the enemy at our mercy."]

9. Should the army forestall you in occupying a pass, do not go after him if the pass is fully garrisoned, but only if it is weakly garrisoned.

10. With regard to **PRECIPITOUS HEIGHTS**, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up.

[Ts`ao Kung says: "The particular advantage of securing heights and defiles is that your actions cannot then be dictated by the enemy." [For the enunciation of the grand principle alluded to, see VI. ss. 2]. Chang Yu tells the following anecdote of P`ei Hsing-chien (A.D. 619-682), who was sent on a punitive expedition against the Turkic tribes. "At night he pitched his camp as usual, and it had already been completely fortified by wall and ditch, when suddenly he gave orders that the army should shift its quarters to a hill near by. This was highly displeasing to his officers, who protested loudly against the extra fatigue which it would entail on the men. P`ei Hsing-chien, however, paid no heed to their remonstrances and had the camp moved as quickly as possible. The same night, a terrific storm came on, which flooded their former place of encampment to the depth of over twelve feet. The recalcitrant officers were amazed at the sight, and owned that they had been in the wrong. 'How did you know what was going to happen?' they asked. P`ei Hsing-chien replied: 'From this time forward be content to obey orders without asking unnecessary questions.' From this it may be seen," Chang Yu continues, "that high and sunny places are advantageous not only for fighting, but also because they are immune from disastrous floods."]

11. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but retreat and try to entice him away.

[The turning point of Li Shih-min's campaign in 621 A.D. against the two rebels, Tou Chien-te, King of Hsia, and Wang Shih-ch`ung, Prince of Cheng, was his seizure of the heights of Wu-lao, in spite of which Tou Chien-te persisted in his attempt to relieve his ally in Lo-yang, was defeated and taken prisoner. See **CHIU T`ANG**, ch. 2, fol. 5 verso, and also ch. 54.]

12. If you are situated at a great distance from the enemy, and the strength of the two armies is equal, it is not easy to provoke a battle,

[The point is that we must not think of undertaking a long and wearisome march, at the end of which, as Tu Yu says, "we should be exhausted and our adversary fresh and keen."]

and fighting will be to your disadvantage.

13. These six are the principles connected with Earth.

[Or perhaps, "the principles relating to ground." See, however, I. ss. 8.]

The general who has attained a responsible post must be careful to study them.

14. Now an army is exposed to six several calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are: (1) Flight; (2) insubordination; (3) collapse; (4) ruin; (5) disorganization; (6) rout.

15. Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the FLIGHT of the former.

16. When the common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak, the result is INSUBORDINATION.

[Tu Mu cites the unhappy case of T`ien Pu [HSIN T`ANG SHU, ch. 148], who was sent to Wei in 821 A.D. with orders to lead an army against Wang T`ing-ts`ou. But the whole time he was in command, his soldiers treated him with the utmost contempt, and openly flouted his authority by riding about the camp on donkeys, several thousands at a time. T`ien Pu was powerless to put a stop to this conduct, and when, after some months had passed, he made an attempt to engage the enemy, his troops turned tail and dispersed in every direction. After that, the unfortunate man committed suicide by cutting his throat.]

When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak, the result is COLLAPSE.

[Ts`ao Kung says: "The officers are energetic and want to press on, the common soldiers are feeble and suddenly collapse."]

17. When the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, and on meeting the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the commander-in-chief can tell whether or no he is in a position to fight, the result is RUIN.

[Wang Hsi's note is: "This means, the general is angry without cause, and at the same time does not appreciate the ability of his subordinate officers; thus he arouses fierce resentment and brings an avalanche of ruin upon his head."]

18. When the general is weak and without authority; when his orders are not clear and distinct;

[Wei Liao Tzu (ch. 4) says: "If the commander gives his orders with decision, the soldiers will not wait to hear them twice; if his moves are made without vacillation, the soldiers will not be in two minds about doing their duty." General Baden-Powell says, italicizing the words: "The secret of getting successful work out of your trained men lies in one nutshell--in the clearness of the instructions they receive." [3] Cf. also Wu Tzu ch. 3: "the most fatal defect in a military leader is difference; the worst calamities that befall an army arise from hesitation."]

when there are no fixed duties assigned to officers and men,

[Tu Mu says: "Neither officers nor men have any regular routine."]

and the ranks are formed in a slovenly haphazard manner, the result is utter DISORGANIZATION.

19. When a general, unable to estimate the enemy's strength, allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one, and neglects to place picked soldiers in the front rank, the result must be ROUT.

[Chang Yu paraphrases the latter part of the sentence and continues: "Whenever there is fighting to be done, the keenest spirits should be appointed to serve in the front ranks, both in order to strengthen the resolution of our own men and to demoralize the enemy." Cf. the *primi ordines* of Caesar ("De Bello Gallico," V. 28, 44, et al.).]

20. These are six ways of courting defeat, which must be carefully noted by the general who has attained a responsible post.

[See supra, ss. 13.]

21. The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally;

[Ch'en Hao says: "The advantages of weather and season are not equal to those connected with ground."]

but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of victory, and of shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general.

22. He who knows these things, and in fighting puts his knowledge into practice, will win his battles. He who knows them not, nor practices them, will surely be defeated.

23. If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.

[Cf. VIII. ss. 3 fin. Huang Shih-kung of the Ch`in dynasty, who is said to have been the patron of Chang Liang and to have written the SAN LUEH, has these words attributed to him: "The responsibility of setting an army in motion must devolve on the general alone; if advance and retreat are controlled from the Palace, brilliant results will hardly be achieved. Hence the god-like ruler and the enlightened monarch are content to play a humble part in furthering their country's cause [lit., kneel down to push the chariot wheel]." This means that "in matters lying outside the zenana, the decision of the military commander must be absolute." Chang Yu also quote the saying: "Decrees from the Son of Heaven do not penetrate the walls of a camp."]

24. The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace,

[It was Wellington, I think, who said that the hardest thing of all for a soldier is to retreat.]

whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.

[A noble presentiment, in few words, of the Chinese "happy warrior." Such a man, says Ho Shih, "even if he had to suffer punishment, would not regret his conduct."]

25. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death.

[Cf. I. ss. 6. In this connection, Tu Mu draws for us an engaging picture of the famous general Wu Ch`i, from whose treatise on war I have frequently had occasion to quote: "He wore the same clothes and ate the same food as the meanest of his soldiers, refused to have either a horse to ride or a mat to sleep on, carried his own surplus rations wrapped in a parcel, and shared every hardship with his men. One of his soldiers was suffering from an abscess, and

Wu Ch`i himself sucked out the virus. The soldier's mother, hearing this, began wailing and lamenting. Somebody asked her, saying: 'Why do you cry? Your son is only a common soldier, and yet the commander-in-chief himself has sucked the poison from his sore.' The woman replied, 'Many years ago, Lord Wu performed a similar service for my husband, who never left him afterwards, and finally met his death at the hands of the enemy. And now that he has done the same for my son, he too will fall fighting I know not where.'" Li Ch`uan mentions the Viscount of Ch`u, who invaded the small state of Hsiao during the winter. The Duke of Shen said to him: "Many of the soldiers are suffering severely from the cold." So he made a round of the whole army, comforting and encouraging the men; and straightway they felt as if they were clothed in garments lined with floss silk.]

26. If, however, you are indulgent, but unable to make your authority felt; kind-hearted, but unable to enforce your commands; and incapable, moreover, of quelling disorder: then your soldiers must be likened to spoilt children; they are useless for any practical purpose.

[Li Ching once said that if you could make your soldiers afraid of you, they would not be afraid of the enemy. Tu Mu recalls an instance of stern military discipline which occurred in 219 A.D., when Lu Meng was occupying the town of Chiang-ling. He had given stringent orders to his army not to molest the inhabitants nor take anything from them by force. Nevertheless, a certain officer serving under his banner, who happened to be a fellow-townsmen, ventured to appropriate a bamboo hat belonging to one of the people, in order to wear it over his regulation helmet as a protection against the rain. Lu Meng considered that the fact of his being also a native of Ju-nan should not be allowed to palliate a clear breach of discipline, and accordingly he ordered his summary execution, the tears rolling down his face, however, as he did so. This act of severity filled the army with wholesome awe, and from that time forth even articles dropped in the highway were not picked up.]

27. If we know that our own men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.

[That is, Ts`ao Kung says, "the issue in this case is uncertain."]

28. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, but are unaware that our own men are not in a condition to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.

[Cf. III. ss. 13 (1).]

29. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, and also know that our men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the nature of the ground makes fighting impracticable, we have still gone only halfway towards victory.

30. Hence the experienced soldier, once in motion, is never bewildered; once he has broken camp, he is never at a loss.

[The reason being, according to Tu Mu, that he has taken his measures so thoroughly as to ensure victory beforehand. "He does not move recklessly," says Chang Yu, "so that when he does move, he makes no mistakes."]

31. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

[Li Ch`uan sums up as follows: "Given a knowledge of three things--the affairs of men, the seasons of heaven and the natural advantages of earth--, victory will invariably crown your battles."]

[1] See "Pensees de Napoleon 1er," no. 47.

[2] "The Science of War," chap. 2.

[3] "Aids to Scouting," p. xii.

XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground.

2. When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory, it is dispersive ground.

[So called because the soldiers, being near to their homes and anxious to see their wives and children, are likely to seize the opportunity afforded by a battle and scatter in every direction. "In their advance," observes Tu Mu, "they will lack the valor of desperation, and when they retreat, they will find harbors of refuge."]

3. When he has penetrated into hostile territory, but to no great distance, it is facile ground.

[Li Ch`uan and Ho Shih say "because of the facility for retreating," and the other commentators give similar explanations. Tu Mu remarks: "When your army has crossed the border, you should burn your boats and bridges, in order to make it clear to everybody that you have no hankering after home."]

4. Ground the possession of which imports great advantage to either side, is contentious ground.

[Tu Mu defines the ground as ground "to be contended for." Ts`ao Kung says: "ground on which the few and the weak can defeat the many and the strong," such as "the neck of a pass," instanced by Li Ch`uan. Thus, Thermopylae was of this classification because the possession of it, even for a few days only, meant holding the entire invading army in check and thus gaining invaluable time. Cf. Wu Tzu, ch. V. ad init.: "For those who have to fight in the ratio of one to ten, there is nothing better than a narrow pass." When Lu Kuang was returning from his triumphant expedition to Turkestan in 385 A.D., and had got as far as I-ho, laden with spoils, Liang Hsi, administrator of Liang-chou, taking advantage of the death of Fu Chien, King of Ch`in, plotted against him and was for barring his way into the province. Yang Han, governor of Kao-ch`ang, counseled him, saying: "Lu Kuang is fresh from his victories in the west, and his soldiers are vigorous and mettlesome. If we oppose him in the shifting sands of the desert, we shall be no match for him, and we must therefore try a different plan. Let us hasten to occupy the defile at the mouth of the Kao-wu pass, thus cutting him off from supplies of water, and when his troops are prostrated with thirst, we can dictate our own terms without moving. Or if you think that the pass I mention is too far off, we could make a stand against him at the I-wu pass, which is nearer. The cunning and resource of Tzu-fang himself would be expended in vain against the enormous strength of these two positions." Liang Hsi, refusing to act on this advice, was overwhelmed and swept away by the invader.]

5. Ground on which each side has liberty of movement is open ground.

[There are various interpretations of the Chinese adjective for this type of ground. Ts`ao Kung says it means "ground covered with a network of roads," like a chessboard. Ho Shih suggested: "ground on which intercommunication is easy."]

6. Ground which forms the key to three contiguous states,

[Ts`ao Kung defines this as: "Our country adjoining the enemy's and a third country conterminous with both." Meng Shih instances the small principality of Cheng, which was bounded on the north-east by Ch`i, on the west by Chin, and on the south by Ch`u.]

so that he who occupies it first has most of the Empire at his command,

[The belligerent who holds this dominating position can constrain most of them to become his allies.]

is a ground of intersecting highways.

7. When an army has penetrated into the heart of a hostile country, leaving a number of fortified cities in its rear, it is serious ground.

[Wang Hsi explains the name by saying that "when an army has reached such a point, its situation is serious."]

8. Mountain forests,

[Or simply "forests."]

rugged steeps, marshes and fens--all country that is hard to traverse: this is difficult ground.

9. Ground which is reached through narrow gorges, and from which we can only retire by tortuous paths, so that a small number of the enemy would suffice to crush a large body of our men: this is hemmed in ground. 10. Ground on which we can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay, is desperate ground.

[The situation, as pictured by Ts`ao Kung, is very similar to the "hemmed-in ground" except that here escape is no longer possible: "A lofty mountain in front, a large river behind, advance impossible, retreat blocked." Ch`en Hao says: "to be on 'desperate ground' is like sitting in a leaking boat or crouching in a burning house." Tu Mu quotes from Li Ching a vivid description of the plight of an army thus entrapped: "Suppose an army invading hostile territory without the aid of local guides: -- it falls into a fatal snare and is at the enemy's mercy. A ravine on the left, a mountain on the right, a pathway so perilous that the horses have to be roped together and the chariots carried in slings, no passage open in front, retreat cut off behind, no choice but to proceed in single file.

Then, before there is time to range our soldiers in order of battle, the enemy is overwhelming strength suddenly appears on the scene. Advancing, we can nowhere take a breathing-space; retreating, we have no haven of refuge. We seek a pitched battle, but in vain; yet standing on the defensive, none of us has a moment's respite. If we simply maintain our ground, whole days and months will crawl by; the moment we make a move, we have to sustain the enemy's attacks on front and rear. The country is wild, destitute of water and plants; the army is lacking in the necessaries of life, the horses are jaded and the men worn-out, all the resources of strength and skill unavailing, the pass so

narrow that a single man defending it can check the onset of ten thousand; all means of offense in the hands of the enemy, all points of vantage already forfeited by ourselves:--in this terrible plight, even though we had the most valiant soldiers and the keenest of weapons, how could they be employed with the slightest effect?" Students of Greek history may be reminded of the awful close to the Sicilian expedition, and the agony of the Athenians under Nicias and Demosthenes. [See Thucydides, VII. 78 sqq..]

11. On dispersive ground, therefore, fight not. On facile ground, halt not. On contentious ground, attack not.

[But rather let all your energies be bent on occupying the advantageous position first. So Ts`ao Kung, Li Ch`uan and others, however, suppose the meaning to be that the enemy has already forestalled us, so that it would be sheer madness to attack. In the SUN TZU HSU LU, when the King of Wu inquires what should be done in this case, Sun Tzu replies: "The rule with regard to contentious ground is that those in possession have the advantage over the other side. If a position of this kind is secured first by the enemy, beware of attacking him. Lure him away by pretending to flee--show your banners and sound your drums--make a dash for other places that he cannot afford to lose--trail brushwood and raise a dust--confound his ears and eyes--detach a body of your best troops, and place it secretly in ambush. Then your opponent will sally forth to the rescue."]

12. On open ground, do not try to block the enemy's way.

[Because the attempt would be futile, and would expose the blocking force itself to serious risks. There are two interpretations available here. I follow that of Chang Yu. The other is indicated in Ts`ao Kung's brief note: "Draw closer together"--i.e., see that a portion of your own army is not cut off.]

On the ground of intersecting highways, join hands with your allies.

[Or perhaps, "form alliances with neighboring states."]

13. On serious ground, gather in plunder.

[On this, Li Ch`uan has the following delicious note: "When an army penetrates far into the enemy's country, care must be taken not to alienate the people by unjust treatment. Follow the example of the Han Emperor Kao Tsu, whose march into Ch`in territory was marked by no violation of women or looting of valuables. [Nota bene: this was in 207 B.C., and may well cause us to blush for the Christian armies that entered Peking in 1900 A.D.] Thus he won the hearts of all. In the present passage, then, I think that the true reading must be, not 'plunder,' but 'do not plunder.'" Alas, I fear that in this instance the worthy commentator's feelings outran his judgment. Tu Mu, at least, has no such

illusions. He says: "When encamped on 'serious ground,' there being no inducement as yet to advance further, and no possibility of retreat, one ought to take measures for a protracted resistance by bringing in provisions from all sides, and keep a close watch on the enemy."]

In difficult ground, keep steadily on the march.

[Or, in the words of VIII. ss. 2, "do not encamp.]

14. On hemmed-in ground, resort to stratagem.

[Ts`au Kung says: "Try the effect of some unusual artifice;" and Tu Yu amplifies this by saying: "In such a position, some scheme must be devised which will suit the circumstances, and if we can succeed in deluding the enemy, the peril may be escaped." This is exactly what happened on the famous occasion when Hannibal was hemmed in among the mountains on the road to Casilinum, and to all appearances entrapped by the dictator Fabius. The stratagem which Hannibal devised to baffle his foes was remarkably like that which T`ien Tan had also employed with success exactly 62 years before. [See IX. ss. 24, note.] When night came on, bundles of twigs were fastened to the horns of some 2000 oxen and set on fire, the terrified animals being then quickly driven along the mountain side towards the passes which were beset by the enemy. The strange spectacle of these rapidly moving lights so alarmed and discomfited the Romans that they withdrew from their position, and Hannibal's army passed safely through the defile. [See Polybius, III. 93, 94; Livy, XXII. 16 17.]

On desperate ground, fight.

[For, as Chia Lin remarks: "if you fight with all your might, there is a chance of life; where as death is certain if you cling to your corner."]

15. Those who were called skillful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear;

[More literally, "cause the front and rear to lose touch with each other."]

to prevent co-operation between his large and small divisions; to hinder the good troops from rescuing the bad, the officers from rallying their men.

16. When the enemy's men were united, they managed to keep them in disorder.

17. When it was to their advantage, they made a forward move; when otherwise, they stopped still.

[Mei Yao-ch`en connects this with the foregoing: "Having succeeded in thus dislocating the enemy, they would push forward in order to secure any advantage to be gained; if there was no advantage to be gained, they would remain where they were."]

18. If asked how to cope with a great host of the enemy in orderly array and on the point of marching to the attack, I should say: "Begin by seizing something which your opponent holds dear; then he will be amenable to your will."

[Opinions differ as to what Sun Tzu had in mind. Ts`ao Kung thinks it is "some strategical advantage on which the enemy is depending." Tu Mu says: "The three things which an enemy is anxious to do, and on the accomplishment of which his success depends, are: (1) to capture our favorable positions; (2) to ravage our cultivated land; (3) to guard his own communications." Our object then must be to thwart his plans in these three directions and thus render him helpless. [Cf. III. ss. 3.] By boldly seizing the initiative in this way, you at once throw the other side on the defensive.]

19. Rapidity is the essence of war:

[According to Tu Mu, "this is a summary of leading principles in warfare," and he adds: "These are the profoundest truths of military science, and the chief business of the general." The following anecdotes, told by Ho Shih, shows the importance attached to speed by two of China's greatest generals. In 227 A.D., Meng Ta, governor of Hsin-ch`eng under the Wei Emperor Wen Ti, was meditating defection to the House of Shu, and had entered into correspondence with Chu-ko Liang, Prime Minister of that State. The Wei general Ssu-ma I was then military governor of Wan, and getting wind of Meng Ta's treachery, he at once set off with an army to anticipate his revolt, having previously cajoled him by a specious message of friendly import. Ssu-ma's officers came to him and said: "If Meng Ta has leagued himself with Wu and Shu, the matter should be thoroughly investigated before we make a move." Ssu-ma I replied: "Meng Ta is an unprincipled man, and we ought to go and punish him at once, while he is still wavering and before he has thrown off the mask." Then, by a series of forced marches, he brought his army under the walls of Hsin-ch`eng within a space of eight days. Now Meng Ta had previously said in a letter to Chu-ko Liang: "Wan is 1200 LI from here. When the news of my revolt reaches Ssu-ma I, he will at once inform his imperial master, but it will be a whole month before any steps can be taken, and by that time my city will be well fortified. Besides, Ssu-ma I is sure not to come himself, and the generals that will be sent against us are not worth troubling about." The next letter, however, was filled with consternation: "Though only eight days have passed since I threw off my allegiance, an army is already at the city-gates. What miraculous rapidity is this!" A fortnight later, Hsin-ch`eng had fallen and Meng Ta had lost his head. [See CHIN SHU, ch. 1, f. 3.] In 621 A.D., Li Ching was

sent from K`uei-chou in Ssu-ch`uan to reduce the successful rebel Hsiao Hsien, who had set up as Emperor at the modern Ching-chou Fu in Hupeh. It was autumn, and the Yangtze being then in flood, Hsiao Hsien never dreamt that his adversary would venture to come down through the gorges, and consequently made no preparations. But Li Ching embarked his army without loss of time, and was just about to start when the other generals implored him to postpone his departure until the river was in a less dangerous state for navigation. Li Ching replied: "To the soldier, overwhelming speed is of paramount importance, and he must never miss opportunities. Now is the time to strike, before Hsiao Hsien even knows that we have got an army together. If we seize the present moment when the river is in flood, we shall appear before his capital with startling suddenness, like the thunder which is heard before you have time to stop your ears against it. [See VII. ss. 19, note.] This is the great principle in war. Even if he gets to know of our approach, he will have to levy his soldiers in such a hurry that they will not be fit to oppose us. Thus the full fruits of victory will be ours." All came about as he predicted, and Hsiao Hsien was obliged to surrender, nobly stipulating that his people should be spared and he alone suffer the penalty of death.]

take advantage of the enemy's unreadiness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack unguarded spots.

