

The
Art of War
by
Sun Tzu

The Strategic Advantage of Natural Intelligence

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Foreword

Sun Wu, generally known as Sun Zi (Tzu) to readers, was a great strategist in China's history. Sun Zi lived in a time (722-481 B.C.) during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, which is referred to as the Spring-Autumn Period. During his lifetime there was great turbulence. At the time of the establishment of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty there were many wars among sovereign states. The sovereignty of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty was limited and it was unable to prevent other states from waging war and annexing each other's territories. Finally, during the later part of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the disparate sovereigns merged to form six states, namely the Chu, Qi, Qin, Jin, Wu and Yue. In 403 BC the State of Jin was divided into three new states, the Han, Zhao and Wei. Beginning with this event there dawned a famous period in Chinese history the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Seven big powers emerged: the Qin, Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao and Wei. Therefore, Sun Zi lived in a time of frequent warfare, a period ripe for the making of great strategists. He was born into a clan of the State of Qi whose ancestors were officials well-versed in military affairs. When Sun Zi was introduced to King Helu of the State of Wu he presented his works on military strategy and tactics in thirteen chapters. Later, he assisted the State of Wu in conducting wars against the states of Chu and Yue. Consequently, the State of Wu became a large and strong power for an extended period. Some believe that Sun Zi was history's first real strategist, and that his essays on the art of war were the concentrated essence of wisdom on conducting warfare. Since the value of the Art of War extends beyond the study of battles, people regard it as an important part of Chinese culture. The wisdom of its text was highly acclaimed by the people. It was thought that a major achievement of The Art of War was in the scientific attitude adopted by Sun Zi in summarizing battle strategies developed by his forerunners. Sun Zi stated that information on the enemy's situation could not be obtained by observing changes in heaven, nor by observing similar events which took place in the past, instead, he said, victory be won by using strategies tailored to specific circumstances. This is the foundation on which thoughts on the art of war were developed. Another point that merits our attention is the high level Sun Zi placed in victory. As he said, "Victory should be won before battle starts." For this reason, he thought that the best policy was to first attack the enemy's strategy rather than defeat the enemy's troops. He

expressed his ideas by simply stating that the enemy to be defeated was in fact the doomed loser. Sun Zi's accomplishments are also attributed to his morale principle that generals should not care much about acquiring fame when they made advances and that they should not avoid incurring penalty when they retreated provided that their actions benefit the state. This, he said, applied even if they did not become famous for their bravery or for their resourcefulness. These ideas made Sun Zi a strategist who in his own way was as great as the philosopher Confucius. Sun Zi's thoughts on the art of war, though originating in battle, have not and will not be limited to war. His ideas can also be applied in dealing with various areas outside the battlefield. A saying widely accepted by the Chinese people says that "knowing the enemy and knowing yourself, you can fight a hundred battles and win them all." Of course, the use of the art of war is not exhaustible and much remains to be done in order to make it more accessible to ordinary people. Since the day of its inception, The Art of War, which in effect is the crystallization of China's military thought, has been analyzed, studied, applied and annotated by outstanding leaders and strategists.

THE ART OF WAR

CHAPTER 1 Estimates

War is a matter of vital importance to the state; a matter of life or death, the road either to survival or to ruin. Hence, it is imperative that it be studied thoroughly. Therefore, appraise it in terms of the five fundamental factors and make comparisons of the various conditions of the antagonistic sides in order to ascertain the results of a war. The first of these factors is politics; the second, weather; the third, terrain; the fourth, the commander; and the fifth, doctrine. Politics means the thing which causes the people to be in harmony with their ruler so that they will follow him in disregard of their lives and without fear of any danger. Weather signifies night and day, cold and heat, fine days and rain, and change of seasons. Terrain means distances, and refers to whether the ground is traversed with ease or difficulty and to whether it is open or constricted, and influences your chances of life or death. The commander stands for the general's qualities of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and strictness. Doctrine is

to be understood as the organization of the army, the gradations of rank among the officers, the regulation of supply routes, and the provision of military materials to the army.

