

# SUN TZU's The art of **WAR**

The Oldest Military  
Treatise in the World

Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles, M.A.

This eBook was Published by

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## **Introduction**

The Art of War is a Chinese military treatise that was written during the 6th century BC by Sun Tzu. Composed of thirteen chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of warfare, it has long been praised as the definitive work on military strategies and tactics of its time.

The Art of War is one of the oldest and most successful books on military strategy in the world. It has had a huge influence on Eastern military thinking, business tactics, and beyond. Sun Tzu recognized the importance of positioning in strategy and that position is affected both by objective conditions in the physical environment and the subjective opinions of competitive actors in that environment. He taught that strategy was not planning in the sense of working through a to-do list, but rather that it requires quick and appropriate responses to changing conditions. Planning works in a controlled environment, but in a competitive environment, competing plans collide, creating unexpected situations.

The book was first translated into the French language in 1782 by French Jesuit Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, and into English by sinologist Lionel Giles in 1910, which is the copy you have before you. Giles' translation is considered the standard reference work.

The book very likely influenced Napoleon, and more recently, the planning of Operation Desert Storm. Leaders as diverse as Mao Zedong, General Vo Nguyen Giap, Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini, and General Douglas MacArthur have claimed to have drawn inspiration from the work.

## 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.

II. 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 way:

13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law? [harmony with his subjects]
- (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 heeding 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

I. 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.

II. 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.

I2. When their substance is drained away, the  
peasantry

will be afflicted by heavy exactions [unjust  
demands; extortion].

I3,I4. 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 [133 1/3 pounds; about 60 kg] 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.

I7. 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.

I8. This is called, using the conquered foe to  
augment  
one's own strength.

I9. 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

I. 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.

II. 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. (I) 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.

II. 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

I. 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 no 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 done by maneuvers direct and indirect.
4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg - this is done 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 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.

II. 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.

I3. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

I4. Therefore, the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

I5. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

I6. 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.

I7. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

I8. 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 done 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 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.

II. 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.

I2. 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.

I3. By discovering the enemy's dispositions and remaining invisible ourselves, we can keep our forces concentrated, while the enemy's must be divided.

I4. 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.

I5. 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 vanguard; 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  
vanguard unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to  
support the vanguard.

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 estimates, 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

I. 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.
- II. 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,[concealment] 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, is 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

I. 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.

II. 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.

I2. 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 [care] for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

I3. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war.

I4. 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

I. 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.

II. 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 ambuscade. 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  
unless.

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

I. 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.

II. 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.

## XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

I. 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.

II. 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 alert 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 ignorant 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

I. 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.

II. 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

I. 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.

II. 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.

I3. Surviving spies, finally, are those who bring  
back news from the enemy's camp.

I4. 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.

I5. Spies cannot be usefully employed without a  
certain  
intuitive sagacity.

I6. They cannot be properly managed without  
benevolence  
and straightforwardness.

I7. Without subtle ingenuity of mind, one cannot  
make  
certain of the truth of their reports.

I8. 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.