20. The following are the principles to be observed by an invading force: The further you penetrate into a country, the greater will be the solidarity of your troops, and thus the defenders will not prevail against you.

21. Make forays in fertile country in order to supply your army with food.

[Cf. supra, ss. 13. Li Ch`uan does not venture on a note here.]

22. Carefully study the well-being of your men,

[For "well-being", Wang Hsi means, "Pet them, humor them, give them plenty of food and drink, and look after them generally."]

and do not overtax them. Concentrate your energy and hoard your strength.

[Ch`en recalls the line of action adopted in 224 B.C. by the famous general Wang Chien, whose military genius largely contributed to the success of the First Emperor. He had invaded the Ch`u State, where a universal levy was made to oppose him. But, being doubtful of the temper of his troops, he declined all invitations to fight and remained strictly on the defensive. In vain did the Ch`u general try to force a battle: day after day Wang Chien kept inside his walls and would not come out, but devoted his whole time and energy to winning the affection and confidence of his men. He took care that they should be well fed, sharing his own meals with them, provided facilities for

bathing, and employed every method of judicious indulgence to weld them into a loyal and homogenous body. After some time had elapsed, he told off certain persons to find out how the men were amusing themselves. The answer was, that they were contending with one another in putting the weight and long-jumping. When Wang Chien heard that they were engaged in these athletic pursuits, he knew that their spirits had been strung up to the required pitch and that they were now ready for fighting. By this time the Ch`u army, after repeating their challenge again and again, had marched away eastwards in disgust. The Ch`in general immediately broke up his camp and followed them, and in the battle that ensued they were routed with great slaughter. Shortly afterwards, the whole of Ch`u was conquered by Ch`in, and the king Fu-ch`u led into captivity.]

Keep your army continually on the move,

[In order that the enemy may never know exactly where you are. It has struck me, however, that the true reading might be "link your army together."]

and devise unfathomable plans.

23. Throw your soldiers into positions whence there is no escape, and they will prefer death to flight. If they will face death, there is nothing they may not achieve.

[Chang Yu quotes his favorite Wei Liao Tzu (ch. 3): "If one man were to run amok with a sword in the market-place, and everybody else tried to get out of his way, I should not allow that this man alone had courage and that all the rest were contemptible cowards. The truth is, that a desperado and a man who sets some value on his life do not meet on even terms."]

Officers and men alike will put forth their uttermost strength.

[Chang Yu says: "If they are in an awkward place together, they will surely exert their united strength to get out of it."]

24. Soldiers when in desperate straits lose the sense of fear. If there is no place of refuge, they will stand firm. If they are in hostile country, they will show a stubborn front. If there is no help for it, they will fight hard.

25. Thus, without waiting to be marshaled, the soldiers will be constantly on the qui vive; without waiting to be asked, they will do your will;

[Literally, "without asking, you will get."]

without restrictions, they will be faithful; without giving orders, they can be trusted.

26. Prohibit the taking of omens, and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared.

[The superstitious, "bound in to saucy doubts and fears," degenerate into cowards and "die many times before their deaths." Tu Mu quotes Huang Shih-kung: "'Spells and incantations should be strictly forbidden, and no officer allowed to inquire by divination into the fortunes of an army, for fear the soldiers' minds should be seriously perturbed.' The meaning is," he continues, "that if all doubts and scruples are discarded, your men will never falter in their resolution until they die."]

27. If our soldiers are not overburdened with money, it is not because they have a distaste for riches; if their lives are not unduly long, it is not because they are disinclined to longevity.

[Chang Yu has the best note on this passage: "Wealth and long life are things for which all men have a natural inclination. Hence, if they burn or fling away valuables, and sacrifice their own lives, it is not that they dislike them, but simply that they have no choice." Sun Tzu is slyly insinuating that, as soldiers are but human, it is for the general to see that temptations to shirk fighting and grow rich are not thrown in their way.]

28. On the day they are ordered out to battle, your soldiers may weep,

[The word in the Chinese is "snivel." This is taken to indicate more genuine grief than tears alone.]

those sitting up bedewing their garments, and those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks.

[Not because they are afraid, but because, as Ts`ao Kung says, "all have embraced the firm resolution to do or die." We may remember that the heroes of the Iliad were equally childlike in showing their emotion. Chang Yu alludes to the mournful parting at the I River between Ching K`o and his friends, when the former was sent to attempt the life of the King of Ch`in (afterwards First Emperor) in 227 B.C. The tears of all flowed down like rain as he bade them farewell and uttered the following lines: "The shrill blast is blowing, Chilly the burn; Your champion is going--Not to return." [1]]

But let them once be brought to bay, and they will display the courage of a Chu or a Kuei.

[Chu was the personal name of Chuan Chu, a native of the Wu State and contemporary with Sun Tzu himself, who was employed by Kung-tzu Kuang, better known as Ho Lu Wang, to assassinate his sovereign Wang Liao with a

dagger which he secreted in the belly of a fish served up at a banquet. He succeeded in his attempt, but was immediately hacked to pieces by the king's bodyguard. This was in 515 B.C. The other hero referred to, Ts`ao Kuei (or Ts`ao Mo), performed the exploit which has made his name famous 166 years earlier, in 681 B.C. Lu had been thrice defeated by Ch`i, and was just about to conclude a treaty surrendering a large slice of territory, when Ts`ao Kuei suddenly seized Huan Kung, the Duke of Ch`i, as he stood on the altar steps and held a dagger against his chest. None of the duke's retainers dared to move a muscle, and Ts`ao Kuei proceeded to demand full restitution, declaring the Lu was being unjustly treated because she was a smaller and a weaker state. Huan Kung, in peril of his life, was obliged to consent, whereupon Ts`ao Kuei flung away his dagger and quietly resumed his place amid the terrified assemblage without having so much as changed color. As was to be expected, the Duke wanted afterwards to repudiate the bargain, but his wise old counselor Kuan Chung pointed out to him the impolicy of breaking his word, and the upshot was that this bold stroke regained for Lu the whole of what she had lost in three pitched battles.]

29. The skillful tactician may be likened to the SHUAI-JAN. Now the SHUAI-JAN is a snake that is found in the Ch`ang mountains.

["Shuai-jan" means "suddenly" or "rapidly," and the snake in question was doubtless so called owing to the rapidity of its movements. Through this passage, the term in the Chinese has now come to be used in the sense of "military maneuvers."]

Strike at its head, and you will be attacked by its tail; strike at its tail, and you will be attacked by its head; strike at its middle, and you will be attacked by head and tail both.

30. Asked if an army can be made to imitate the SHUAI-JAN, [That is, as Mei Yao-ch`en says, "Is it possible to make the front and rear of an army each swiftly responsive to attack on the other, just as though they were part of a single living body?"]

I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies;

[Cf. VI. ss. 21.]

yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and are caught by a storm, they will come to each other's assistance just as the left hand helps the right.

[The meaning is: If two enemies will help each other in a time of common peril, how much more should two parts of the same army, bound together as they are by every tie of interest and fellow-feeling. Yet it is notorious that many a

campaign has been ruined through lack of cooperation, especially in the case of allied armies.]

31. Hence it is not enough to put one's trust in the tethering of horses, and the burying of chariot wheels in the ground

[These quaint devices to prevent one's army from running away recall the Athenian hero Sophanes, who carried the anchor with him at the battle of Plataea, by means of which he fastened himself firmly to one spot. [See Herodotus, IX. 74.] It is not enough, says Sun Tzu, to render flight impossible by such mechanical means. You will not succeed unless your men have tenacity and unity of purpose, and, above all, a spirit of sympathetic cooperation. This is the lesson which can be learned from the SHUAI-JAN.]

32. The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach.

[Literally, "level the courage [of all] as though [it were that of] one." If the ideal army is to form a single organic whole, then it follows that the resolution and spirit of its component parts must be of the same quality, or at any rate must not fall below a certain standard. Wellington's seemingly ungrateful description of his army at Waterloo as "the worst he had ever commanded" meant no more than that it was deficient in this important particular--unity of spirit and courage. Had he not foreseen the Belgian defections and carefully kept those troops in the background, he would almost certainly have lost the day.]

33. How to make the best of both strong and weak--that is a question involving the proper use of ground.

[Mei Yao-ch`en's paraphrase is: "The way to eliminate the differences of strong and weak and to make both serviceable is to utilize accidental features of the ground." Less reliable troops, if posted in strong positions, will hold out as long as better troops on more exposed terrain. The advantage of position neutralizes the inferiority in stamina and courage. Col. Henderson says: "With all respect to the text books, and to the ordinary tactical teaching, I am inclined to think that the study of ground is often overlooked, and that by no means sufficient importance is attached to the selection of positions... and to the immense advantages that are to be derived, whether you are defending or attacking, from the proper utilization of natural features." [2]]

34. Thus the skillful general conducts his army just as though he were leading a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand.

[Tu Mu says: "The simile has reference to the ease with which he does it."]

35. It is the business of a general to be quiet and thus ensure secrecy; upright and just, and thus maintain order.

36. He must be able to mystify his officers and men by false reports and appearances,

[Literally, "to deceive their eyes and ears."]

and thus keep them in total ignorance.

[Ts`ao Kung gives us one of his excellent apophthegms: "The troops must not be allowed to share your schemes in the beginning; they may only rejoice with you over their happy outcome." "To mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy," is one of the first principles in war, as had been frequently pointed out. But how about the other process--the mystification of one's own men? Those who may think that Sun Tzu is over-emphatic on this point would do well to read Col. Henderson's remarks on Stonewall Jackson's Valley campaign: "The infinite pains," he says, "with which Jackson sought to conceal, even from his most trusted staff officers, his movements, his intentions, and his thoughts, a commander less thorough would have pronounced useless"--etc. etc. [3] In the year 88 A.D., as we read in ch. 47 of the HOU HAN SHU, "Pan Ch`ao took the field with 25,000 men from Khotan and other Central Asian states with the object of crushing Yarkand. The King of Kutcha replied by dispatching his chief commander to succor the place with an army drawn from the kingdoms of Wen-su, Ku-mo, and Wei-t`ou, totaling 50,000 men. Pan Ch`ao summoned his officers and also the King of Khotan to a council of war, and said: 'Our forces are now outnumbered and unable to make head against the enemy. The best plan, then, is for us to separate and disperse, each in a different direction. The King of Khotan will march away by the easterly route, and I will then return myself towards the west. Let us wait until the evening drum has sounded and then start.' Pan Ch`ao now secretly released the prisoners whom he had taken alive, and the King of Kutcha was thus informed of his plans. Much elated by the news, the latter set off at once at the head of 10,000 horsemen to bar Pan Ch`ao's retreat in the west, while the King of Wen-su rode eastward with 8000 horse in order to intercept the King of Khotan. As soon as Pan Ch`ao knew that the two chieftains had gone, he called his divisions together, got them well in hand, and at cock-crow hurled them against the army of Yarkand, as it lay encamped. The barbarians, panic-stricken, fled in confusion, and were closely pursued by Pan Ch`ao. Over 5000 heads were brought back as trophies, besides immense spoils in the shape of horses and cattle and valuables of every description. Yarkand then capitulating, Kutcha and the other kingdoms drew off their respective forces. From that time forward, Pan Ch`ao's prestige completely overawed the countries of the west." In this case, we see that the Chinese general not only kept his own officers in ignorance of his real plans, but actually took the bold step of dividing his army in order to deceive the enemy.]

37. By altering his arrangements and changing his plans,

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[Wang Hsi thinks that this means not using the same stratagem twice.]

he keeps the enemy without definite knowledge.

[Chang Yu, in a quotation from another work, says: "The axiom, that war is based on deception, does not apply only to deception of the enemy. You must deceive even your own soldiers. Make them follow you, but without letting them know why."]

By shifting his camp and taking circuitous routes, he prevents the enemy from anticipating his purpose. 38. At the critical moment, the leader of an army acts like one who has climbed up a height and then kicks away the ladder behind him. He carries his men deep into hostile territory before he shows his hand.

[Literally, "releases the spring" (see V. ss. 15), that is, takes some decisive step which makes it impossible for the army to return--like Hsiang Yu, who sunk his ships after crossing a river. Ch`en Hao, followed by Chia Lin, understands the words less well as "puts forth every artifice at his command."]

39. He burns his boats and breaks his cooking-pots; like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, he drives his men this way and that, and nothing knows whither he is going.

[Tu Mu says: "The army is only cognizant of orders to advance or retreat; it is ignorant of the ulterior ends of attacking and conquering."]

40. To muster his host and bring it into danger:--this may be termed the business of the general.

[Sun Tzu means that after mobilization there should be no delay in aiming a blow at the enemy's heart. Note how he returns again and again to this point. Among the warring states of ancient China, desertion was no doubt a much more present fear and serious evil than it is in the armies of today.]

41. The different measures suited to the nine varieties of ground;

[Chang Yu says: "One must not be hide-bound in interpreting the rules for the nine varieties of ground.]

the expediency of aggressive or defensive tactics; and the fundamental laws of human nature: these are things that must most certainly be studied.

42. When invading hostile territory, the general principle is, that penetrating deeply brings cohesion; penetrating but a short way means dispersion.

[Cf. supra, ss. 20.]

43. When you leave your own country behind, and take your army across neighborhood territory, you find yourself on critical ground.

[This "ground" is curiously mentioned in VIII. ss. 2, but it does not figure among the Nine Situations or the Six Calamities in chap. X. One's first impulse would be to translate it distant ground," but this, if we can trust the commentators, is precisely what is not meant here. Mei Yao-ch`en says it is "a position not far enough advanced to be called 'facile,' and not near enough to home to be 'dispersive,' but something between the two." Wang Hsi says: "It is ground separated from home by an interjacent state, whose territory we have had to cross in order to reach it. Hence, it is incumbent on us to settle our business there quickly." He adds that this position is of rare occurrence, which is the reason why it is not included among the Nine Situations.]

When there are means of communication on all four sides, the ground is one of intersecting highways.

44. When you penetrate deeply into a country, it is serious ground. When you penetrate but a little way, it is facile ground.

45. When you have the enemy's strongholds on your rear, and narrow passes in front, it is hemmed-in ground. When there is no place of refuge at all, it is desperate ground.

46. Therefore, on dispersive ground, I would inspire my men with unity of purpose.

[This end, according to Tu Mu, is best attained by remaining on the defensive, and avoiding battle. Cf. supra, ss. 11.]

On facile ground, I would see that there is close connection between all parts of my army.

[As Tu Mu says, the object is to guard against two possible contingencies: "(1) the desertion of our own troops; (2) a sudden attack on the part of the enemy." Cf. VII. ss. 17. Mei Yao-ch`en says: "On the march, the regiments should be in close touch; in an encampment, there should be continuity between the fortifications."]

47. On contentious ground, I would hurry up my rear.

[This is Ts`ao Kung's interpretation. Chang Yu adopts it, saying: "We must quickly bring up our rear, so that head and tail may both reach the goal." That is, they must not be allowed to straggle up a long way apart. Mei Yao-ch`en

offers another equally plausible explanation: "Supposing the enemy has not yet reached the coveted position, and we are behind him, we should advance with all speed in order to dispute its possession." Ch`en Hao, on the other hand, assuming that the enemy has had time to select his own ground, quotes VI. ss. 1, where Sun Tzu warns us against coming exhausted to the attack. His own idea of the situation is rather vaguely expressed: "If there is a favorable position lying in front of you, detach a picked body of troops to occupy it, then if the enemy, relying on their numbers, come up to make a fight for it, you may fall quickly on their rear with your main body, and victory will be assured." It was thus, he adds, that Chao She beat the army of Ch`in. (See p. 57.)]

48. On open ground, I would keep a vigilant eye on my defenses. On ground of intersecting highways, I would consolidate my alliances.

49. On serious ground, I would try to ensure a continuous stream of supplies.

[The commentators take this as referring to forage and plunder, not, as one might expect, to an unbroken communication with a home base.]

On difficult ground, I would keep pushing on along the road.

50. On hemmed-in ground, I would block any way of retreat.

[Meng Shih says: "To make it seem that I meant to defend the position, whereas my real intention is to burst suddenly through the enemy's lines." Mei Yao-ch`en says: "in order to make my soldiers fight with desperation." Wang Hsi says, "fearing lest my men be tempted to run away." Tu Mu points out that this is the converse of VII. ss. 36, where it is the enemy who is surrounded. In 532 A.D., Kao Huan, afterwards Emperor and canonized as Shen-wu, was surrounded by a great army under Erh- chu Chao and others. His own force was comparatively small, consisting only of 2000 horse and something under 30,000 foot. The lines of investment had not been drawn very closely together, gaps being left at certain points. But Kao Huan, instead of trying to escape, actually made a shift to block all the remaining outlets himself by driving into them a number of oxen and donkeys roped together. As soon as his officers and men saw that there was nothing for it but to conquer or die, their spirits rose to an extraordinary pitch of exaltation, and they charged with such desperate ferocity that the opposing ranks broke and crumbled under their onslaught.]

On desperate ground, I would proclaim to my soldiers the hopelessness of saving their lives.

Tu Yu says: "Burn your baggage and impedimenta, throw away your stores and provisions, choke up the wells, destroy your cooking-stoves, and make it plain to your men that they cannot survive, but must fight to the death." Mei Yao-ch`en says: "The only chance of life lies in giving up all hope of it." This

concludes what Sun Tzu has to say about "grounds" and the "variations" corresponding to them. Reviewing the passages which bear on this important subject, we cannot fail to be struck by the desultory and unmethodical fashion in which it is treated. Sun Tzu begins abruptly in VIII. ss. 2 to enumerate "variations" before touching on "grounds" at all, but only mentions five, namely nos. 7, 5, 8 and 9 of the subsequent list, and one that is not included in it. A few varieties of ground are dealt with in the earlier portion of chap. IX, and then chap. X sets forth six new grounds, with six variations of plan to match. None of these is mentioned again, though the first is hardly to be distinguished from ground no. 4 in the next chapter. At last, in chap. XI, we come to the Nine Grounds par excellence, immediately followed by the variations. This takes us down to ss. 14. In SS. 43-45, fresh definitions are provided for nos. 5, 6, 2, 8 and 9 (in the order given), as well as for the tenth ground noticed in chap. VIII; and finally, the nine variations are enumerated once more from beginning to end, all, with the exception of 5, 6 and 7, being different from those previously given. Though it is impossible to account for the present state of Sun Tzu's text, a few suggestive facts maybe brought into prominence: (1) Chap. VIII, according to the title, should deal with nine variations, whereas only five appear. (2) It is an abnormally short chapter. (3) Chap. XI is entitled The Nine Grounds. Several of these are defined twice over, besides which there are two distinct lists of the corresponding variations. (4) The length of the chapter is disproportionate, being double that of any other except IX. I do not propose to draw any inferences from these facts, beyond the general conclusion that Sun Tzu's work cannot have come down to us in the shape in which it left his hands: chap. VIII is obviously defective and probably out of place, while XI seems to contain matter that has either been added by a later hand or ought to appear elsewhere.]

51. For it is the soldier's disposition to offer an obstinate resistance when surrounded, to fight hard when he cannot help himself, and to obey promptly when he has fallen into danger.