These five fundamental factors are familiar to every general. Those who master them win those who do not are defeated. Therefore, in laying plans, compare the following seven elements, appraising them with the utmost care.

1. Which ruler is wise and more able?
2. Which commander is more talented?
3. Which army obtains the advantages of nature and the terrain?
4. In which army are regulations and instructions better carried out?
5. Which troops are stronger?
6. Which army has the better-trained officers and men?
7. Which army administers rewards and punishments in a more enlightened and correct way? By means of these seven elements, I shall be able to forecast which side will be victorious and which will be defeated.

The general who heeds my counsel is sure to win. Such a general should be retained in command. One who ignores my counsel is certain to be defeated. Such a one should be dismissed.

Having paid attention to my counsel and plans, the general must create a situation which will contribute to their accomplishment. By 'situation' I mean he should take the field situation into consideration and act in accordance with what is advantageous.

All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable of attacking, feign incapacity; when active in moving troops, feign inactivity. When near the enemy, make it seem that you are far away; when far away, make it seem that you are near. Hold out baits to lure the enemy. Strike the enemy when he is in disorder. Prepare against the enemy when he is secure at all points. Avoid the enemy for the time being when he is stronger. If your opponent is of choleric temper, try to irritate him. If he is arrogant, try to encourage his egotism. If the enemy troops are well prepared after reorganization, try to wear them down. If they are united, try to sow dissension among them. Attack the enemy where he is unprepared. and appear where you are not expected. These are the keys to victory for a strategist. It is not possible to formulate them in detail beforehand.

Now, if the estimates made before a battle indicate victory, it is because careful calculations show that your conditions are more favorable than those of your

enemy; if they indicate defeat, it is because careful calculations show that favorable conditions for a battle are fewer. With more careful calculations, one can win; with less, one cannot. How much less chance of victory has one who makes no calculations at all! By this means, one can foresee the outcome of a battle.

CHAPTER 2 Waging War

in operations of war when one thousand fast four-horse chariots, one thousand heavy chariots, and one thousand mail-clad soldiers are required; when provisions are transported for a thousand li; when there are expenditures at home and at the front, and stipends for entertainment of envoys and advisers the cost of materials such as glue and lacquer, and of chariots and armor, will amount to one thousand pieces of gold a day. One hundred thousand troops may be dispatched only when this money is in hand.

A speedy victory is the main object in war. If this is long in coming, weapons are blunted and morale depressed. If troops are attacking cities, their strength will be exhausted. When the enemy engages in protracted campaigns, the resources of the state will fall short. When your weapons are dulled and ardor dampened, your strength exhausted and treasure spent, the chieftains of the neighboring states will take advantage of your crisis to act. In that case, no man, however wise will be able to avert the disastrous consequences that ensue. Thus, while we have heard of stupid haste in war, we have not yet seen a clever operation that was prolonged. For there has never been a protracted war which benefited a country. Therefore, those unable to understand the evils inherent in employing troops are equally unable to understand the advantageous ways of doing so.

Those adept in waging war do not require a second levy of conscripts or more than two provisioning. They carry military equipment from, the homeland, but rely on the enemy for provisions. Thus, the army is plentifully provided with food. When a country is impoverished by military operations, it is due to distant transportation; carrying supplies for great distances renders the people destitute. Where troops are gathered, prices go up. When prices rise, the wealth of the people is drained away. When wealth is drained away, the people will be afflicted with urgent and heavy exaction's. With this loss of wealth and exhaustion of strength the households in the country will be extremely poor and seven-tenths of their wealth dissipated. As to government expenditures, those due to broken down chariots, worn-out horses,

armor and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draft oxen, and wagons will amount to 60 percent total.

Hence, a wise general sees to it that his troops feed on the enemy, for one zhong of the enemy provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own and one shi of the enemy's fodder to twenty shi of one's own.

In order to make the soldiers courageous in overcoming the enemy, they must be roused to anger. In order to capture more booty from the enemy, soldiers must have their rewards.