[Chang Yu alludes to the conduct of Pan Ch`ao's devoted followers in 73 A.D. The story runs thus in the HOU HAN SHU, ch. 47: "When Pan Ch`ao arrived at Shan-shan, Kuang, the King of the country, received him at first with great politeness and respect; but shortly afterwards his behavior underwent a sudden change, and he became remiss and negligent. Pan Ch`ao spoke about this to the officers of his suite: 'Have you noticed,' he said, 'that Kuang's polite intentions are on the wane? This must signify that envoys have come from the Northern barbarians, and that consequently he is in a state of indecision, not knowing with which side to throw in his lot. That surely is the reason. The truly wise man, we are told, can perceive things before they have come to pass; how much more, then, those that are already manifest!' Thereupon he called one of the natives who had been assigned to his service, and set a trap for him, saying: 'Where are those envoys from the Hsiung-nu who arrived some day ago?' The man was so taken aback that between surprise and fear he presently

blurted out the whole truth. Pan Ch`ao, keeping his informant carefully under lock and key, then summoned a general gathering of his officers, thirty-six in all, and began drinking with them. When the wine had mounted into their heads a little, he tried to rouse their spirit still further by addressing them thus: 'Gentlemen, here we are in the heart of an isolated region, anxious to achieve riches and honor by some great exploit. Now it happens that an ambassador from the Hsiung-no arrived in this kingdom only a few days ago, and the result is that the respectful courtesy extended towards us by our royal host has disappeared. Should this envoy prevail upon him to seize our party and hand us over to the Hsiung-no, our bones will become food for the wolves of the desert. What are we to do?' With one accord, the officers replied: 'Standing as we do in peril of our lives, we will follow our commander through life and death.' For the sequel of this adventure, see chap. XII. ss. 1, note.]

52. We cannot enter into alliance with neighboring princes until we are acquainted with their designs. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. We shall be unable to turn natural advantages to account unless we make use of local guides.

[These three sentences are repeated from VII. SS. 12-14 - in order to emphasize their importance, the commentators seem to think. I prefer to regard them as interpolated here in order to form an antecedent to the following words. With regard to local guides, Sun Tzu might have added that there is always the risk of going wrong, either through their treachery or some misunderstanding such as Livy records (XXII. 13): Hannibal, we are told, ordered a guide to lead him into the neighborhood of Casinum, where there was an important pass to be occupied; but his Carthaginian accent, unsuited to the pronunciation of Latin names, caused the guide to understand Casilinum instead of Casinum, and turning from his proper route, he took the army in that direction, the mistake not being discovered until they had almost arrived.]

53. To be ignored of any one of the following four or five principles does not befit a warlike prince.

54. When a warlike prince attacks a powerful state, his generalship shows itself in preventing the concentration of the enemy's forces. He overawes his opponents, and their allies are prevented from joining against him.

[Mei Tao-ch`en constructs one of the chains of reasoning that are so much affected by the Chinese: "In attacking a powerful state, if you can divide her forces, you will have a superiority in strength; if you have a superiority in strength, you will overawe the enemy; if you overawe the enemy, the neighboring states will be frightened; and if the neighboring states are frightened, the enemy's allies will be prevented from joining her." The following gives a stronger meaning: "If the great state has once been defeated (before

she has had time to summon her allies), then the lesser states will hold aloof and refrain from massing their forces." Ch`en Hao and Chang Yu take the sentence in quite another way. The former says: "Powerful though a prince may be, if he attacks a large state, he will be unable to raise enough troops, and must rely to some extent on external aid; if he dispenses with this, and with overweening confidence in his own strength, simply tries to intimidate the enemy, he will surely be defeated." Chang Yu puts his view thus: "If we recklessly attack a large state, our own people will be discontented and hang back. But if (as will then be the case) our display of military force is inferior by half to that of the enemy, the other chieftains will take fright and refuse to join us."]

55. Hence he does not strive to ally himself with all and sundry, nor does he foster the power of other states. He carries out his own secret designs, keeping his antagonists in awe.

[The train of thought, as said by Li Ch`uan, appears to be this: Secure against a combination of his enemies, "he can afford to reject entangling alliances and simply pursue his own secret designs, his prestige enable him to dispense with external friendships."]

Thus he is able to capture their cities and overthrow their kingdoms.

[This paragraph, though written many years before the Ch`in State became a serious menace, is not a bad summary of the policy by which the famous Six Chancellors gradually paved the way for her final triumph under Shih Huang Ti. Chang Yu, following up his previous note, thinks that Sun Tzu is condemning this attitude of cold-blooded selfishness and haughty isolation.]

56. Bestow rewards without regard to rule,

[Wu Tzu (ch. 3) less wisely says: "Let advance be richly rewarded and retreat be heavily punished."]

issue orders

[Literally, "hang" or post up."]

without regard to previous arrangements:

["In order to prevent treachery," says Wang Hsi. The general meaning is made clear by Ts`ao Kung's quotation from the SSU-MA FA: "Give instructions only on sighting the enemy; give rewards when you see deserving deeds." Ts`ao Kung's paraphrase: "The final instructions you give to your army should not correspond with those that have been previously posted up." Chang Yu simplifies this into "your arrangements should not be divulged beforehand." And Chia Lin

says: "there should be no fixity in your rules and arrangements." Not only is there danger in letting your plans be known, but war often necessitates the entire reversal of them at the last moment.]

and you will be able to handle a whole army as though you had to do with but a single man.

[Cf. supra, ss. 34.]

57. Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design.

[Literally, "do not tell them words;" i.e. do not give your reasons for any order. Lord Mansfield once told a junior colleague to "give no reasons" for his decisions, and the maxim is even more applicable to a general than to a judge.]

When the outlook is bright, bring it before their eyes; but tell them nothing when the situation is gloomy.

58. Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive; plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety.

[These words of Sun Tzu were once quoted by Han Hsin in explanation of the tactics he employed in one of his most brilliant battles, already alluded to on p. 28. In 204 B.C., he was sent against the army of Chao, and halted ten miles from the mouth of the Ching-hsing pass, where the enemy had mustered in full force. Here, at midnight, he detached a body of 2000 light cavalry, every man of which was furnished with a red flag. Their instructions were to make their way through narrow defiles and keep a secret watch on the enemy. "When the men of Chao see me in full flight," Han Hsin said, "they will abandon their fortifications and give chase. This must be the sign for you to rush in, pluck down the Chao standards and set up the red banners of Han in their stead." Turning then to his other officers, he remarked: "Our adversary holds a strong position, and is not likely to come out and attack us until he sees the standard and drums of the commander-in-chief, for fear I should turn back and escape through the mountains." So saying, he first of all sent out a division consisting of 10,000 men, and ordered them to form in line of battle with their backs to the River Ti. Seeing this maneuver, the whole army of Chao broke into loud laughter. By this time it was broad daylight, and Han Hsin, displaying the generalissimo's flag, marched out of the pass with drums beating, and was immediately engaged by the enemy. A great battle followed, lasting for some time; until at length Han Hsin and his colleague Chang Ni, leaving drums and banner on the field, fled to the division on the river bank, where another fierce battle was raging. The enemy rushed out to pursue them and to secure the trophies, thus denuding their ramparts of men; but the two generals succeeded in joining the other army, which was fighting with the utmost desperation. The

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time had now come for the 2000 horsemen to play their part. As soon as they saw the men of Chao following up their advantage, they galloped behind the deserted walls, tore up the enemy's flags and replaced them by those of Han. When the Chao army looked back from the pursuit, the sight of these red flags struck them with terror. Convinced that the Hans had got in and overpowered their king, they broke up in wild disorder, every effort of their leader to stay the panic being in vain. Then the Han army fell on them from both sides and completed the rout, killing a number and capturing the rest, amongst whom was King Ya himself.... After the battle, some of Han Hsin's officers came to him and said: "In the ART OF WAR we are told to have a hill or tumulus on the right rear, and a river or marsh on the left front. [This appears to be a blend of Sun Tzu and T`ai Kung. See IX ss. 9, and note.] You, on the contrary, ordered us to draw up our troops with the river at our back. Under these conditions, how did you manage to gain the victory?" The general replied: "I fear you gentlemen have not studied the Art of War with sufficient care. Is it not written there: 'Plunge your army into desperate straits and it will come off in safety; place it in deadly peril and it will survive'? Had I taken the usual course, I should never have been able to bring my colleague round. What says the Military Classic--'Swoop down on the market-place and drive the men off to fight.' [This passage does not occur in the present text of Sun Tzu.] If I had not placed my troops in a position where they were obliged to fight for their lives, but had allowed each man to follow his own discretion, there would have been a general debandade, and it would have been impossible to do anything with them." The officers admitted the force of his argument, and said: "These are higher tactics than we should have been capable of." [See CH`IEN HAN SHU, ch. 34, ff. 4, 5.]]

59. For it is precisely when a force has fallen into harm's way that is capable of striking a blow for victory.

[Danger has a bracing effect.]

60. Success in warfare is gained by carefully accommodating ourselves to the enemy's purpose.

[Ts`ao Kung says: "Feign stupidity"--by an appearance of yielding and falling in with the enemy's wishes. Chang Yu's note makes the meaning clear: "If the enemy shows an inclination to advance, lure him on to do so; if he is anxious to retreat, delay on purpose that he may carry out his intention." The object is to make him remiss and contemptuous before we deliver our attack.]

61. By persistently hanging on the enemy's flank,

[I understand the first four words to mean "accompanying the enemy in one direction." Ts`ao Kung says: "unite the soldiers and make for the enemy." But such a violent displacement of characters is quite indefensible.]

we shall succeed in the long run

[Literally, "after a thousand LI."]

in killing the commander-in-chief.

[Always a great point with the Chinese.]

62. This is called ability to accomplish a thing by sheer cunning.

63. On the day that you take up your command, block the frontier passes, destroy the official tallies,

[These were tablets of bamboo or wood, one half of which was issued as a permit or passport by the official in charge of a gate. Cf. the "border-warden" of LUN YU III. 24, who may have had similar duties. When this half was returned to him, within a fixed period, he was authorized to open the gate and let the traveler through.]

and stop the passage of all emissaries.

[Either to or from the enemy's country.]

64. Be stern in the council-chamber,

[Show no weakness, and insist on your plans being ratified by the sovereign.]

so that you may control the situation.

[Mei Yao-ch`en understands the whole sentence to mean: Take the strictest precautions to ensure secrecy in your deliberations.]

65. If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in.

66. Forestall your opponent by seizing what he holds dear,

[Cf. supra, ss. 18.]

and subtly contrive to time his arrival on the ground.

[Ch`en Hao`s explanation: "If I manage to seize a favourable position, but the enemy does not appear on the scene, the advantage thus obtained cannot be turned to any practical account. He who intends therefore, to occupy a position of importance to the enemy, must begin by making an artful appointment, so to speak, with his antagonist, and cajole him into going there as well." Mei Yao-

ch`en explains that this "artful appointment" is to be made through the medium of the enemy's own spies, who will carry back just the amount of information that we choose to give them. Then, having cunningly disclosed our intentions, "we must manage, though starting after the enemy, to arrive before him (VII. ss. 4). We must start after him in order to ensure his marching thither; we must arrive before him in order to capture the place without trouble. Taken thus, the present passage lends some support to Mei Yao-ch`en's interpretation of ss. 47.]

67. Walk in the path defined by rule,

[Chia Lin says: "Victory is the only thing that matters, and this cannot be achieved by adhering to conventional canons." It is unfortunate that this variant rests on very slight authority, for the sense yielded is certainly much more satisfactory. Napoleon, as we know, according to the veterans of the old school whom he defeated, won his battles by violating every accepted canon of warfare.]

and accommodate yourself to the enemy until you can fight a decisive battle.

[Tu Mu says: "Conform to the enemy's tactics until a favourable opportunity offers; then come forth and engage in a battle that shall prove decisive."]

68. At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden, until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards emulate the rapidity of a running hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you.

[As the hare is noted for its extreme timidity, the comparison hardly appears felicitous. But of course Sun Tzu was thinking only of its speed. The words have been taken to mean: You must flee from the enemy as quickly as an escaping hare; but this is rightly rejected by Tu Mu.]

[1] Giles' Biographical Dictionary, no. 399.

[2] "The Science of War," p. 333.

[3] "Stonewall Jackson," vol. I, p. 421.

XII. THE ATTACK BY FIRE

[Rather more than half the chapter (SS. 1-13) is devoted to the subject of fire, after which the author branches off into other topics.]

1. Sun Tzu said: There are five ways of attacking with fire. The first is to burn soldiers in their camp;

[So Tu Mu. Li Ch`uan says: "Set fire to the camp, and kill the soldiers" (when they try to escape from the flames). Pan Ch`ao, sent on a diplomatic mission to the King of Shan-shan [see XI. ss. 51, note], found himself placed in extreme peril by the unexpected arrival of an envoy from the Hsiung-nu [the mortal enemies of the Chinese]. In consultation with his officers, he exclaimed: "Never venture, never win! [1] The only course open to us now is to make an assault by fire on the barbarians under cover of night, when they will not be able to discern our numbers. Profiting by their panic, we shall exterminate them completely; this will cool the King's courage and cover us with glory, besides ensuring the success of our mission.' The officers all replied that it would be necessary to discuss the matter first with the Intendant. Pan Ch`ao then fell into a passion: 'It is today,' he cried, 'that our fortunes must be decided! The Intendant is only a humdrum civilian, who on hearing of our project will certainly be afraid, and everything will be brought to light. An inglorious death is no worthy fate for valiant warriors.' All then agreed to do as he wished. Accordingly, as soon as night came on, he and his little band quickly made their way to the barbarian camp. A strong gale was blowing at the time. Pan Ch`ao ordered ten of the party to take drums and hide behind the enemy's barracks, it being arranged that when they saw flames shoot up, they should begin drumming and yelling with all their might. The rest of his men, armed with bows and crossbows, he posted in ambush at the gate of the camp. He then set fire to the place from the windward side, whereupon a deafening noise of drums and shouting arose on the front and rear of the Hsiung-nu, who rushed out pell-mell in frantic disorder. Pan Ch`ao slew three of them with his own hand, while his companions cut off the heads of the envoy and thirty of his suite. The remainder, more than a hundred in all, perished in the flames. On the following day, Pan Ch`ao, divining his thoughts, said with uplifted hand: 'Although you did not go with us last night, I should not think, Sir, of taking sole credit for our exploit.' This satisfied Kuo Hsun, and Pan Ch`ao, having sent for Kuang, King of Shan-shan, showed him the head of the barbarian envoy. The whole kingdom was seized with fear and trembling, which Pan Ch`ao took steps to allay by issuing a public proclamation. Then, taking the king's sons as hostage, he returned to make his report to Tou Ku." HOU HAN SHU, ch. 47, ff. 1, 2.]

the second is to burn stores;

[Tu Mu says: "Provisions, fuel and fodder." In order to subdue the rebellious population of Kiangnan, Kao Keng recommended Wen Ti of the Sui dynasty to make periodical raids and burn their stores of grain, a policy which in the long run proved entirely successful.]

the third is to burn baggage trains;

[An example given is the destruction of Yuan Shao's wagons and impedimenta by Ts'ao Ts'ao in 200 A.D.]

the fourth is to burn arsenals and magazines;

[Tu Mu says that the things contained in "arsenals" and "magazines" are the same. He specifies weapons and other implements, bullion and clothing. Cf. VII. ss. 11.]

the fifth is to hurl dropping fire amongst the enemy.

[Tu Yu says in the T`UNG TIEN: "To drop fire into the enemy's camp. The method by which this may be done is to set the tips of arrows alight by dipping them into a brazier, and then shoot them from powerful crossbows into the enemy's lines."]

2. In order to carry out an attack, we must have means available.

[T`sao Kung thinks that "traitors in the enemy's camp" are referred to. But Ch`en Hao is more likely to be right in saying: "We must have favorable circumstances in general, not merely traitors to help us." Chia Lin says: "We must avail ourselves of wind and dry weather."]

the material for raising fire should always be kept in readiness.

[Tu Mu suggests as material for making fire: "dry vegetable matter, reeds, brushwood, straw, grease, oil, etc." Here we have the material cause. Chang Yu says: "vessels for hoarding fire, stuff for lighting fires."]

3. There is a proper season for making attacks with fire, and special days for starting a conflagration.

4. The proper season is when the weather is very dry; the special days are those when the moon is in the constellations of the Sieve, the Wall, the Wing or the Cross-bar;

[These are, respectively, the 7th, 14th, 27th, and 28th of the Twenty-eight Stellar Mansions, corresponding roughly to Sagittarius, Pegasus, Crater and Corvus.]

for these four are all days of rising wind.

5. In attacking with fire, one should be prepared to meet five possible developments:

6. (1) When fire breaks out inside to enemy's camp, respond at once with an attack from without.

7. (2) If there is an outbreak of fire, but the enemy's soldiers remain quiet, bide your time and do not attack.

[The prime object of attacking with fire is to throw the enemy into confusion. If this effect is not produced, it means that the enemy is ready to receive us. Hence the necessity for caution.]

8. (3) When the force of the flames has reached its height, follow it up with an attack, if that is practicable; if not, stay where you are.

[Ts`ao Kung says: "If you see a possible way, advance; but if you find the difficulties too great, retire."]

9. (4) If it is possible to make an assault with fire from without, do not wait for it to break out within, but deliver your attack at a favorable moment.

[Tu Mu says that the previous paragraphs had reference to the fire breaking out (either accidentally, we may suppose, or by the agency of incendiaries) inside the enemy's camp. "But," he continues, "if the enemy is settled in a waste place littered with quantities of grass, or if he has pitched his camp in a position which can be burnt out, we must carry our fire against him at any seasonable opportunity, and not await on in hopes of an outbreak occurring within, for fear our opponents should themselves burn up the surrounding vegetation, and thus render our own attempts fruitless." The famous Li Ling once baffled the leader of the Hsiung-nu in this way. The latter, taking advantage of a favorable wind, tried to set fire to the Chinese general's camp, but found that every scrap of combustible vegetation in the neighborhood had already been burnt down. On the other hand, Po-ts`ai, a general of the Yellow Turban rebels, was badly defeated in 184 A.D. through his neglect of this simple precaution. "At the head of a large army he was besieging Ch`ang-she, which was held by Huang-fu Sung. The garrison was very small, and a general feeling of nervousness pervaded the ranks; so Huang-fu Sung called his officers together and said:

"In war, there are various indirect methods of attack, and numbers do not count for everything. [The commentator here quotes Sun Tzu, V. SS. 5, 6 and 10.] Now the rebels have pitched their camp in the midst of thick grass which will easily burn when the wind blows. If we set fire to it at night, they will be thrown into a panic, and we can make a sortie and attack them on all sides at once, thus emulating the achievement of T`ien Tan.' [See p. 90.] That same evening, a strong breeze sprang up; so Huang-fu Sung instructed his soldiers to bind reeds together into torches and mount guard on the city walls, after which

he sent out a band of daring men, who stealthily made their way through the lines and started the fire with loud shouts and yells. Simultaneously, a glare of light shot up from the city walls, and Huang-fu Sung, sounding his drums, led a rapid charge, which threw the rebels into confusion and put them to headlong flight." [HOU HAN SHU, ch. 71.]]

10. (5) When you start a fire, be to windward of it. Do not attack from the leeward.

[Chang Yu, following Tu Yu, says: "When you make a fire, the enemy will retreat away from it; if you oppose his retreat and attack him then, he will fight desperately, which will not conduce to your success." A rather more obvious explanation is given by Tu Mu: "If the wind is in the east, begin burning to the east of the enemy, and follow up the attack yourself from that side. If you start the fire on the east side, and then attack from the west, you will suffer in the same way as your enemy."]

11. A wind that rises in the daytime lasts long, but a night breeze soon falls.

[Cf. Lao Tzu's saying: "A violent wind does not last the space of a morning." (TAO TE CHING, chap. 23.) Mei Yao-ch`en and Wang Hsi say: "A day breeze dies down at nightfall, and a night breeze at daybreak. This is what happens as a general rule." The phenomenon observed may be correct enough, but how this sense is to be obtained is not apparent.]

12. In every army, the five developments connected with fire must be known, the movements of the stars calculated, and a watch kept for the proper days.

[Tu Mu says: "We must make calculations as to the paths of the stars, and watch for the days on which wind will rise, before making our attack with fire." Chang Yu seems to interpret the text differently: "We must not only know how to assail our opponents with fire, but also be on our guard against similar attacks from them."]

13. Hence those who use fire as an aid to the attack show intelligence; those who use water as an aid to the attack gain an accession of strength.

14. By means of water, an enemy may be intercepted, but not robbed of all his belongings.

[Ts`ao Kung's note is: "We can merely obstruct the enemy's road or divide his army, but not sweep away all his accumulated stores." Water can do useful service, but it lacks the terrible destructive power of fire. This is the reason, Chang Yu concludes, why the former is dismissed in a couple of sentences, whereas the attack by fire is discussed in detail. Wu Tzu (ch. 4) speaks thus of the two elements: "If an army is encamped on low-lying marshy ground, from

which the water cannot run off, and where the rainfall is heavy, it may be submerged by a flood. If an army is encamped in wild marsh lands thickly overgrown with weeds and brambles, and visited by frequent gales, it may be exterminated by fire."]

15. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise; for the result is waste of time and general stagnation.

[This is one of the most perplexing passages in Sun Tzu. Ts`ao Kung says: "Rewards for good service should not be deferred a single day." And Tu Mu: "If you do not take opportunity to advance and reward the deserving, your subordinates will not carry out your commands, and disaster will ensue." For several reasons, however, and in spite of the formidable array of scholars on the other side, I prefer the interpretation suggested by Mei Yao-ch`en alone, whose words I will quote: "Those who want to make sure of succeeding in their battles and assaults must seize the favorable moments when they come and not shrink on occasion from heroic measures: that is to say, they must resort to such means of attack of fire, water and the like. What they must not do, and what will prove fatal, is to sit still and simply hold to the advantages they have got."]

16. Hence the saying: The enlightened ruler lays his plans well ahead; the good general cultivates his resources.

[Tu Mu quotes the following from the SAN LUEH, ch. 2: "The warlike prince controls his soldiers by his authority, kits them together by good faith, and by rewards makes them serviceable. If faith decays, there will be disruption; if rewards are deficient, commands will not be respected."]

17. Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical.

[Sun Tzu may at times appear to be over-cautious, but he never goes so far in that direction as the remarkable passage in the TAO TE CHING, ch. 69. "I dare not take the initiative, but prefer to act on the defensive; I dare not advance an inch, but prefer to retreat a foot."]

18. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique.

19. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are.

[This is repeated from XI. ss. 17. Here I feel convinced that it is an interpolation, for it is evident that ss. 20 ought to follow immediately on ss. 18.]

20. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content.

21. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being;

[The Wu State was destined to be a melancholy example of this saying.]

nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.

22. Hence the enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact.

[1] "Unless you enter the tiger's lair, you cannot get hold of the tiger's cubs."

XIII. THE USE OF SPIES

1. Sun Tzu said: Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entails heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the State. The daily expenditure will amount to a thousand ounces of silver.

[Cf. II. ss. 1, 13, 14.]

There will be commotion at home and abroad, and men will drop down exhausted on the highways.

[Cf. TAO TE CHING, ch. 30: "Where troops have been quartered, brambles and thorns spring up. Chang Yu has the note: "We may be reminded of the saying: 'On serious ground, gather in plunder.' Why then should carriage and transportation cause exhaustion on the highways?--The answer is, that not victuals alone, but all sorts of munitions of war have to be conveyed to the army. Besides, the injunction to 'forage on the enemy' only means that when an army is deeply engaged in hostile territory, scarcity of food must be provided against. Hence, without being solely dependent on the enemy for corn, we must forage in order that there may be an uninterrupted flow of supplies. Then, again, there are places like salt deserts where provisions being unobtainable, supplies from home cannot be dispensed with."]

As many as seven hundred thousand families will be impeded in their labor.

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "Men will be lacking at the plough- tail." The allusion is to the system of dividing land into nine parts, each consisting of about 15 acres, the plot in the center being cultivated on behalf of the State by the tenants of the other eight. It was here also, so Tu Mu tells us, that their cottages were built and a well sunk, to be used by all in common. [See II. ss. 12, note.] In time of war, one of the families had to serve in the army, while the other seven contributed to its support. Thus, by a levy of 100,000 men (reckoning one able-bodied soldier to each family) the husbandry of 700,000 families would be affected.]

2. Hostile armies may face each other for years, striving for the victory which is decided in a single day. This being so, to remain in ignorance of the enemy's condition simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honors and emoluments,

["For spies" is of course the meaning, though it would spoil the effect of this curiously elaborate exordium if spies were actually mentioned at this point.]

is the height of inhumanity.

[Sun Tzu's agreement is certainly ingenious. He begins by adverting to the frightful misery and vast expenditure of blood and treasure which war always brings in its train. Now, unless you are kept informed of the enemy's condition, and are ready to strike at the right moment, a war may drag on for years. The only way to get this information is to employ spies, and it is impossible to obtain trustworthy spies unless they are properly paid for their services. But it is surely false economy to grudge a comparatively trifling amount for this purpose, when every day that the war lasts eats up an incalculably greater sum. This grievous burden falls on the shoulders of the poor, and hence Sun Tzu concludes that to neglect the use of spies is nothing less than a crime against humanity.]

3. One who acts thus is no leader of men, no present help to his sovereign, no master of victory.

[This idea, that the true object of war is peace, has its root in the national temperament of the Chinese. Even so far back as 597 B.C., these memorable words were uttered by Prince Chuang of the Ch`u State: "The [Chinese] character for 'prowess' is made up of [the characters for] 'to stay' and 'a spear' (cessation of hostilities). Military prowess is seen in the repression of cruelty, the calling in of weapons, the preservation of the appointment of Heaven, the firm establishment of merit, the bestowal of happiness on the people, putting harmony between the princes, the diffusion of wealth."]

4. Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is FOREKNOWLEDGE.

[That is, knowledge of the enemy's dispositions, and what he means to do.]

5. Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience,

[Tu Mu's note is: "[knowledge of the enemy] cannot be gained by reasoning from other analogous cases."]

nor by any deductive calculation.

[Li Ch`uan says: "Quantities like length, breadth, distance and magnitude, are susceptible of exact mathematical determination; human actions cannot be so calculated."]

6. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men.

[Mei Yao-ch`en has rather an interesting note: "Knowledge of the spirit-world is to be obtained by divination; information in natural science may be sought by inductive reasoning; the laws of the universe can be verified by mathematical calculation: but the dispositions of an enemy are ascertainable through spies and spies alone."]

7. Hence the use of spies, of whom there are five classes: (1) Local spies; (2) inward spies; (3) converted spies; (4) doomed spies; (5) surviving spies.

8. When these five kinds of spy are all at work, none can discover the secret system. This is called "divine manipulation of the threads." It is the sovereign's most precious faculty.

[Cromwell, one of the greatest and most practical of all cavalry leaders, had officers styled 'scout masters,' whose business it was to collect all possible information regarding the enemy, through scouts and spies, etc., and much of his success in war was traceable to the previous knowledge of the enemy's moves thus gained." [1]]

9. Having LOCAL SPIES means employing the services of the inhabitants of a district.

[Tu Mu says: "In the enemy's country, win people over by kind treatment, and use them as spies."]

10. Having INWARD SPIES, making use of officials of the enemy.

[Tu Mu enumerates the following classes as likely to do good service in this respect: "Worthy men who have been degraded from office, criminals who have undergone punishment; also, favorite concubines who are greedy for gold, men who are aggrieved at being in subordinate positions, or who have been passed over in the distribution of posts, others who are anxious that their side should be defeated in order that they may have a chance of displaying their ability and talents, fickle turncoats who always want to have a foot in each boat. Officials of these several kinds," he continues, "should be secretly approached and bound to one's interests by means of rich presents. In this way you will be able to find out the state of affairs in the enemy's country, ascertain the plans that are being formed against you, and moreover disturb the harmony and create a breach between the sovereign and his ministers." The necessity for extreme caution, however, in dealing with "inward spies," appears from an historical incident related by Ho Shih: "Lo Shang, Governor of I-Chou, sent his general Wei Po to attack the rebel Li Hsiung of Shu in his stronghold at P`i. After each side had experienced a number of victories and defeats, Li Hsiung had recourse to the services of a certain P`o-t`ai, a native of Wu-tu. He began to have him whipped until the blood came, and then sent him off to Lo Shang, whom he was to delude by offering to cooperate with him from inside the city, and to give a fire signal at the right moment for making a general assault. Lo Shang, confiding in these promises, march out all his best troops, and placed Wei Po and others at their head with orders to attack at P`o-t`ai's bidding. Meanwhile, Li Hsiung's general, Li Hsiang, had prepared an ambushade on their line of march; and P`o-t`ai, having reared long scaling-ladders against the city walls, now lighted the beacon-fire. Wei Po's men raced up on seeing the signal and began climbing the ladders as fast as they could, while others were drawn up by ropes lowered from above. More than a hundred of Lo Shang's soldiers entered the city in this way, every one of whom was forthwith beheaded. Li Hsiung then charged with all his forces, both inside and outside the city, and routed the enemy completely." [This happened in 303 A.D. I do not know where Ho Shih got the story from. It is not given in the biography of Li Hsiung or that of his father Li T`e, CHIN SHU, ch. 120, 121.]

11. Having CONVERTED SPIES, getting hold of the enemy's spies and using them for our own purposes.

[By means of heavy bribes and liberal promises detaching them from the enemy's service, and inducing them to carry back false information as well as to spy in turn on their own countrymen. On the other hand, Hsiao Shih-hsien says that we pretend not to have detected him, but contrive to let him carry away a false impression of what is going on. Several of the commentators accept this as an alternative definition; but that it is not what Sun Tzu meant is conclusively proved by his subsequent remarks about treating the converted spy generously (ss. 21 sqq.). Ho Shih notes three occasions on which converted

spies were used with conspicuous success: (1) by T`ien Tan in his defense of Chi-mo (see supra, p. 90); (2) by Chao She on his march to O-yu (see p. 57); and by the wily Fan Chu in 260 B.C., when Lien P`o was conducting a defensive campaign against Ch`in. The King of Chao strongly disapproved of Lien P`o's cautious and dilatory methods, which had been unable to avert a series of minor disasters, and therefore lent a ready ear to the reports of his spies, who had secretly gone over to the enemy and were already in Fan Chu's pay. They said: "The only thing which causes Ch`in anxiety is lest Chao Kua should be made general. Lien P`o they consider an easy opponent, who is sure to be vanquished in the long run." Now this Chao Kua was a son of the famous Chao She. From his boyhood, he had been wholly engrossed in the study of war and military matters, until at last he came to believe that there was no commander in the whole Empire who could stand against him. His father was much disquieted by this overweening conceit, and the flippancy with which he spoke of such a serious thing as war, and solemnly declared that if ever Kua was appointed general, he would bring ruin on the armies of Chao. This was the man who, in spite of earnest protests from his own mother and the veteran statesman Lin Hsiang-ju, was now sent to succeed Lien P`o. Needless to say, he proved no match for the redoubtable Po Ch`i and the great military power of Ch`in. He fell into a trap by which his army was divided into two and his communications cut; and after a desperate resistance lasting 46 days, during which the famished soldiers devoured one another, he was himself killed by an arrow, and his whole force, amounting, it is said, to 400,000 men, ruthlessly put to the sword.]

12. Having DOOMED SPIES, doing certain things openly for purposes of deception, and allowing our spies to know of them and report them to the enemy.

[Tu Yu gives the best exposition of the meaning: "We ostentatiously do thing calculated to deceive our own spies, who must be led to believe that they have been unwittingly disclosed. Then, when these spies are captured in the enemy's lines, they will make an entirely false report, and the enemy will take measures accordingly, only to find that we do something quite different. The spies will thereupon be put to death." As an example of doomed spies, Ho Shih mentions the prisoners released by Pan Ch`ao in his campaign against Yarkand. (See p. 132.) He also refers to T`ang Chien, who in 630 A.D. was sent by T`ai Tsung to lull the Turkish Kahn Chieh-li into fancied security, until Li Ching was able to deliver a crushing blow against him. Chang Yu says that the Turks revenged themselves by killing T`ang Chien, but this is a mistake, for we read in both the old and the New T`ang History (ch. 58, fol. 2 and ch. 89, fol. 8 respectively) that he escaped and lived on until 656. Li I-chi played a somewhat similar part in 203 B.C., when sent by the King of Han to open peaceful negotiations with Ch`i. He has certainly more claim to be described a "doomed spy", for the king of Ch`i, being subsequently attacked

without warning by Han Hsin, and infuriated by what he considered the treachery of Li I-chi, ordered the unfortunate envoy to be boiled alive.]

13. SURVIVING SPIES, finally, are those who bring back news from the enemy's camp.

[This is the ordinary class of spies, properly so called, forming a regular part of the army. Tu Mu says: "Your surviving spy must be a man of keen intellect, though in outward appearance a fool; of shabby exterior, but with a will of iron. He must be active, robust, endowed with physical strength and courage; thoroughly accustomed to all sorts of dirty work, able to endure hunger and cold, and to put up with shame and ignominy." Ho Shih tells the following story of Ta`hsi Wu of the Sui dynasty: "When he was governor of Eastern Ch`in, Shen-wu of Ch`i made a hostile movement upon Sha-yuan. The Emperor T`ai Tsu [? Kao Tsu] sent Ta-hsi Wu to spy upon the enemy. He was accompanied by two other men. All three were on horseback and wore the enemy's uniform. When it was dark, they dismounted a few hundred feet away from the enemy's camp and stealthily crept up to listen, until they succeeded in catching the passwords used in the army. Then they got on their horses again and boldly passed through the camp under the guise of night-watchmen; and more than once, happening to come across a soldier who was committing some breach of discipline, they actually stopped to give the culprit a sound cudgeling! Thus they managed to return with the fullest possible information about the enemy's dispositions, and received warm commendation from the Emperor, who in consequence of their report was able to inflict a severe defeat on his adversary."]

14. Hence it is that which none in the whole army are more intimate relations to be maintained than with spies.

[Tu Mu and Mei Yao-ch`en point out that the spy is privileged to enter even the general's private sleeping-tent.]

None should be more liberally rewarded. In no other business should greater secrecy be preserved.

[Tu Mu gives a graphic touch: all communication with spies should be carried "mouth-to-ear." The following remarks on spies may be quoted from Turenne, who made perhaps larger use of them than any previous commander: "Spies are attached to those who give them most, he who pays them ill is never served. They should never be known to anybody; nor should they know one another. When they propose anything very material, secure their persons, or have in your possession their wives and children as hostages for their fidelity. Never communicate anything to them but what is absolutely necessary that they should know. [2]]

15. Spies cannot be usefully employed without a certain intuitive sagacity.

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "In order to use them, one must know fact from falsehood, and be able to discriminate between honesty and double-dealing." Wang Hsi in a different interpretation thinks more along the lines of "intuitive perception" and "practical intelligence." Tu Mu strangely refers these attributes to the spies themselves: "Before using spies we must assure ourselves as to their integrity of character and the extent of their experience and skill." But he continues: "A brazen face and a crafty disposition are more dangerous than mountains or rivers; it takes a man of genius to penetrate such." So that we are left in some doubt as to his real opinion on the passage."]

16. They cannot be properly managed without benevolence and straightforwardness.

[Chang Yu says: "When you have attracted them by substantial offers, you must treat them with absolute sincerity; then they will work for you with all their might."]

17. Without subtle ingenuity of mind, one cannot make certain of the truth of their reports.

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "Be on your guard against the possibility of spies going over to the service of the enemy."]

18. Be subtle! be subtle! and use your spies for every kind of business.

[Cf. VI. ss. 9.]

19. If a secret piece of news is divulged by a spy before the time is ripe, he must be put to death together with the man to whom the secret was told.

[Word for word, the translation here is: "If spy matters are heard before [our plans] are carried out," etc. Sun Tzu's main point in this passage is: Whereas you kill the spy himself "as a punishment for letting out the secret," the object of killing the other man is only, as Ch`en Hao puts it, "to stop his mouth" and prevent news leaking any further. If it had already been repeated to others, this object would not be gained. Either way, Sun Tzu lays himself open to the charge of inhumanity, though Tu Mu tries to defend him by saying that the man deserves to be put to death, for the spy would certainly not have told the secret unless the other had been at pains to worm it out of him."]

20. Whether the object be to crush an army, to storm a city, or to assassinate an individual, it is always necessary to begin by finding out the names of the attendants, the aides-de- camp,

[Literally "visitors", is equivalent, as Tu Yu says, to "those whose duty it is to keep the general supplied with information," which naturally necessitates frequent interviews with him.]

and door-keepers and sentries of the general in command. Our spies must be commissioned to ascertain these.

[As the first step, no doubt towards finding out if any of these important functionaries can be won over by bribery.]

21. The enemy's spies who have come to spy on us must be sought out, tempted with bribes, led away and comfortably housed. Thus they will become converted spies and available for our service.

22. It is through the information brought by the converted spy that we are able to acquire and employ local and inward spies.

[Tu Yu says: "through conversion of the enemy's spies we learn the enemy's condition." And Chang Yu says: "We must tempt the converted spy into our service, because it is he that knows which of the local inhabitants are greedy of gain, and which of the officials are open to corruption."]

23. It is owing to his information, again, that we can cause the doomed spy to carry false tidings to the enemy.

[Chang Yu says, "because the converted spy knows how the enemy can best be deceived."]

24. Lastly, it is by his information that the surviving spy can be used on appointed occasions.

25. The end and aim of spying in all its five varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy.

[As explained in ss. 22-24. He not only brings information himself, but makes it possible to use the other kinds of spy to advantage.]

Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with the utmost liberality.

26. Of old, the rise of the Yin dynasty

[Sun Tzu means the Shang dynasty, founded in 1766 B.C. Its name was changed to Yin by P`an Keng in 1401.]

was due to I Chih

[Better known as I Yin, the famous general and statesman who took part in Ch`eng T`ang's campaign against Chieh Kuei.]

who had served under the Hsia. Likewise, the rise of the Chou dynasty was due to Lu Ya

[Lu Shang rose to high office under the tyrant Chou Hsin, whom he afterwards helped to overthrow. Popularly known as T`ai Kung, a title bestowed on him by Wen Wang, he is said to have composed a treatise on war, erroneously identified with the LIU T`AO.]

who had served under the Yin.

[There is less precision in the Chinese than I have thought it well to introduce into my translation, and the commentaries on the passage are by no means explicit. But, having regard to the context, we can hardly doubt that Sun Tzu is holding up I Chih and Lu Ya as illustrious examples of the converted spy, or something closely analogous. His suggestion is, that the Hsia and Yin dynasties were upset owing to the intimate knowledge of their weaknesses and shortcoming which these former ministers were able to impart to the other side. Mei Yao-ch`en appears to resent any such aspersion on these historic names: "I Yin and Lu Ya," he says, "were not rebels against the Government. Hsia could not employ the former, hence Yin employed him. Yin could not employ the latter, hence Hou employed him. Their great achievements were all for the good of the people." Ho Shih is also indignant: "How should two divinely inspired men such as I and Lu have acted as common spies? Sun Tzu's mention of them simply means that the proper use of the five classes of spies is a matter which requires men of the highest mental caliber like I and Lu, whose wisdom and capacity qualified them for the task. The above words only emphasize this point." Ho Shih believes then that the two heroes are mentioned on account of their supposed skill in the use of spies. But this is very weak.]

27. Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for purposes of spying and thereby they achieve great results.

[Tu Mu closes with a note of warning: "Just as water, which carries a boat from bank to bank, may also be the means of sinking it, so reliance on spies, while production of great results, is oft-times the cause of utter destruction."]

Spies are a most important element in water, because on them depends an army's ability to move.

[Chia Lin says that an army without spies is like a man with ears or eyes.]

[1] "Aids to Scouting," p. 2.

[2] "Marshal Turenne," p. 311.

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SUN TZU ON THE ART OF WAR THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

Translated from the Chinese
By LIONEL GILES, M.A. (1910)

[This is the basic text of Sun Tzu on the Art of War. It was extracted from Mr. Giles' complete work as titled above. The commentary itself, which, of course includes this work embedded within it, has been released as Project Gutenberg's eBook #132.]

I. LAYING PLANS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.
2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

4. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline.

5,6. The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.

7. Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

8. Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.

9. The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.

10. By method and discipline are to be understood the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.

12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:--

13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law?

(2) Which of the two generals has most ability?

(3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?

(4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?

(5) Which army is stronger?

(6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained?

(7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.

15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat:--let such a one be dismissed!

16. While heading the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.

17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.

18. All warfare is based on deception.

19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.

20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.

21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.

22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.

23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.

24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.

25. These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.

26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

II. WAGING WAR

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers, with provisions enough to carry them a thousand li, the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armor, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.
2. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.
3. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.
4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.
5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.
6. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.
7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.
8. The skillful soldier does not raise a second levy, neither are his supply-wagons loaded more than twice.
9. Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy. Thus the army will have food enough for its needs.
10. Poverty of the State exchequer causes an army to be maintained by contributions from a distance. Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be

impoverished.

11. On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's substance to be drained away.

12. When their substance is drained away, the peasantry will be afflicted by heavy exactions.

13,14. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three-tenths of their income will be dissipated; while government expenses for broken chariots, worn-out horses, breast-plates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draught-oxen and heavy wagons, will amount to four-tenths of its total revenue.