Therefore, in chariot fighting when more than ten chariots are captured, reward those who take the first. Replace the enemy's flags and banners with your own, mix the captured chariots with yours, and mount them. Treat the prisoners of war well, and care for them. This is called 'winning a battle and becoming stronger'. Hence, what is valued in war is victory, not prolonged operations. And the general who understands how to employ troops is the minister of the people's fate and arbiter of the nation's destiny.

CHAPTER 3

Offensive Strategy

Generally war the best policy is to take a state intact, to ruin it is inferior to this. To capture the enemy's entire army is better than to destroy it; to take intact a regiment, a company, or a squad is better than to destroy them. Regiment, company, and squad are lu, zu, and wu in Chinese. In ancient China, five hundred soldiers made up a lu, one hundred a zu, and five a wu. For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence.

Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy. Next best is to disrupt his alliances by diplomacy. The next best is to attack his army. And the worst policy is to attack cities. Attack cities only when there is no alternative because to prepare big shields and wagons and make ready the necessary arms and equipment require at least three months, and to pile up earthen ramps against the walls requires an additional three months. The general, unable to control his impatience, will order his troops to swarm tip the wall like ants, with the result that one-third of them will be killed without taking the city. Such is the calamity of attacking cities.

Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. They capture the enemy's cities without assaulting them and overthrow his state without protracted operations. Their aim is to take all under heaven intact by strategic considerations. Thus, their troops are not worn out and their gains will be complete. This is the art of offensive strategy. Consequently, the art of using troops is this: When ten to the enemy's one, surround him. When five times his strength, attack him. If double his strength, divide him. If equally matched, you may engage him with some good plan. If weaker numerically, be capable of withdrawing. And if in all respects unequal, be capable of eluding him, for a small force is but booty for one more powerful if it fights recklessly.

Now, the general is the assistant to the sovereign of the state. If this assistance is all embracing, the state will surely be strong; if defective, the state will certainly be weak. Now, there are three ways in which a sovereign can bring misfortune upon his army:

1. When ignorant that the army should not advance, to order an advance; or when ignorant that it should not retire, to order a retirement. This is described as 'hobbling the army'.

2. When ignorant of military affairs, to interfere in their administration. This causes the officers to be perplexed.

3. When ignorant of command problems, to interfere with the direction of fighting. This engenders doubts in the minds of the officers. If the army is confused and suspicious, neighboring rulers will take advantage of this and cause trouble. This is what is meant by: 'A confused army leads to another's victory'. Thus, there are five points in which victory may be predicted:

1. He who knows, when he can fight and when he cannot will be victorious.

2. He who understands how-to fight in accordance with the strength of antagonistic forces

will be victorious.

3. He whose ranks are united in purpose will be victorious.

4. He who is well prepared and lies in wait for an enemy who is not well prepared will be

victorious.

5. He whose generals are able and not interfered with by the sovereign will be victorious. It is in these five matters that the way to victory is known. Therefore, I

say: Know the enemy and know yourself, in a hundred battles, you will never be defeated. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are sure to be defeated in every battle.

CHAPTER 4 Dispositions

The skillful warriors in ancient times first made themselves invincible and then awaited the enemy's moment of vulnerability. Invincibility depends on oneself, but the enemy's vulnerability on himself. It follows that those skilled in war can make themselves invincible but cannot cause an enemy to be certainly vulnerable. Therefore, it can be said that, one may know how to win, but cannot necessarily do so.

Defend yourself when you cannot defeat the enemy, and attack the enemy when you can. One defends when his strength is inadequate; he attacks when it is abundant. Those who are skilled in defense hide themselves as under the nine fold earth; (in ancient China, the number nine was used to signify the highest number). Those in attack flash forth as from above the nine fold heavens. Thus, they are capable both of protecting themselves and of gaining a complete victory. To foresee a victory which the ordinary man can foresee is not the acme of excellence. Neither is it if you triumph in battle and are universally acclaimed 'expert, for to lift an autumn down requires no great strength, to distinguish between the sun and moon is no rest of vision, to hear the thunderclap is no indication of acute hearing. In ancient times, those called skilled in war conquered an enemy easily conquered. And, therefore, the victories won by a master of war gain him neither reputation for wisdom nor merit for courage. For he wins his victories without erring. Without erring he establishes the certainty of his victory; he conquers an enemy already defeated. Therefore, the skillful commander takes up a position in which he cannot be defeated and misses no opportunity to overcome his enemy. Thus, a victorious army always seeks battle after his plans indicate that victory is possible under them, whereas an army destined to defeat fights in the hope of winning but without any planning. Those skilled in war cultivate their policies and strictly adhere to the laws and regulations. Thus, it is in their power to control success.