15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single picul of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store.

16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.

18. This is called, using the conquered foe to augment one's own strength.

19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.

20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.

III. ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

1. Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's

country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

2. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

4. The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided. The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months; and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more.

5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.

6. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.

7. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.

8. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.

9. If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.

10. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force.

11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.

12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:--

13. (1) By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.

14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.

15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This shakes the confidence of the soldiers.

16. But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes. This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away.

17. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory:

(1) He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.

(2) He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

(3) He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.

(4) He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.

(5) He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

IV. TACTICAL DISPOSITIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.

2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.
3. Thus the good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat, but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.
4. Hence the saying: One may know how to conquer without being able to do it.
5. Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.
6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.
7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth; he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven. Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.
8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.
9. Neither is it the acme of excellence if you fight and conquer and the whole Empire says, "Well done!"
10. To lift an autumn hair is no sign of great strength; to see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.
11. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.
12. Hence his victories bring him neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage.
13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.
14. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.

15. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.

16. The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.

17. In respect of military method, we have, firstly, Measurement; secondly, Estimation of quantity; thirdly, Calculation; fourthly, Balancing of chances; fifthly, Victory.

18. Measurement owes its existence to Earth; Estimation of quantity to Measurement; Calculation to Estimation of quantity; Balancing of chances to Calculation; and Victory to Balancing of chances.

19. A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound's weight placed in the scale against a single grain.

20. The onrush of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep.

V. ENERGY

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.

2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

3. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken-- this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.

4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg--this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.

5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods

will be needed in order to secure victory.

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.

7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.

9. There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack--the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle--you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

15. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.

17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage;

simulated weakness postulates strength.

18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy; masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.

20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.

23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.

VI. WEAK POINTS AND STRONG

1. Sun Tzu said: Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.

2. Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him.

3. By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own

accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.

4. If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him; if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly encamped, he can force him to move.

5. Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.

6. An army may march great distances without distress, if it marches through country where the enemy is not.

7. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack places which are undefended. You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold positions that cannot be attacked.

8. Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.

9. O divine art of subtlety and secrecy! Through you we learn to be invisible, through you inaudible; and hence we can hold the enemy's fate in our hands.

10. You may advance and be absolutely irresistible, if you make for the enemy's weak points; you may retire and be safe from pursuit if your movements are more rapid than those of the enemy.

11. If we wish to fight, the enemy can be forced to an engagement even though he be sheltered behind a high rampart and a deep ditch. All we need do is attack some other place that he will be obliged to relieve.

12. If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from engaging us even though the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground. All we need do is to throw something odd and unaccountable in his way.

13. By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided.

14. We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions.

Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few.

15. And if we are able thus to attack an inferior force with a superior one, our opponents will be in dire straits.

16. The spot where we intend to fight must not be made known; for then the enemy will have to prepare against a possible attack at several different points; and his forces being thus distributed in many directions, the numbers we shall have to face at any given point will be proportionately few.

17. For should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak.

18. Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations against us.

19. Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight.

20. But if neither time nor place be known, then the left wing will be impotent to succor the right, the right equally impotent to succor the left, the van unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to support the van. How much more so if the furthest portions of the army are anything under a hundred LI apart, and even the nearest are separated by several LI!

21. Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.

22. Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success.

23. Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity. Force him to reveal

himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots.

24. Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient.

25. In making tactical dispositions, the highest pitch you can attain is to conceal them; conceal your dispositions, and you will be safe from the prying of the subtlest spies, from the machinations of the wisest brains.

26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics--that is what the multitude cannot comprehend.

27. All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.

28. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

29. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards.

30. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.

31. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.

32. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.

33. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.

34. The five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) are not always equally predominant; the four seasons make way for each other in turn. There are short days and long; the moon has its periods of waning and waxing.

VII. MANEUVERING

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign.
2. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonize the different elements thereof before pitching his camp.
3. After that, comes tactical maneuvering, than which there is nothing more difficult. The difficulty of tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain.
4. Thus, to take a long and circuitous route, after enticing the enemy out of the way, and though starting after him, to contrive to reach the goal before him, shows knowledge of the artifice of DEVIATION.
5. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, most dangerous.
6. If you set a fully equipped army in march in order to snatch an advantage, the chances are that you will be too late. On the other hand, to detach a flying column for the purpose involves the sacrifice of its baggage and stores.
7. Thus, if you order your men to roll up their buff-coats, and make forced marches without halting day or night, covering double the usual distance at a stretch, doing a hundred LI in order to wrest an advantage, the leaders of all your three divisions will fall into the hands of the enemy.
8. The stronger men will be in front, the jaded ones will fall behind, and on this plan only one-tenth of your army will reach its destination.
9. If you march fifty LI in order to outmaneuver the enemy, you will lose the leader of your first division, and only half your force will reach the goal.
10. If you march thirty LI with the same object, two-thirds of your army will arrive.
11. We may take it then that an army without its baggage-train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost.

12. We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.

13. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.

14. We shall be unable to turn natural advantage to account unless we make use of local guides.

15. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed.

16. Whether to concentrate or to divide your troops, must be decided by circumstances.

17. Let your rapidity be that of the wind, your compactness that of the forest.

18. In raiding and plundering be like fire, in immovability like a mountain.

19. Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

20. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men; when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery.

21. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.

22. He will conquer who has learnt the artifice of deviation. Such is the art of maneuvering.

23. The Book of Army Management says: On the field of battle, the spoken word does not carry far enough: hence the institution of gongs and drums. Nor can ordinary objects be seen clearly enough: hence the institution of banners and flags.

24. Gongs and drums, banners and flags, are means whereby the ears and eyes of the host may be focused on one particular point.

25. The host thus forming a single united body, is it impossible either for the brave to advance alone, or for the cowardly to retreat alone. This is the art of handling large masses of men.

26. In night-fighting, then, make much use of signal-fires and drums, and in fighting by day, of flags and banners, as a means of influencing the ears and eyes of your army.

27. A whole army may be robbed of its spirit; a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind.

28. Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp.

29. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods.

30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy:--this is the art of retaining self-possession.

31. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished:--this is the art of husbanding one's strength.

32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:--this is the art of studying circumstances.

33. It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill.

34. Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen.

35. Do not swallow bait offered by the enemy. Do not interfere with an army that is returning home.

36. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.

37. Such is the art of warfare.

VIII. VARIATION IN TACTICS

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign, collects his army and concentrates his forces

2. When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions. In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight.

3. There are roads which must not be followed, armies which must be not attacked, towns which must not be besieged, positions which must not be contested, commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed.

4. The general who thoroughly understands the advantages that accompany variation of tactics knows how to handle his troops.

5. The general who does not understand these, may be well acquainted with the configuration of the country, yet he will not be able to turn his knowledge to practical account.

6. So, the student of war who is unversed in the art of war of varying his plans, even though he be acquainted with the Five Advantages, will fail to make the best use of his men.

7. Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and of disadvantage will be blended together.

8. If our expectation of advantage be tempered in this way, we may succeed in accomplishing the essential part of our schemes.

9. If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an

advantage, we may extricate ourselves from misfortune.

10. Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them; and make trouble for them, and keep them constantly engaged; hold out specious allurements, and make them rush to any given point.

11. The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

12. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general:

- (1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction;
- (2) cowardice, which leads to capture;
- (3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;
- (4) a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame;
- (5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

13. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war.

14. When an army is overthrown and its leader slain, the cause will surely be found among these five dangerous faults. Let them be a subject of meditation.

IX. THE ARMY ON THE MARCH

1. Sun Tzu said: We come now to the question of encamping the army, and observing signs of the enemy. Pass quickly over mountains, and keep in the neighborhood of valleys.

2. Camp in high places, facing the sun. Do not climb heights in order to fight. So much for mountain warfare.

3. After crossing a river, you should get far away from it.

4. When an invading force crosses a river in its onward march, do not advance to meet it in mid-stream. It will be best to let half the army get across, and then deliver your attack.

5. If you are anxious to fight, you should not go to meet the invader near a river which he has to cross.
6. Moor your craft higher up than the enemy, and facing the sun. Do not move up-stream to meet the enemy. So much for river warfare.
7. In crossing salt-marshes, your sole concern should be to get over them quickly, without any delay.
8. If forced to fight in a salt-marsh, you should have water and grass near you, and get your back to a clump of trees. So much for operations in salt-marches.
9. In dry, level country, take up an easily accessible position with rising ground to your right and on your rear, so that the danger may be in front, and safety lie behind. So much for campaigning in flat country.
10. These are the four useful branches of military knowledge which enabled the Yellow Emperor to vanquish four several sovereigns.
11. All armies prefer high ground to low and sunny places to dark.
12. If you are careful of your men, and camp on hard ground, the army will be free from disease of every kind, and this will spell victory.
13. When you come to a hill or a bank, occupy the sunny side, with the slope on your right rear. Thus you will at once act for the benefit of your soldiers and utilize the natural advantages of the ground.
14. When, in consequence of heavy rains up-country, a river which you wish to ford is swollen and flecked with foam, you must wait until it subsides.
15. Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows, confined places, tangled thickets, quagmires and crevasses, should be left with all possible speed and not approached.
16. While we keep away from such places, we should get the enemy to approach them;

while we face them, we should let the enemy have them on his rear.

17. If in the neighborhood of your camp there should be any hilly country, ponds surrounded by aquatic grass, hollow basins filled with reeds, or woods with thick undergrowth, they must be carefully routed out and searched; for these are places where men in ambush or insidious spies are likely to be lurking.

18. When the enemy is close at hand and remains quiet, he is relying on the natural strength of his position.

19. When he keeps aloof and tries to provoke a battle, he is anxious for the other side to advance.

20. If his place of encampment is easy of access, he is tendering a bait.

21. Movement amongst the trees of a forest shows that the enemy is advancing. The appearance of a number of screens in the midst of thick grass means that the enemy wants to make us suspicious.

22. The rising of birds in their flight is the sign of an ambush. Startled beasts indicate that a sudden attack is coming.

23. When there is dust rising in a high column, it is the sign of chariots advancing; when the dust is low, but spread over a wide area, it betokens the approach of infantry. When it branches out in different directions, it shows that parties have been sent to collect firewood. A few clouds of dust moving to and fro signify that the army is encamping.

24. Humble words and increased preparations are signs that the enemy is about to advance. Violent language and driving forward as if to the attack are signs that he will retreat.

25. When the light chariots come out first and take up a position on the wings, it is a sign that the enemy is forming for battle.

26. Peace proposals unaccompanied by a sworn covenant indicate a plot.

27. When there is much running about and the soldiers fall into rank, it means that the critical moment has come.
28. When some are seen advancing and some retreating, it is a lure.
29. When the soldiers stand leaning on their spears, they are faint from want of food.
30. If those who are sent to draw water begin by drinking themselves, the army is suffering from thirst.
31. If the enemy sees an advantage to be gained and makes no effort to secure it, the soldiers are exhausted.
32. If birds gather on any spot, it is unoccupied. Clamor by night betokens nervousness.
33. If there is disturbance in the camp, the general's authority is weak. If the banners and flags are shifted about, sedition is afoot. If the officers are angry, it means that the men are weary.
34. When an army feeds its horses with grain and kills its cattle for food, and when the men do not hang their cooking-pots over the camp-fires, showing that they will not return to their tents, you may know that they are determined to fight to the death.
35. The sight of men whispering together in small knots or speaking in subdued tones points to disaffection amongst the rank and file.
36. Too frequent rewards signify that the enemy is at the end of his resources; too many punishments betray a condition of dire distress.
37. To begin by bluster, but afterwards to take fright at the enemy's numbers, shows a supreme lack of intelligence.
38. When envoys are sent with compliments in their mouths, it is a sign that the enemy wishes for a truce.
39. If the enemy's troops march up angrily and remain facing ours for a long time without either joining battle or taking themselves off again, the situation is one that

demands great vigilance and circumspection.

40. If our troops are no more in number than the enemy, that is amply sufficient; it only means that no direct attack can be made. What we can do is simply to concentrate all our available strength, keep a close watch on the enemy, and obtain reinforcements.

41. He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them.

42. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.

43. Therefore soldiers must be treated in the first instance with humanity, but kept under control by means of iron discipline. This is a certain road to victory.

44. If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.

45. If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed, the gain will be mutual.

X. TERRAIN

1. Sun Tzu said: We may distinguish six kinds of terrain, to wit: (1) Accessible ground; (2) entangling ground; (3) temporizing ground; (4) narrow passes; (5) precipitous heights; (6) positions at a great distance from the enemy.

2. Ground which can be freely traversed by both sides is called accessible.

3. With regard to ground of this nature, be before the enemy in occupying the raised and sunny spots, and carefully guard your line of supplies. Then you will be able to fight with advantage.

4. Ground which can be abandoned but is hard to re-occupy is called entangling.

5. From a position of this sort, if the enemy is unprepared, you may sally forth and defeat him. But if the enemy is prepared for your coming, and you fail to defeat him, then, return being impossible, disaster will ensue.

6. When the position is such that neither side will gain by making the first move, it is called temporizing ground.

7. In a position of this sort, even though the enemy should offer us an attractive bait, it will be advisable not to stir forth, but rather to retreat, thus enticing the enemy in his turn; then, when part of his army has come out, we may deliver our attack with advantage.

8. With regard to narrow passes, if you can occupy them first, let them be strongly garrisoned and await the advent of the enemy.

9. Should the army forestall you in occupying a pass, do not go after him if the pass is fully garrisoned, but only if it is weakly garrisoned.

10. With regard to precipitous heights, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up.

11. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but retreat and try to entice him away.

12. If you are situated at a great distance from the enemy, and the strength of the two armies is equal, it is not easy to provoke a battle, and fighting will be to your disadvantage.

13. These six are the principles connected with Earth. The general who has attained a responsible post must be careful to study them.

14. Now an army is exposed to six several calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are: (1) Flight; (2) insubordination; (3) collapse; (4) ruin; (5) disorganization; (6) rout.

15. Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the flight of the former.

16. When the common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak, the result is insubordination. When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak, the result is collapse.

17. When the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, and on meeting the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the commander-in-chief can tell whether or not he is in a position to fight, the result is ruin.

18. When the general is weak and without authority; when his orders are not clear and distinct; when there are no fixed duties assigned to officers and men, and the ranks are formed in a slovenly haphazard manner, the result is utter disorganization.

19. When a general, unable to estimate the enemy's strength, allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one, and neglects to place picked soldiers in the front rank, the result must be rout.

20. These are six ways of courting defeat, which must be carefully noted by the general who has attained a responsible post.

21. The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of victory, and of shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general.

22. He who knows these things, and in fighting puts his knowledge into practice, will win his battles. He who knows them not, nor practices them, will surely be defeated.

23. If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.

24. The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.

25. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even

unto death.

26. If, however, you are indulgent, but unable to make your authority felt; kind-hearted, but unable to enforce your commands; and incapable, moreover, of quelling disorder: then your soldiers must be likened to spoilt children; they are useless for any practical purpose.

27. If we know that our own men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.

28. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, but are unaware that our own men are not in a condition to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.

29. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, and also know that our men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the nature of the ground makes fighting impracticable, we have still gone only halfway towards victory.

30. Hence the experienced soldier, once in motion, is never bewildered; once he has broken camp, he is never at a loss.

31. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground.

2. When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory, it is dispersive ground.

3. When he has penetrated into hostile territory, but to no great distance, it is facile ground.

4. Ground the possession of which imports great advantage to either side, is contentious ground.
5. Ground on which each side has liberty of movement is open ground.
6. Ground which forms the key to three contiguous states, so that he who occupies it first has most of the Empire at his command, is a ground of intersecting highways.
7. When an army has penetrated into the heart of a hostile country, leaving a number of fortified cities in its rear, it is serious ground.
8. Mountain forests, rugged steeps, marshes and fens--all country that is hard to traverse: this is difficult ground.
9. Ground which is reached through narrow gorges, and from which we can only retire by tortuous paths, so that a small number of the enemy would suffice to crush a large body of our men: this is hemmed in ground.
10. Ground on which we can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay, is desperate ground.
11. On dispersive ground, therefore, fight not. On facile ground, halt not. On contentious ground, attack not.
12. On open ground, do not try to block the enemy's way. On the ground of intersecting highways, join hands with your allies.
13. On serious ground, gather in plunder. In difficult ground, keep steadily on the march.
14. On hemmed-in ground, resort to stratagem. On desperate ground, fight.
15. Those who were called skillful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear; to prevent co-operation between his large and small divisions; to hinder the good troops from rescuing the bad, the officers from rallying their men.

16. When the enemy's men were united, they managed to keep them in disorder.

17. When it was to their advantage, they made a forward move; when otherwise, they stopped still.

18. If asked how to cope with a great host of the enemy in orderly array and on the point of marching to the attack, I should say: "Begin by seizing something which your opponent holds dear; then he will be amenable to your will."

19. Rapidity is the essence of war: take advantage of the enemy's unreadiness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack unguarded spots.

20. The following are the principles to be observed by an invading force: The further you penetrate into a country, the greater will be the solidarity of your troops, and thus the defenders will not prevail against you.

21. Make forays in fertile country in order to supply your army with food.

22. Carefully study the well-being of your men, and do not overtax them. Concentrate your energy and hoard your strength. Keep your army continually on the move, and devise unfathomable plans.

23. Throw your soldiers into positions whence there is no escape, and they will prefer death to flight. If they will face death, there is nothing they may not achieve. Officers and men alike will put forth their uttermost strength.

24. Soldiers when in desperate straits lose the sense of fear. If there is no place of refuge, they will stand firm. If they are in hostile country, they will show a stubborn front. If there is no help for it, they will fight hard.

25. Thus, without waiting to be marshaled, the soldiers will be constantly on the qui vive; without waiting to be asked, they will do your will; without restrictions, they will be faithful; without giving orders, they can be trusted.

26. Prohibit the taking of omens, and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared.

27. If our soldiers are not overburdened with money, it is not because they have a distaste for riches; if their lives are not unduly long, it is not because they are disinclined to longevity.
28. On the day they are ordered out to battle, your soldiers may weep, those sitting up bedewing their garments, and those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks. But let them once be brought to bay, and they will display the courage of a Chu or a Kuei.
29. The skillful tactician may be likened to the shuai-jan. Now the shuai-jan is a snake that is found in the ChUng mountains. Strike at its head, and you will be attacked by its tail; strike at its tail, and you will be attacked by its head; strike at its middle, and you will be attacked by head and tail both.
30. Asked if an army can be made to imitate the shuai-jan, I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies; yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and are caught by a storm, they will come to each other's assistance just as the left hand helps the right.
31. Hence it is not enough to put one's trust in the tethering of horses, and the burying of chariot wheels in the ground.
32. The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach.
33. How to make the best of both strong and weak--that is a question involving the proper use of ground.
34. Thus the skillful general conducts his army just as though he were leading a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand.
35. It is the business of a general to be quiet and thus ensure secrecy; upright and just, and thus maintain order.
36. He must be able to mystify his officers and men by false reports and appearances, and thus keep them in total ignorance.

37. By altering his arrangements and changing his plans, he keeps the enemy without definite knowledge. By shifting his camp and taking circuitous routes, he prevents the enemy from anticipating his purpose.

38. At the critical moment, the leader of an army acts like one who has climbed up a height and then kicks away the ladder behind him. He carries his men deep into hostile territory before he shows his hand.

39. He burns his boats and breaks his cooking-pots; like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, he drives his men this way and that, and nothing knows whither he is going.

40. To muster his host and bring it into danger:--this may be termed the business of the general.

41. The different measures suited to the nine varieties of ground; the expediency of aggressive or defensive tactics; and the fundamental laws of human nature: these are things that must most certainly be studied.

42. When invading hostile territory, the general principle is, that penetrating deeply brings cohesion; penetrating but a short way means dispersion.

43. When you leave your own country behind, and take your army across neighborhood territory, you find yourself on critical ground. When there are means of communication on all four sides, the ground is one of intersecting highways.

44. When you penetrate deeply into a country, it is serious ground. When you penetrate but a little way, it is facile ground.

45. When you have the enemy's strongholds on your rear, and narrow passes in front, it is hemmed-in ground. When there is no place of refuge at all, it is desperate ground.

46. Therefore, on dispersive ground, I would inspire my men with unity of purpose. On facile ground, I would see that there is close connection between all parts of my army.

47. On contentious ground, I would hurry up my rear.

48. On open ground, I would keep a vigilant eye on my defenses. On ground of

intersecting highways, I would consolidate my alliances.

49. On serious ground, I would try to ensure a continuous stream of supplies. On difficult ground, I would keep pushing on along the road.

50. On hemmed-in ground, I would block any way of retreat. On desperate ground, I would proclaim to my soldiers the hopelessness of saving their lives.

51. For it is the soldier's disposition to offer an obstinate resistance when surrounded, to fight hard when he cannot help himself, and to obey promptly when he has fallen into danger.

52. We cannot enter into alliance with neighboring princes until we are acquainted with their designs. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. We shall be unable to turn natural advantages to account unless we make use of local guides.

53. To be ignored of any one of the following four or five principles does not befit a warlike prince.

54. When a warlike prince attacks a powerful state, his generalship shows itself in preventing the concentration of the enemy's forces. He overawes his opponents, and their allies are prevented from joining against him.

55. Hence he does not strive to ally himself with all and sundry, nor does he foster the power of other states. He carries out his own secret designs, keeping his antagonists in awe. Thus he is able to capture their cities and overthrow their kingdoms.

56. Bestow rewards without regard to rule, issue orders without regard to previous arrangements; and you will be able to handle a whole army as though you had to do with but a single man.

57. Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design. When the outlook is bright, bring it before their eyes; but tell them nothing when the situation is gloomy.

58. Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive; plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety.
59. For it is precisely when a force has fallen into harm's way that is capable of striking a blow for victory.
60. Success in warfare is gained by carefully accommodating ourselves to the enemy's purpose.
61. By persistently hanging on the enemy's flank, we shall succeed in the long run in killing the commander-in-chief.
62. This is called ability to accomplish a thing by sheer cunning.
63. On the day that you take up your command, block the frontier passes, destroy the official tallies, and stop the passage of all emissaries.
64. Be stern in the council-chamber, so that you may control the situation.
65. If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in.
66. Forestall your opponent by seizing what he holds dear, and subtly contrive to time his arrival on the ground.
67. Walk in the path defined by rule, and accommodate yourself to the enemy until you can fight a decisive battle.
68. At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden, until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards emulate the rapidity of a running hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you.

XII. THE ATTACK BY FIRE

1. Sun Tzu said: There are five ways of attacking with fire. The first is to burn soldiers in their camp; the second is to burn stores; the third is to burn baggage trains; the fourth is to burn arsenals and magazines; the fifth is to hurl dropping fire amongst the enemy.

2. In order to carry out an attack, we must have means available. The material for raising fire should always be kept in readiness.
3. There is a proper season for making attacks with fire, and special days for starting a conflagration.
4. The proper season is when the weather is very dry; the special days are those when the moon is in the constellations of the Sieve, the Wall, the Wing or the Cross-bar; for these four are all days of rising wind.
5. In attacking with fire, one should be prepared to meet five possible developments:
6. (1) When fire breaks out inside to enemy's camp, respond at once with an attack from without.
7. (2) If there is an outbreak of fire, but the enemy's soldiers remain quiet, bide your time and do not attack.
8. (3) When the force of the flames has reached its height, follow it up with an attack, if that is practicable; if not, stay where you are.
9. (4) If it is possible to make an assault with fire from without, do not wait for it to break out within, but deliver your attack at a favorable moment.
10. (5) When you start a fire, be to windward of it. Do not attack from the leeward.
11. A wind that rises in the daytime lasts long, but a night breeze soon falls.
12. In every army, the five developments connected with fire must be known, the movements of the stars calculated, and a watch kept for the proper days.
13. Hence those who use fire as an aid to the attack show intelligence; those who use water as an aid to the attack gain an accession of strength.
14. By means of water, an enemy may be intercepted, but not robbed of all his belongings.

15. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise; for the result is waste of time and general stagnation.

16. Hence the saying: The enlightened ruler lays his plans well ahead; the good general cultivates his resources.

17. Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical.

18. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique.

19. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are.

20. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content.

21. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.

22. Hence the enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact.

XIII. THE USE OF SPIES

1. Sun Tzu said: Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entails heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the State. The daily expenditure will amount to a thousand ounces of silver. There will be commotion at home and abroad, and men will drop down exhausted on the highways. As many as seven hundred thousand families will be impeded in their labor.

2. Hostile armies may face each other for years, striving for the victory which is decided in a single day. This being so, to remain in ignorance of the enemy's condition simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honors and emoluments, is the height of inhumanity.

3. One who acts thus is no leader of men, no present help to his sovereign, no master of victory.

4. Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge.

5. Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation.

6. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men.

7. Hence the use of spies, of whom there are five classes: (1) Local spies; (2) inward spies; (3) converted spies; (4) doomed spies; (5) surviving spies.

8. When these five kinds of spy are all at work, none can discover the secret system. This is called "divine manipulation of the threads." It is the sovereign's most precious faculty.

9. Having local spies means employing the services of the inhabitants of a district.

10. Having inward spies, making use of officials of the enemy.

11. Having converted spies, getting hold of the enemy's spies and using them for our own purposes.

12. Having doomed spies, doing certain things openly for purposes of deception, and allowing our spies to know of them and report them to the enemy.

13. Surviving spies, finally, are those who bring back news from the enemy's camp.

14. Hence it is that which none in the whole army are more intimate relations to be maintained than with spies. None should be more liberally rewarded. In no other business should greater secrecy be preserved.

15. Spies cannot be usefully employed without a certain intuitive sagacity.

16. They cannot be properly managed without benevolence and straightforwardness.

17. Without subtle ingenuity of mind, one cannot make certain of the truth of their reports.

18. Be subtle! be subtle! and use your spies for every kind of business.

19. If a secret piece of news is divulged by a spy before the time is ripe, he must be put to death together with the man to whom the secret was told.

20. Whether the object be to crush an army, to storm a city, or to assassinate an individual, it is always necessary to begin by finding out the names of the attendants, the aides-de-camp, and door-keepers and sentries of the general in command. Our spies must be commissioned to ascertain these.

21. The enemy's spies who have come to spy on us must be sought out, tempted with bribes, led away and comfortably housed. Thus they will become converted spies and available for our service.

22. It is through the information brought by the converted spy that we are able to acquire and employ local and inward spies.

23. It is owing to his information, again, that we can cause the doomed spy to carry false tidings to the enemy.

24. Lastly, it is by his information that the surviving spy can be used on appointed occasions.

25. The end and aim of spying in all its five varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy. Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with the utmost liberality.

26. Of old, the rise of the Yin dynasty was due to I Chih who had served under the Hsia. Likewise, the rise of the Chou dynasty was due to Lu Ya who had served under the Yin.

27. Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for purposes of spying and thereby they achieve great results.

Spies are a most important element in water, because on them depends an army's ability to move.

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SUN TZU ON THE ART OF WAR
THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

孫子兵法

Translated from the Chinese
By LIONEL GILES, M.A. (1910)

[This is the basic text of Sun Tzu on the Art of War. It was extracted from Mr. Giles' complete work as titled above. The commentary itself, which, of course includes this work embedded within it, has been released as [suntzu10.txt](#) (or [suntzu10.zip](#)). This is being released only as an adjunct to that work, which contains a wealth of commentary upon this text.]

The *Art of War* has 13 chapters. You can click on the Chapter Number to go to that chapter directly.

Each chapter is hyper-linked to its corresponding Chinese text. You may switch back and forth between the English and the original Chinese text, by clicking on the link at the end of each chapter.

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I. LAYING PLANS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.
2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.
3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.
4. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline.
- 5,6. The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.
7. Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.
8. Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.
9. The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerely, benevolence, courage and strictness.

10. By method and discipline are to be understood the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.
11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.
12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:--
13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law?
(2) Which of the two generals has most ability?
(3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?
(4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?
(5) Which army is stronger?
(6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained?
(7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?
14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.
15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat:--let such a one be dismissed!
16. While heading the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.
17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.
18. All warfare is based on deception.
19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.
20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.
21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.
22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.
23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.
24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.
25. These military devices, leading to victory,

must not be divulged beforehand.

26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

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II. WAGING WAR

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers, with provisions enough to carry them a thousand li, the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armor, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.
2. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.
3. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.
4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.
5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.
6. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.
7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.
8. The skillful soldier does not raise a second levy, neither are his supply-wagons loaded more than twice.
9. Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy. Thus the army will have food enough for its needs.
10. Poverty of the State exchequer causes an army to be maintained by contributions from a distance. Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be impoverished.
11. On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's

substance to be drained away.

12. When their substance is drained away, the peasantry will be afflicted by heavy exactions.
- 13,14. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three-tenths of their income will be dissipated; while government expenses for broken chariots, worn-out horses, breast-plates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draught-oxen and heavy wagons, will amount to four-tenths of its total revenue.
15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single picul of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store.
16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.
17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.
18. This is called, using the conquered foe to augment one's own strength.
19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.
20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.

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III. ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

1. Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.
2. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.
3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.
4. The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it

can possibly be avoided. The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months; and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more.

5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.
6. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.
7. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.
8. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.
9. If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.
10. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force.
11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.
12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:--
13. (1) By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.
14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.
15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This shakes the confidence of the soldiers.
16. But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes. This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away.
17. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory:
 - (1) He will win who knows when to fight and when

not to fight.

- (2) He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.
- (3) He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.
- (4) He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.
- (5) He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

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IV. TACTICAL DISPOSITIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.
2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.
3. Thus the good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat, but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.
4. Hence the saying: One may know how to conquer without being able to do it.
5. Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.
6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.
7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth; he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven. Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.
8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.
9. Neither is it the acme of excellence if you fight and conquer and the whole Empire says, "Well done!"
10. To lift an autumn hair is no sign of great strength; to see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.
11. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.
12. Hence his victories bring him neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage.

13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes.
Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.
14. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.
15. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.
16. The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.
17. In respect of military method, we have, firstly, Measurement; secondly, Estimation of quantity; thirdly, Calculation; fourthly, Balancing of chances; fifthly, Victory.
18. Measurement owes its existence to Earth; Estimation of quantity to Measurement; Calculation to Estimation of quantity; Balancing of chances to Calculation; and Victory to Balancing of chances.
19. A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound's weight placed in the scale against a single grain.
20. The onrush of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep.

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V. ENERGY

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.
2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.
3. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken--this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.
4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg--this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.
5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.
7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.
8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.
9. There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.
10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack--the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.
11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle--you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?
12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.
13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.
14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.
15. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.
16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.
17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.
18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy; masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.
19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.
20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.
21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals.

Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.
23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.

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VI. WEAK POINTS AND STRONG

1. Sun Tzu said: Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.
2. Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him.
3. By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.
4. If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him; if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly encamped, he can force him to move.
5. Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.
6. An army may march great distances without distress, if it marches through country where the enemy is not.
7. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack places which are undefended. You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold positions that cannot be attacked.
8. Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.
9. O divine art of subtlety and secrecy! Through you we learn to be invisible, through you inaudible; and hence we can hold the enemy's fate in our hands.
10. You may advance and be absolutely irresistible, if you make for the enemy's weak points; you may retire and be safe from pursuit if your movements are more rapid than those of the enemy.
11. If we wish to fight, the enemy can be forced to an engagement even though he be sheltered behind a high

rampart and a deep ditch. All we need do is attack some other place that he will be obliged to relieve.

12. If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from engaging us even though the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground. All we need do is to throw something odd and unaccountable in his way.
13. By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided.
14. We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few.
15. And if we are able thus to attack an inferior force with a superior one, our opponents will be in dire straits.
16. The spot where we intend to fight must not be made known; for then the enemy will have to prepare against a possible attack at several different points; and his forces being thus distributed in many directions, the numbers we shall have to face at any given point will be proportionately few.
17. For should the enemy strengthen his van, he will weaken his rear; should he strengthen his rear, he will weaken his van; should he strengthen his left, he will weaken his right; should he strengthen his right, he will weaken his left. If he sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak.
18. Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations against us.
19. Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight.
20. But if neither time nor place be known, then the left wing will be impotent to succor the right, the right equally impotent to succor the left, the van unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to support the van. How much more so if the furthest portions of the army are anything under a hundred LI apart, and even the nearest are separated by several LI!
21. Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.
22. Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success.
23. Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity. Force him to reveal himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots.

24. Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient.
25. In making tactical dispositions, the highest pitch you can attain is to conceal them; conceal your dispositions, and you will be safe from the prying of the subtlest spies, from the machinations of the wisest brains.
26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics--that is what the multitude cannot comprehend.
27. All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.
28. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.
29. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards.
30. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.
31. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.
32. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.
33. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.
34. The five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) are not always equally predominant; the four seasons make way for each other in turn. There are short days and long; the moon has its periods of waning and waxing.

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VII. MANEUVERING

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign.
2. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonize the different elements thereof before pitching his camp.
3. After that, comes tactical maneuvering, than which there is nothing more difficult. The difficulty of tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain.
4. Thus, to take a long and circuitous route, after enticing the enemy out of the way, and though starting

after him, to contrive to reach the goal before him, shows knowledge of the artifice of DEVIATION.

5. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, most dangerous.
6. If you set a fully equipped army in march in order to snatch an advantage, the chances are that you will be too late. On the other hand, to detach a flying column for the purpose involves the sacrifice of its baggage and stores.
7. Thus, if you order your men to roll up their buff-coats, and make forced marches without halting day or night, covering double the usual distance at a stretch, doing a hundred LI in order to wrest an advantage, the leaders of all your three divisions will fall into the hands of the enemy.
8. The stronger men will be in front, the jaded ones will fall behind, and on this plan only one-tenth of your army will reach its destination.
9. If you march fifty LI in order to outmaneuver the enemy, you will lose the leader of your first division, and only half your force will reach the goal.
10. If you march thirty LI with the same object, two-thirds of your army will arrive.
11. We may take it then that an army without its baggage-train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost.
12. We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.
13. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.
14. We shall be unable to turn natural advantage to account unless we make use of local guides.
15. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed.
16. Whether to concentrate or to divide your troops, must be decided by circumstances.
17. Let your rapidity be that of the wind, your compactness that of the forest.
18. In raiding and plundering be like fire, in immovability like a mountain.
19. Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.
20. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men; when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery.

21. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.
22. He will conquer who has learnt the artifice of deviation. Such is the art of maneuvering.
23. The Book of Army Management says: On the field of battle, the spoken word does not carry far enough: hence the institution of gongs and drums. Nor can ordinary objects be seen clearly enough: hence the institution of banners and flags.
24. Gongs and drums, banners and flags, are means whereby the ears and eyes of the host may be focused on one particular point.
25. The host thus forming a single united body, is it impossible either for the brave to advance alone, or for the cowardly to retreat alone. This is the art of handling large masses of men.
26. In night-fighting, then, make much use of signal-fires and drums, and in fighting by day, of flags and banners, as a means of influencing the ears and eyes of your army.
27. A whole army may be robbed of its spirit; a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind.
28. Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp.
29. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods.
30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy:--this is the art of retaining self-possession.
31. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished:--this is the art of husbanding one's strength.
32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:--this is the art of studying circumstances.
33. It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill.
34. Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen.
35. Do not swallow bait offered by the enemy. Do not interfere with an army that is returning home.
36. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.
37. Such is the art of warfare.

VIII. VARIATION IN TACTICS

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign, collects his army and concentrates his forces
2. When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions. In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight.
3. There are roads which must not be followed, armies which must be not attacked, towns which must be besieged, positions which must not be contested, commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed.
4. The general who thoroughly understands the advantages that accompany variation of tactics knows how to handle his troops.
5. The general who does not understand these, may be well acquainted with the configuration of the country, yet he will not be able to turn his knowledge to practical account.
6. So, the student of war who is unversed in the art of war of varying his plans, even though he be acquainted with the Five Advantages, will fail to make the best use of his men.
7. Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and of disadvantage will be blended together.
8. If our expectation of advantage be tempered in this way, we may succeed in accomplishing the essential part of our schemes.
9. If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an advantage, we may extricate ourselves from misfortune.
10. Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them; and make trouble for them, and keep them constantly engaged; hold out specious allurements, and make them rush to any given point.
11. The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.
12. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general:
 - (1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction;
 - (2) cowardice, which leads to capture;
 - (3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;
 - (4) a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame;
 - (5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him

to worry and trouble.

13. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war.
14. When an army is overthrown and its leader slain, the cause will surely be found among these five dangerous faults. Let them be a subject of meditation.

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IX. THE ARMY ON THE MARCH

1. Sun Tzu said: We come now to the question of encamping the army, and observing signs of the enemy. Pass quickly over mountains, and keep in the neighborhood of valleys.
2. Camp in high places, facing the sun. Do not climb heights in order to fight. So much for mountain warfare.
3. After crossing a river, you should get far away from it.
4. When an invading force crosses a river in its onward march, do not advance to meet it in mid-stream. It will be best to let half the army get across, and then deliver your attack.
5. If you are anxious to fight, you should not go to meet the invader near a river which he has to cross.
6. Moor your craft higher up than the enemy, and facing the sun. Do not move up-stream to meet the enemy. So much for river warfare.
7. In crossing salt-marshes, your sole concern should be to get over them quickly, without any delay.
8. If forced to fight in a salt-marsh, you should have water and grass near you, and get your back to a clump of trees. So much for operations in salt-marches.
9. In dry, level country, take up an easily accessible position with rising ground to your right and on your rear, so that the danger may be in front, and safety lie behind. So much for campaigning in flat country.
10. These are the four useful branches of military knowledge which enabled the Yellow Emperor to vanquish four several sovereigns.
11. All armies prefer high ground to low and sunny places to dark.
12. If you are careful of your men, and camp on hard ground, the army will be free from disease of every kind, and this will spell victory.
13. When you come to a hill or a bank, occupy the sunny side, with the slope on your right rear.

Thus you will at once act for the benefit of your soldiers and utilize the natural advantages of the ground.

14. When, in consequence of heavy rains up-country, a river which you wish to ford is swollen and flecked with foam, you must wait until it subsides.
15. Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows, confined places, tangled thickets, quagmires and crevasses, should be left with all possible speed and not approached.
16. While we keep away from such places, we should get the enemy to approach them; while we face them, we should let the enemy have them on his rear.
17. If in the neighborhood of your camp there should be any hilly country, ponds surrounded by aquatic grass, hollow basins filled with reeds, or woods with thick undergrowth, they must be carefully routed out and searched; for these are places where men in ambush or insidious spies are likely to be lurking.
18. When the enemy is close at hand and remains quiet, he is relying on the natural strength of his position.
19. When he keeps aloof and tries to provoke a battle, he is anxious for the other side to advance.
20. If his place of encampment is easy of access, he is tendering a bait.
21. Movement amongst the trees of a forest shows that the enemy is advancing. The appearance of a number of screens in the midst of thick grass means that the enemy wants to make us suspicious.
22. The rising of birds in their flight is the sign of an ambushade. Startled beasts indicate that a sudden attack is coming.
23. When there is dust rising in a high column, it is the sign of chariots advancing; when the dust is low, but spread over a wide area, it betokens the approach of infantry. When it branches out in different directions, it shows that parties have been sent to collect firewood. A few clouds of dust moving to and fro signify that the army is encamping.
24. Humble words and increased preparations are signs that the enemy is about to advance. Violent language and driving forward as if to the attack are signs that he will retreat.
25. When the light chariots come out first and take up a position on the wings, it is a sign that the enemy is forming for battle.
26. Peace proposals unaccompanied by a sworn covenant indicate a plot.
27. When there is much running about and the soldiers fall into rank, it means that the critical moment has come.

28. When some are seen advancing and some retreating, it is a lure.
29. When the soldiers stand leaning on their spears, they are faint from want of food.
30. If those who are sent to draw water begin by drinking themselves, the army is suffering from thirst.
31. If the enemy sees an advantage to be gained and makes no effort to secure it, the soldiers are exhausted.
32. If birds gather on any spot, it is unoccupied. Clamor by night betokens nervousness.
33. If there is disturbance in the camp, the general's authority is weak. If the banners and flags are shifted about, sedition is afoot. If the officers are angry, it means that the men are weary.
34. When an army feeds its horses with grain and kills its cattle for food, and when the men do not hang their cooking-pots over the camp-fires, showing that they will not return to their tents, you may know that they are determined to fight to the death.
35. The sight of men whispering together in small knots or speaking in subdued tones points to disaffection amongst the rank and file.
36. Too frequent rewards signify that the enemy is at the end of his resources; too many punishments betray a condition of dire distress.
37. To begin by bluster, but afterwards to take fright at the enemy's numbers, shows a supreme lack of intelligence.
38. When envoys are sent with compliments in their mouths, it is a sign that the enemy wishes for a truce.
39. If the enemy's troops march up angrily and remain facing ours for a long time without either joining battle or taking themselves off again, the situation is one that demands great vigilance and circumspection.
40. If our troops are no more in number than the enemy, that is amply sufficient; it only means that no direct attack can be made. What we can do is simply to concentrate all our available strength, keep a close watch on the enemy, and obtain reinforcements.
41. He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them.
42. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.
43. Therefore soldiers must be treated in the first instance with humanity, but kept under control by means

of iron discipline. This is a certain road to victory.

44. If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.
45. If a general shows confidence in his men but always insists on his orders being obeyed, the gain will be mutual.

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X. TERRAIN

1. Sun Tzu said: We may distinguish six kinds of terrain, to wit: (1) Accessible ground; (2) entangling ground; (3) temporizing ground; (4) narrow passes; (5) precipitous heights; (6) positions at a great distance from the enemy.
2. Ground which can be freely traversed by both sides is called accessible.
3. With regard to ground of this nature, be before the enemy in occupying the raised and sunny spots, and carefully guard your line of supplies. Then you will be able to fight with advantage.
4. Ground which can be abandoned but is hard to re-occupy is called entangling.
5. From a position of this sort, if the enemy is unprepared, you may sally forth and defeat him. But if the enemy is prepared for your coming, and you fail to defeat him, then, return being impossible, disaster will ensue.
6. When the position is such that neither side will gain by making the first move, it is called temporizing ground.
7. In a position of this sort, even though the enemy should offer us an attractive bait, it will be advisable not to stir forth, but rather to retreat, thus enticing the enemy in his turn; then, when part of his army has come out, we may deliver our attack with advantage.
8. With regard to narrow passes, if you can occupy them first, let them be strongly garrisoned and await the advent of the enemy.
9. Should the army forestall you in occupying a pass, do not go after him if the pass is fully garrisoned, but only if it is weakly garrisoned.
10. With regard to precipitous heights, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up.
11. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but retreat and try to entice him away.
12. If you are situated at a great distance from the enemy, and the strength of the two armies is equal,

it is not easy to provoke a battle, and fighting will be to your disadvantage.

13. These six are the principles connected with Earth. The general who has attained a responsible post must be careful to study them.
14. Now an army is exposed to six several calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are: (1) Flight; (2) insubordination; (3) collapse; (4) ruin; (5) disorganization; (6) rout.
15. Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the flight of the former.
16. When the common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak, the result is insubordination. When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak, the result is collapse.
17. When the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, and on meeting the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the commander-in-chief can tell whether or no he is in a position to fight, the result is ruin.
18. When the general is weak and without authority; when his orders are not clear and distinct; when there are no fixed duties assigned to officers and men, and the ranks are formed in a slovenly haphazard manner, the result is utter disorganization.
19. When a general, unable to estimate the enemy's strength, allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one, and neglects to place picked soldiers in the front rank, the result must be rout.
20. These are six ways of courting defeat, which must be carefully noted by the general who has attained a responsible post.
21. The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of victory, and of shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general.
22. He who knows these things, and in fighting puts his knowledge into practice, will win his battles. He who knows them not, nor practices them, will surely be defeated.
23. If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.
24. The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service

for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.

25. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death.
26. If, however, you are indulgent, but unable to make your authority felt; kind-hearted, but unable to enforce your commands; and incapable, moreover, of quelling disorder: then your soldiers must be likened to spoilt children; they are useless for any practical purpose.
27. If we know that our own men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.
28. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, but are unaware that our own men are not in a condition to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.
29. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, and also know that our men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the nature of the ground makes fighting impracticable, we have still gone only halfway towards victory.
30. Hence the experienced soldier, once in motion, is never bewildered; once he has broken camp, he is never at a loss.
31. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

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XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground:
(1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground;
(4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways;
(6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground;
(9) desperate ground.
2. When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory, it is dispersive ground.
3. When he has penetrated into hostile territory, but to no great distance, it is facile ground.
4. Ground the possession of which imports great advantage to either side, is contentious ground.
5. Ground on which each side has liberty of movement is open ground.
6. Ground which forms the key to three contiguous states, so that he who occupies it first has most of the Empire

at his command, is a ground of intersecting highways.

7. When an army has penetrated into the heart of a hostile country, leaving a number of fortified cities in its rear, it is serious ground.
8. Mountain forests, rugged steeps, marshes and fens--all country that is hard to traverse: this is difficult ground.
9. Ground which is reached through narrow gorges, and from which we can only retire by tortuous paths, so that a small number of the enemy would suffice to crush a large body of our men: this is hemmed in ground.
10. Ground on which we can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay, is desperate ground.
11. On dispersive ground, therefore, fight not. On facile ground, halt not. On contentious ground, attack not.
12. On open ground, do not try to block the enemy's way. On the ground of intersecting highways, join hands with your allies.
13. On serious ground, gather in plunder. In difficult ground, keep steadily on the march.
14. On hemmed-in ground, resort to stratagem. On desperate ground, fight.
15. Those who were called skillful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear; to prevent co-operation between his large and small divisions; to hinder the good troops from rescuing the bad, the officers from rallying their men.
16. When the enemy's men were united, they managed to keep them in disorder.
17. When it was to their advantage, they made a forward move; when otherwise, they stopped still.
18. If asked how to cope with a great host of the enemy in orderly array and on the point of marching to the attack, I should say: "Begin by seizing something which your opponent holds dear; then he will be amenable to your will."
19. Rapidity is the essence of war: take advantage of the enemy's unreadiness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack unguarded spots.
20. The following are the principles to be observed by an invading force: The further you penetrate into a country, the greater will be the solidarity of your troops, and thus the defenders will not prevail against you.
21. Make forays in fertile country in order to supply your army with food.
22. Carefully study the well-being of your men, and do not overtax them. Concentrate your energy and hoard your strength. Keep your army continually on the move,

and devise unfathomable plans.

23. Throw your soldiers into positions whence there is no escape, and they will prefer death to flight. If they will face death, there is nothing they may not achieve. Officers and men alike will put forth their uttermost strength.
24. Soldiers when in desperate straits lose the sense of fear. If there is no place of refuge, they will stand firm. If they are in hostile country, they will show a stubborn front. If there is no help for it, they will fight hard.
25. Thus, without waiting to be marshaled, the soldiers will be constantly on the qui vive; without waiting to be asked, they will do your will; without restrictions, they will be faithful; without giving orders, they can be trusted.
26. Prohibit the taking of omens, and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared.
27. If our soldiers are not overburdened with money, it is not because they have a distaste for riches; if their lives are not unduly long, it is not because they are disinclined to longevity.
28. On the day they are ordered out to battle, your soldiers may weep, those sitting up bedewing their garments, and those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks. But let them once be brought to bay, and they will display the courage of a Chu or a Kuei.
29. The skillful tactician may be likened to the shuai-jan. Now the shuai-jan is a snake that is found in the ChUng mountains. Strike at its head, and you will be attacked by its tail; strike at its tail, and you will be attacked by its head; strike at its middle, and you will be attacked by head and tail both.
30. Asked if an army can be made to imitate the shuai-jan, I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies; yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and are caught by a storm, they will come to each other's assistance just as the left hand helps the right.
31. Hence it is not enough to put one's trust in the tethering of horses, and the burying of chariot wheels in the ground
32. The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach.
33. How to make the best of both strong and weak--that is a question involving the proper use of ground.
34. Thus the skillful general conducts his army just as though he were leading a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand.
35. It is the business of a general to be quiet and thus

ensure secrecy; upright and just, and thus maintain order.

36. He must be able to mystify his officers and men by false reports and appearances, and thus keep them in total ignorance.
37. By altering his arrangements and changing his plans, he keeps the enemy without definite knowledge. By shifting his camp and taking circuitous routes, he prevents the enemy from anticipating his purpose.
38. At the critical moment, the leader of an army acts like one who has climbed up a height and then kicks away the ladder behind him. He carries his men deep into hostile territory before he shows his hand.
39. He burns his boats and breaks his cooking-pots; like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, he drives his men this way and that, and nothing knows whither he is going.
40. To muster his host and bring it into danger:--this may be termed the business of the general.
41. The different measures suited to the nine varieties of ground; the expediency of aggressive or defensive tactics; and the fundamental laws of human nature: these are things that must most certainly be studied.
42. When invading hostile territory, the general principle is, that penetrating deeply brings cohesion; penetrating but a short way means dispersion.
43. When you leave your own country behind, and take your army across neighborhood territory, you find yourself on critical ground. When there are means of communication on all four sides, the ground is one of intersecting highways.
44. When you penetrate deeply into a country, it is serious ground. When you penetrate but a little way, it is facile ground.
45. When you have the enemy's strongholds on your rear, and narrow passes in front, it is hemmed-in ground. When there is no place of refuge at all, it is desperate ground.
46. Therefore, on dispersive ground, I would inspire my men with unity of purpose. On facile ground, I would see that there is close connection between all parts of my army.
47. On contentious ground, I would hurry up my rear.
48. On open ground, I would keep a vigilant eye on my defenses. On ground of intersecting highways, I would consolidate my alliances.
49. On serious ground, I would try to ensure a continuous stream of supplies. On difficult ground, I would keep pushing on along the road.
50. On hemmed-in ground, I would block any way of retreat. On desperate ground, I would proclaim

to my soldiers the hopelessness of saving their lives.

51. For it is the soldier's disposition to offer an obstinate resistance when surrounded, to fight hard when he cannot help himself, and to obey promptly when he has fallen into danger.
52. We cannot enter into alliance with neighboring princes until we are acquainted with their designs. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country--its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. We shall be unable to turn natural advantages to account unless we make use of local guides.
53. To be ignored of any one of the following four or five principles does not befit a warlike prince.
54. When a warlike prince attacks a powerful state, his generalship shows itself in preventing the concentration of the enemy's forces. He overawes his opponents, and their allies are prevented from joining against him.
55. Hence he does not strive to ally himself with all and sundry, nor does he foster the power of other states. He carries out his own secret designs, keeping his antagonists in awe. Thus he is able to capture their cities and overthrow their kingdoms.
56. Bestow rewards without regard to rule, issue orders without regard to previous arrangements; and you will be able to handle a whole army as though you had to do with but a single man.
57. Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design. When the outlook is bright, bring it before their eyes; but tell them nothing when the situation is gloomy.
58. Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive; plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety.
59. For it is precisely when a force has fallen into harm's way that is capable of striking a blow for victory.
60. Success in warfare is gained by carefully accommodating ourselves to the enemy's purpose.
61. By persistently hanging on the enemy's flank, we shall succeed in the long run in killing the commander-in-chief.
62. This is called ability to accomplish a thing by sheer cunning.
63. On the day that you take up your command, block the frontier passes, destroy the official tallies, and stop the passage of all emissaries.
64. Be stern in the council-chamber, so that you may control the situation.
65. If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in.

66. Forestall your opponent by seizing what he holds dear, and subtly contrive to time his arrival on the ground.
67. Walk in the path defined by rule, and accommodate yourself to the enemy until you can fight a decisive battle.
68. At first, then, exhibit the coyness of a maiden, until the enemy gives you an opening; afterwards emulate the rapidity of a running hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose you.

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XII. THE ATTACK BY FIRE

1. Sun Tzu said: There are five ways of attacking with fire. The first is to burn soldiers in their camp; the second is to burn stores; the third is to burn baggage trains; the fourth is to burn arsenals and magazines; the fifth is to hurl dropping fire amongst the enemy.
2. In order to carry out an attack, we must have means available. The material for raising fire should always be kept in readiness.
3. There is a proper season for making attacks with fire, and special days for starting a conflagration.
4. The proper season is when the weather is very dry; the special days are those when the moon is in the constellations of the Sieve, the Wall, the Wing or the Cross-bar; for these four are all days of rising wind.
5. In attacking with fire, one should be prepared to meet five possible developments:
6. (1) When fire breaks out inside to enemy's camp, respond at once with an attack from without.
7. (2) If there is an outbreak of fire, but the enemy's soldiers remain quiet, bide your time and do not attack.
8. (3) When the force of the flames has reached its height, follow it up with an attack, if that is practicable; if not, stay where you are.
9. (4) If it is possible to make an assault with fire from without, do not wait for it to break out within, but deliver your attack at a favorable moment.
10. (5) When you start a fire, be to windward of it. Do not attack from the leeward.
11. A wind that rises in the daytime lasts long, but a night breeze soon falls.
12. In every army, the five developments connected with fire must be known, the movements of the stars calculated, and a watch kept for the proper days.

13. Hence those who use fire as an aid to the attack show intelligence; those who use water as an aid to the attack gain an accession of strength.
14. By means of water, an enemy may be intercepted, but not robbed of all his belongings.
15. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise; for the result is waste of time and general stagnation.
16. Hence the saying: The enlightened ruler lays his plans well ahead; the good general cultivates his resources.
17. Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical.
18. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique.
19. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are.
20. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content.
21. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.
22. Hence the enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution. This is the way to keep a country at peace and an army intact.

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XIII. THE USE OF SPIES

1. Sun Tzu said: Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entails heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the State. The daily expenditure will amount to a thousand ounces of silver. There will be commotion at home and abroad, and men will drop down exhausted on the highways. As many as seven hundred thousand families will be impeded in their labor.
2. Hostile armies may face each other for years, striving for the victory which is decided in a single day. This being so, to remain in ignorance of the enemy's condition simply because one grudges the outlay of a hundred ounces of silver in honors and emoluments, is the height of inhumanity.
3. One who acts thus is no leader of men, no present help to his sovereign, no master of victory.
4. Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond

the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge.

5. Now this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits; it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation.
6. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men.
7. Hence the use of spies, of whom there are five classes:
(1) Local spies; (2) inward spies; (3) converted spies;
(4) doomed spies; (5) surviving spies.
8. When these five kinds of spy are all at work, none can discover the secret system. This is called "divine manipulation of the threads." It is the sovereign's most precious faculty.
9. Having local spies means employing the services of the inhabitants of a district.
10. Having inward spies, making use of officials of the enemy.
11. Having converted spies, getting hold of the enemy's spies and using them for our own purposes.
12. Having doomed spies, doing certain things openly for purposes of deception, and allowing our spies to know of them and report them to the enemy.
13. Surviving spies, finally, are those who bring back news from the enemy's camp.
14. Hence it is that which none in the whole army are more intimate relations to be maintained than with spies. None should be more liberally rewarded. In no other business should greater secrecy be preserved.
15. Spies cannot be usefully employed without a certain intuitive sagacity.
16. They cannot be properly managed without benevolence and straightforwardness.
17. Without subtle ingenuity of mind, one cannot make certain of the truth of their reports.
18. Be subtle! be subtle! and use your spies for every kind of business.
19. If a secret piece of news is divulged by a spy before the time is ripe, he must be put to death together with the man to whom the secret was told.
20. Whether the object be to crush an army, to storm a city, or to assassinate an individual, it is always necessary to begin by finding out the names of the attendants, the aides-de-camp, and door-keepers and sentries of the general in command. Our spies must be commissioned to ascertain these.
21. The enemy's spies who have come to spy on us must be sought out, tempted with bribes, led away and

comfortably housed. Thus they will become converted spies and available for our service.

22. It is through the information brought by the converted spy that we are able to acquire and employ local and inward spies.
23. It is owing to his information, again, that we can cause the doomed spy to carry false tidings to the enemy.
24. Lastly, it is by his information that the surviving spy can be used on appointed occasions.
25. The end and aim of spying in all its five varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy. Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with the utmost liberality.
26. Of old, the rise of the Yin dynasty was due to I Chih who had served under the Hsia. Likewise, the rise of the Chou dynasty was due to Lu Ya who had served under the Yin.
27. Hence it is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for purposes of spying and thereby they achieve great results. Spies are a most important element in war, because on them depends an army's ability to move.

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[END - Sun Tzu on the Art of War, text-only]

STESSO URL, CONTENENDO IL DOCUMENTO PRECEDENTE, COME SI È VISTO, UN LINK CHE RINVIA AL TESTO IN CINESE DELL'ARTE DELLA GUERRA E LA PAGINA CHE INFINE SI INCONTRA È SEMPRE AL MEDESIMO URL.

Art Of War [孫子兵法] 孫子兵法
By Sun Zi [SunTzu]

Complete Chinese text with hyper-links to its English translation.
Revised January 1996

This webpage contains the complete text of *Art of War* by SunZi in Chinese. It is coded in FanTi (Big5) and should be viewed with appropriate software.

The webpage is hyper-linked to the [English translation](#) by by Lionel Giles. At end of every chapter, you may jumped to the corresponding English text, by clicking on the hyper-link.

The *Art of War* has 13 Chapters. To jump to any chapter directly, simply click on the title of that chapter.

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本版以李曉渝之國標碼電子版為本，改為繁體大五碼，編輯修訂。
凡國標碼表中無對應的漢字，均已補入。

一九九六年春 裴明龍 謹記

故經之以五，校之以計，而索其情：一曰道，二曰天，三曰地，四曰將，五曰法。道者，令民于上同意者也，可與之死，可與之生，民不詭也。天者，陰陽、寒暑、時制也。地者，高下、遠近、險易、廣狹、死生也。將者，智、信、仁、勇、嚴也。法者，曲制、官道、主用也。凡此五者，將莫不聞，知之者勝，不知之者不勝。故校之以計，而索其情。曰：主孰有道？將孰有能？天地孰得？法令執行？兵眾孰強？士卒孰練？賞罰孰明？吾以此知勝負矣。

將聽吾計，用之必勝，留之；將不聽吾計，用之必敗，去之。

計利以聽，乃為之勢，以佐其外。勢者，因利而制權也。

兵者，詭道也。故能而示之不能，用而示之不用，近而示之遠，遠而示之近。利而誘之，亂而取之，實而備之，強而避之，怒而撓之，卑而驕之，佚而勞之，親而離之，攻其不備，出其不意。此兵家之勝，不可先傳也。

夫未戰而廟算勝者，得算多也；未戰而廟算不勝者，得算少也。多算勝，少算不勝，而況無算乎！吾以此觀之，勝負見矣。

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02 《孫子兵法》作戰篇第二

作戰篇

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，馳車千駟，革車千乘，帶甲十萬，千里饋糧，則內外之費，賓客之用，膠漆之材，車甲之奉，日費千金，然後十萬之師舉矣。其用戰也貴勝，久則鈍兵挫銳，攻城則力屈，久暴師則國用不足。夫鈍兵挫銳，屈力殫貨，則諸侯乘其弊而起，雖有智者，不能善其後矣。故兵聞拙速，未睹巧之久也。夫兵久而國利者，未之有也。故不盡知用兵之害者，則不能盡知用兵之利也。

善用兵者，役不再籍，糧不三載；取用于國，因糧于敵，故軍食可足也。

國之貧于師者遠輸，遠輸則百姓貧。近師者貴賣，貴賣則百姓竭，財竭則急於丘役。力屈、財殫，中原內虛于家。百姓之費，十去其七；公家之費：破軍罷馬，甲冑矢弩，戟盾蔽櫓，丘牛大車，十去其六。

故智將務食于敵。食敵一鐘，當吾二十鐘；箕杆一石，當吾二十石。

故殺敵者，怒也；取敵之利者，貨也。故車戰，得車十乘已上，賞其先得者，而更其旌旗，車雜而乘之，卒善而養之，是謂勝敵而益強。

故兵貴勝，不貴久。

故知兵之將，民之司命，國家安危之主也。

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孫子曰：凡用兵之法，全國為上，破國次之；全軍為上，破軍次之；全旅為上，破旅次之；全卒為上，破卒次之；全伍為上，破伍次之。是故百戰百勝，非善之善也；不戰而屈人之兵，善之善者也。

故上兵伐謀，其次伐交，其次伐兵，其下攻城。攻城之法為不得已。修櫓轆轤、具器械、三月而後成，距闔，又三月而後已。將不勝其忿，而蟻附之，殺士三分之一，而城不拔者，此攻之災也。故善用兵者，屈人之兵而非戰也。拔人之城而非攻也，破人之國而非久也，必以全爭于天下，故兵不頓，而利可全，此謀攻之法也。

故用兵之法，十則圍之，五則攻之，倍則分之，敵則能戰之，少則能逃之，不若則能避之。故小敵之堅，大敵之擒也。

夫將者，國之輔也。輔周則國必強，輔隙則國必弱。

故君之所以患于軍者三：不知軍之不可以進而謂之進，不知軍之不可以退而謂之退，是為糜軍；不知三軍之事，而同三軍之政者，則軍士惑矣；不知三軍之權，而同三軍之任，則軍士疑矣。三軍既惑且疑，則諸侯之難至矣，是謂亂軍引勝。

故知勝有五：知可以戰與不可以戰者勝，識眾寡之用者勝，上下同欲者勝，以虞待不虞者勝，將能而君不御者勝。此五者，知勝之道也。

故曰：知己知彼，百戰不貽；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼不知己，每戰必貽。

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孫子曰：昔之善戰者，先為不可勝，以待敵之可勝。不可勝在己，可勝在敵。故善戰者，能為不可勝，不能使敵之必可勝。故曰：勝可知，而不可為。不可勝者，守也；可勝者，攻也。守則不足，攻則有餘。善守者，藏于九地之下；善攻者，動于九天之上。故能自保而全勝也。

見勝不過眾人之所知，非善之善者也；戰勝而天下曰善，非善之善者也。故舉秋毫不為多力，見日月不為明目，聞雷霆不為聰耳。古之所謂善戰者，勝于易勝者也。故善戰之勝也，無智名，無勇功。故其戰勝不忒。不忒者，其所措必勝，勝已敗者也。故善戰者，立于不敗之地，而不失敵之敗也。是故勝兵先勝而後求戰，敗兵先戰而後求勝。善用兵者，修道而保法，故能為勝敗之政。

兵法：一曰度，二曰量，三曰數，四曰稱，五曰勝。地生度，度生量，量生數，數生稱，稱生勝。

故勝兵若以鎰稱銖，敗兵若以銖稱鎰。

勝者之戰民也，若決積水于千仞之谿者，形也。

05 《孫子兵法》勢篇第五

勢篇

孫子曰：凡治眾如治寡，分數是也；鬥眾如鬥寡，形名是也；三軍之眾，可使必受敵而無敗，奇正是也；兵之所加，如以礮投卵者，虛實是也。

凡戰者，以正合，以奇勝。故善出奇者，無窮如天地，不竭如江河。終而復始，日月是也。死而復生，四時是也。聲不過五，五聲之變，不可勝聽也。色不過五，五色之變，不可勝觀也。味不過五，五味之變，不可勝嘗也。戰勢不過奇正，奇正之變，不可勝窮之也。奇正相生，如環之無端，孰能窮之？

激水之疾，至于漂石者，勢也；鷲鳥之疾，至于毀折者，節也。是故善戰者，其勢險，其節短。勢如張弩，節如發機。

紛紛紜紜，鬥亂而不可亂也。渾渾沌沌，形圓而不可敗也。

亂生于治，怯生于勇，弱生于強。治亂，數也；勇怯，勢也；強弱，形也。

故善動敵者，形之，敵必從之；予之，敵必取之。以利動之，以卒動之。

故善戰者，求之于勢，不責于人，故能擇人而任勢。任勢者，其戰人也，如轉木石。木石之性，安則靜，危則動，方則止，圓則行。故善戰人之勢，如轉圓石于千仞之山者，勢也。

06 《孫子兵法》虛實篇第六

虛實篇

孫子曰：凡先處戰地而待敵者佚，後處戰地而趨戰者勞。故善戰者，致人而不致于人。

能使敵自至者，利之也；能使敵不得至者，害之也。故敵佚能勞之，飽能飢之，安能動之。

出其所不趨，趨其所不意。行千里而不勞者，行于無人之地也。攻而必取者，攻其所不守也。守而必固者，守其所不攻也。

故善攻者，敵不知其所守。善守者，敵不知其所攻。

微乎微乎，至于無形，神乎神乎，至于無聲，故能為敵之司命。

進而不可御者，沖其虛也；退而不可追者，速而不可及也。故我欲戰

，敵雖高壘深溝，不得不與我戰者，攻其所必救也；我不欲戰，雖畫地而守之，敵不得與我戰者，乖其所之也。

故形人而我無形，則我專而敵分；我專為一，敵分為十，是以十攻其一也，則我眾而敵寡；能以眾擊寡者，則吾之所與戰者，約矣。吾所與戰之地不可知，不可知，則敵所備者多，敵所備者多，則吾之所戰者，寡矣。

故備前則後寡，備後則前寡，故備左則右寡，備右則左寡，無所不備，則無所不寡。寡者備人者也，眾者使人備己者也。

故知戰之地，知戰之日，則可千里而會戰。不知戰之地，不知戰之日，則左不能救右，右不能救左，前不能救後，後不能救前，而況遠者數十里，近者數里乎？

以吾度之，越人之兵雖多，亦奚益于勝敗哉？！

故曰：勝可為也。敵雖眾，可使無鬥。

故策之而知得失之計，作之而知動靜之理，形之而知死生之地，角之而知有餘不足之處。

故形兵之極，至于無形；無形，則深間不能窺，智者不能謀。

因形而錯勝于眾，眾不能知；人皆知我所以勝之形，而莫知吾所以制勝之形。故其戰勝不復，而應形于無窮。

夫兵形象水，水之形避高而趨下，兵之形，避實而擊虛，水因地而制流，兵應敵而制勝。故兵無常勢，水無常形，能因敵變化而取勝者，謂之神。

故五行無常勝，四時無常位，日有短長，月有死生。

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07 《孫子兵法》軍爭篇第七

軍爭篇

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，將受命于君，合軍聚眾，交和而舍，莫難于軍爭。軍爭之難者，以迂為直，以患為利。故迂其途，而誘之以利，後人發，先人至，此知迂直之計者也。

故軍爭為利，軍爭為危。舉軍而爭利，則不及；委軍而爭利，則輜重捐。是故卷甲而趨，日夜不處，倍道兼行，百里而爭利，則擒三將軍，勁者先，疲者後，其法十一而至；五十里而爭利，則蹶上將軍，其法半至；三十里而爭利，則三分之二至。是故軍無輜重則亡，無糧食則亡，無委積則亡。

故不知諸侯之謀者，不能豫交；不知山林、險阻、沮澤之形者，不能行軍；不用鄉導者，不能得地利。

故兵以詐立，以利動，以分和為變者也。

故其疾如風，其徐如林，侵掠如火，不動如山，難知如陰，動如雷震

。

掠鄉分眾，廓地分守，懸權而動。

先知迂直之計者勝，此軍爭之法也。

軍政曰：「言不相聞，故為金鼓；視而不見，故為旌旗。」夫金鼓旌旗者，所以一人之耳目也；人既專一，則勇者不得獨進，怯者不得獨退，此用眾之法也。故夜戰多火鼓，晝戰多旌旗，所以變人之耳目也。

故三軍可奪氣，將軍可奪心。是故朝氣銳，晝氣惰，暮氣歸。故善用兵者，避其銳氣，擊其惰歸，此治氣者也。以治待亂，以靜待嘩，此治心者也。以近待遠，以佚待勞，以飽待飢，此治力者也。無邀正正之旗，無擊堂堂之陣，此治變者也。

故用兵之法，高陵勿向，背丘勿逆，佯北勿從，銳卒勿攻，餌兵勿食，歸師勿遏，圍師遺闕，窮寇勿迫，此用兵之法也。

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08 《孫子兵法》九變篇第八

九變篇

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，將受命于君，合軍聚眾，圯地無舍，衢地交和，絕地勿留，圍地則謀，死地則戰。

途有所不由，軍有所不擊，城有所不攻，地有所不爭，君命有所不受。

。

故將通于九變之利者，知用兵矣；將不通于九變之利，雖知地形，不能得地之利矣；治兵不知九變之術，雖知地利，不能得人之用矣。

是故智者之慮，必雜于利害。雜于利，而務可信也；雜于害，而患可解也。

是故屈諸侯者以害，役諸侯者以業，趨諸侯者以利。

故用兵之法，無恃其不來，恃吾有以待也；無恃其不攻，恃吾有所不可攻也。

故將有五危：必死，可殺也；必生，可虜也；忿速，可侮也；廉潔，可辱也；愛民，可煩也。凡此五者，將之過也，用兵之災也。覆軍殺將，必以五危，不可不察也。

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09 《孫子兵法》行軍篇第九

行軍篇

孫子曰：凡處軍、相敵，絕山依谷，視生處高，戰隆無登，此處山之

軍也。絕水必遠水；客絕水而來，勿迎之于水內，令半濟而擊之，利；欲戰者，無附于水而迎客；視生處高，無迎水流，此處水上之軍也。絕斥澤，惟亟去無留；若交軍于斥澤之中，必依水草，而背眾樹，此處斥澤之軍也。平陸處易，而右背高，前死後生，此處平陸之軍也。凡此四軍之利，黃帝之所以勝四帝也。

凡軍好高而惡下，貴陽而賤陰，養生而處實，軍無百疾，是謂必勝。丘陵堤防，必處其陽，而右背之。此兵之利，地之助也。

上雨，水沫至，欲涉者，待其定也。

凡地有絕澗、天井、天牢、天羅、天陷、天隙，必亟去之，勿近也。吾遠之，敵近之；吾迎之，敵背之。

軍旁有險阻、潢井、葭葦、林木、蘙薈者，必謹慎復索之，此伏奸之所處也。

敵近而靜者，恃其險也；遠而挑戰者，欲人之進也；其所居易者，利也。

眾樹動者，來也；眾草多障者，疑也；鳥起者，伏也；獸駭者，覆也；塵高而銳者，車來也；卑而廣者，徒來也；散而條達者，樵采也；少而往來者，營軍也。

辭卑而備者，進也；辭強而進驅者，退也；輕車先出其側者，陣也；無約而請和者，謀也；奔走而陳兵者，期也；半進半退者，誘也。

杖而立者，飢也；汲而先飲者，渴也；見利而不進者，勞也；鳥集者，虛也；夜呼者，恐也；軍擾者，將不重也；旌旗動者，亂也；吏怒者，倦也；粟馬肉食，軍無懸缶而不返其舍者，窮寇也；諄諄翁翁，徐與人言者，失眾也；數賞者，窘也；數罰者，困也；先暴而後畏其眾者，不精之至也；來委謝者，欲休息也。兵怒而相迎，久而不合，又不相去，必謹察之。

兵非貴益多也，惟無武進，足以并力、料敵、取人而已。夫惟無慮而易敵者，必擒于人。

卒未親附而罰之，則不服，不服則難用也。卒已親附而罰不行，則不可用也。故令之以文，齊之以武，是謂必取。令素行以教其民，則民服；令素不行以教其民，則民不服。令素行者，與眾相得也。

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孫子曰：地形有通者、有挂者、有支者、有隘者、有險者、有遠者。我可以往，彼可以來，曰通。通形者，先居高陽，利糧道，以戰則利。可以往，難以返，曰挂。挂形者，敵無備，出而勝之，敵若有備，出而不勝，則難以返，不利。我出而不利，彼出而不利，曰支。支形者，敵雖利我，我無出也，引而去之，令敵半出而擊之，利。隘形者，我先居之，必盈之以待敵。若敵先居之，盈而勿從，不盈而從之。險形者，我先居之，必居高陽以待敵；若敵先居之，引而去之，勿從

也。遠形者，勢均，難以挑戰，戰而不利。凡此六者，地之道也，將之至任，不可不察也。

故兵有走者、有馳者、有陷者、有崩者、有亂者、有北者。凡此六者，非天之災，將之過也。夫勢均，以一擊十，曰走。卒強吏弱，曰馳。吏強卒弱，曰陷。大吏怒而不服，遇敵懟而自戰，將不知其能，曰崩。將弱不嚴，教道不明，吏卒無常，陳兵縱橫，曰亂。將不能料敵，以少合眾，以弱擊強，兵無選鋒，曰北。凡此六者，敗之道也，將之至任，不可不察也。

夫地形者，兵之助也。料敵制勝，計險厄遠近，上將之道也。知此而用戰者必勝；不知此而用戰者必敗。

故戰道必勝，主曰無戰，必戰可也；戰道不勝，主曰必戰，無戰可也。故進不求名，退不避罪，惟人是保，而利合于主，國之寶也。

視卒如嬰兒，故可以與之赴深谿；視卒如愛子，故可與之俱死。厚而不能使，愛而不能令，亂而不能治，譬若驕子，不可用也。

知吾卒之可以擊，而不知敵之不可擊，勝之半也；知敵之可擊，而不知吾卒之不可以擊，勝之半也；知敵之可擊，知吾卒之可以擊，而不知地形之不可以戰，勝之半也。故知兵者，動而不迷，舉而不窮。故曰：知己知彼，勝乃不殆；知天知地，勝乃可全。

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11 《孫子兵法》九地篇第十一

九地篇

孫子曰：用兵之法，有散地，有輕地，有爭地，有交地，有衢地，有重地，有圯地，有圍地，有死地。諸侯自戰其地，為散地。入人之地不深者，為輕地。我得則利，彼得亦利者，為爭地。我可以往，彼可以來者，為交地。諸侯之地三屬，先至而得天下眾者，為衢地。入人之地深，背城邑多者，為重地。山林、險阻、沮澤，凡難行之道者，為圯地。所從由入者隘，所從歸者迂，彼寡可以擊我之眾者，為圍地。疾戰則存，不疾戰則亡者，為死地。是故散地則無戰，輕地則無止，爭地則無攻，衢地則合交，重地則掠，圯地則行，圍地則謀，死地則戰。

所謂古之善用兵者，能使敵人前後不相及，眾寡不相恃，貴賤不相救，上下不相收，卒離而不集，兵合而不齊。合于利而動，不合于利而止。敢問：“敵眾整而將來，待之若何？”曰：“先奪其所愛，則聽矣。”

兵之情主速，乘人之不及，由不虞之道，攻其所不戒也。

凡為客之道：深入則專，主人不克。掠于饒野，三軍足食。謹養而勿勞，并氣積力，運并計謀，為不可測。投之無所往，死且不北。死焉不得，士人盡力。兵士甚陷則不懼，無所往則固，深入則拘，不得已則鬥。是故其兵不修而戒，不求而得，不約而親，不令而信。禁祥去疑，至死無所之。吾士無餘財，非惡貨也；無餘命，非惡壽也。令發之日，士卒坐者涕沾襟，偃臥者淚交頤。投之無所往者，諸、劇之勇

也。

故善用兵者，譬如率然。率然者，常山之蛇也。擊其首則尾至，擊其尾則首至，擊其中則首尾俱至。敢問：“兵可使如率然乎？”曰：“可。”夫吳人與越人相惡也，當其同舟而濟，遇風，其相救也，如左右手。是故方馬埋輪，未足恃也。齊勇如一，政之道也，剛柔皆得，地之理也。故善用兵者，攜手若使一人，不得已也。

將軍之事：靜以幽，正以治。能愚士卒之耳目，使之無知。易其事，革其謀，使人無識。易其居，迂其途，使人不得慮。帥與之期，如登高而去其梯。帥與之深入諸侯之地，而發其機，焚舟破釜，若驅群羊。驅而往，驅而來，莫知所之。聚三軍之眾，投之于險，此謂將軍之事也。九地之變，屈伸之力，人情之理，不可不察也。

凡為客之道：深則專，淺則散。去國越境而師者，絕地也；四達者，衢地也；入深者，重地也；入淺者，輕地也；背固前隘者，圍地也；無所往者，死地也。

是故散地，吾將一其志；輕地，吾將使之屬；爭地，吾將趨其後；交地，吾將謹其守；衢地，吾將固其結；重地，吾將繼其食；圯地，吾將進其途；圍地，吾將塞其闕；死地，吾將示之以不活。

故兵之情：圍則御，不得已則鬥，過則從。

是故不知諸侯之謀者，不能預交。不知山林、險阻、沮澤之形者，不能行軍。不用鄉導，不能得地利。四五者，不知一，非霸、王之兵也。夫霸、王之兵，伐大國，則其眾不得聚；威加于敵，則其交不得合。是故不爭天下之交，不養天下之權，信己之私，威加于敵，則其城可拔，其國可隳。施無法之賞，懸無政之令，犯三軍之眾，若使一人。犯之以事，勿告以言。犯之以利，勿告以害。

投之亡地然後存，陷之死地然後生。夫眾陷于害，然後能為勝敗。

故為兵之事，在于佯順敵之意，并敵一向，千里殺將，是謂巧能成事者也。

是故攻舉之日，夷關折符，無通其使；勵于廊廟之上，以誅其事。敵人開闔，必亟入之，先其所愛，微與之期。踐墨隨敵，以決戰事。是故始如處女，敵人開戶，後如脫兔，敵不及拒。

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孫子曰：凡火攻有五：一曰火人，二曰火積，三曰火輜，四曰火庫，五曰火隊。行火必有因，煙火必素具。發火有時，起火有日。時者，天之燥也。日者，月在箕、壁、翼、軫也。凡此四宿者，風起之日也。

凡火攻，必因五火之變而應之。火發于內，則早應之于外。火發而其兵靜者，待而勿攻。極其火力，可從而從之，不可從而止。火可發于外，無待于內，以時發之。火發上風，無攻下風。晝風久，夜風止。

凡軍必知有五火之變，以數守之。

故以火佐攻者明，以水佐攻者強。水可以絕，不可以奪。

夫戰勝攻取，而不修其功者凶，命曰“費留”。故曰：明主慮之，良將修之。非利不動，非得不用，非危不戰。主不可以怒而興師，將不可以愠而致戰。合于利而動，不合于利而止。怒可以復喜，愠可以復悅，亡國不可以復存，死者不可以復生。故明君慎之，良將警之。此安國全軍之道也。

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13 《孫子兵法》用間篇第十三

用間篇

孫子曰：凡興師十萬，出征千里，百姓之費，公家之奉，日費千金。內外騷動，怠于道路，不得操事者，七十萬家。相守數年，以爭一日之勝，而愛爵祿百金，不知敵之情者，不仁之至也。非人之將也，非主之佐也，非勝之主也。故明君賢將，所以動而勝人，成功出于眾者，先知也。先知者，不可取于鬼神，不可象于事，不可驗于度。必取于人，知敵之情者也。

故用間有五：有因間，有內間，有反間，有死間，有生間。五間俱起，莫知其道，是謂神紀，人君之寶也。因間者，因其鄉人而用之。內間者，因其官人而用之。反間者，因其敵間而用之。死間者，為誑事于外，令吾聞知之，而傳于敵間也。生間者，反報也。

故三軍之事，莫親于間，賞莫厚于間，事莫密于間。非聖智不能用間，非仁義不能使間，非微妙不能得間之實。微哉！微哉！無所不用間也。間事未發，而先聞者，間與所告者兼死。

凡軍之所欲擊，城之所欲攻，人之所欲殺，必先知其守將、左右、謁者、門者、舍人之姓名，令吾間必索知之。

必索敵人之間來間我者，因而利之，導而舍之，故反間可得而用也。因是而知之，故鄉間、內間可得而使也；因是而知之，故死間為誑事可使告敵；因是而知之，故生間可使如期。五間之事，君必知之，知之必在于反間，故反間不可不厚也。

昔殷之興也，伊摯在夏；周之興也，呂牙在殷。故惟明君賢將能以上智為間者，必成大功。此兵之要，三軍之所恃而動也。

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End

《孫子兵法》〔春秋孫武撰〕一書，正如許多其它中國典籍那樣，向來有諸多大同小異的版本流傳于世。此處所刊電子版則基本上取自于中國人民解放軍軍事理論家郭化若所著《孫子譯注》〔上海古籍出版社一九八四年版〕中的校勘本。郭本實際上主要參照了《十家注孫子》、《武經·孫子》以及山東臨沂銀雀山漢墓出土的《孫子兵法》竹簡，勘訂而成。我們這裡只是在原來加州張家杰所輸入的《孫子兵法》的基礎上，參照郭本加以編輯修訂，收入正在進行中的電子中文文庫。

(凡國標碼表中無對應的少數漢字，均以“□”符號代之 fixed by Ed.)。原張家杰所擬序言亦收在下面供參考。

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《孫子兵法》序言

序言

《孫子兵法》成書于春秋戰國時代，為中國歷史上最杰出的兵書。至今雖已歷經兩千餘年，但因其內容博大精深，理論高度概括，實踐層出不窮，在現今社會中的每一各層次，從人際關係到國際戰略，它仍有極大的參考價值。其“無為而戰、不戰而勝”的中心思想，仍不失為一值得借鑒的指導原則。

此文本取自語農編著的《孫子兵法》（國家出版社）。

In reading The Art of War, commentaries are very useful in understanding the original scripture. The English version translated by Thomas Cleary is an excellent one with commentaries by Cao Cao, Meng Shi, Jia Lin, Li Quan, Du You, Du Mu, Zhang Yu, Mei Yaochen, Wang Xi, Chen Hao, and Ho Yanxi. Interested readers might want to read this English version.

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