Now, the elements of the art of war are first, the measurement of space; second, the estimation of quantities; third, calculations; fourth, comparisons; and fifth,

chances of victory. Measurements of space are derived from the ground. Quantities derive from measurement, figures from quantities, comparisons from figures, and victory from comparisons. Thus, a victorious army is as one yi (an ancient Chinese weight, approximately equivalent to 24 ounces) balanced against a grain, and a defeated army is as a grain balanced against one yi. It is because of disposition that a victorious general is able to make his soldiers fight with the effect of pent-up waters which, suddenly released, plunge into a bottomless abyss.

CHAPTER 5 Posture of army

Generally management of a large force is the same as management of a few men. It is a matter of organization. And to direct a large force is the same as to direct a few men. This is a matter of formations and signals. That the army is certain to sustain the enemy's attack without suffering defeat is due to operations of the extraordinary and the normal forces. Troops thrown against the enemy as a grindstone against eggs is an example of a solid acting upon a void.

Generally, in battle, use the normal force to engage and use the extraordinary to win. Now, the resources of those skilled in the use of extraordinary forces are all infinite as the heavens and earth, as inexhaustible as the flow of the great rivers, for they end and recommence - cyclical, as are the movements of the sun and moon. They die away and are reborn - recurrent, as are the passing seasons.

The musical notes are only five in number, but their combination gives rise to so numerous melodies that one cannot hear them all. The primary colors are only five in number, but their combinations are so infinite that one cannot visualize them all. The flavors are only five in number, but their blends are so various that one cannot taste them all. In battle, there are only the normal and extraordinary forces, but their combinations are limitless; none can comprehend them all. For these two forces are mutually reproductive. It is like moving in an endless circle. Who can exhaust the possibility of their combination? When torrential water tosses boulders, it is because of its momentum; when the strike of a hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing. Thus, the momentum of one skilled in war is overwhelming, and his attack precisely timed. His potential is that of a fully drawn crossbow; his timing, that of the release of the trigger.

In the tumult and uproar, the battle seems chaotic, but there must be no disorder

in one's own troops. The battlefield may seem in confusion and chaos, but one's array must be in good order, That will be proof against defeat. Apparent confusion is a product of good order; apparent cowardice, of courage; apparent weakness, of strength. Order or disorder depends on organization and direction; courage or cowardice on circumstances; strength or weakness on tactical dispositions. Thus, one who is skilled at making the enemy move does so by creating a situation, according to which the enemy will act. He entices the enemy with something he is certain to want. He keeps the enemy on the move by holding out bait and then attacks him with picked troops.

Therefore, a skilled commander seeks victory from the situation and does not demand it of his subordinates. He selects suitable men and exploits the situation. He who utilizes the situation uses his men in fighting as one rolls logs or stones. Now, the nature of logs and stones is that on stable ground they are static-, on a slope, they move. If square, they stop; if round, they roll. Thus, the energy of troops skillfully commanded in battle may be compared to the momentum of round boulders which roll down from a mountain thousands of feet in height.

CHAPTER 6

Void and Actuality

Generally he who occupies the field of battle first and awaits his enemy is at ease, and he who comes later to the scene and rushes into the fight is weary. And, therefore, those skilled in war bring the enemy to the field of battle and are not brought there by him. One able to make the enemy come of his own accord does so by offering him some advantage. And one

able to stop him from coming does so by preventing him. Thus, when the enemy is at ease be able to tire him, when well fed to starve him, when at rest to make him move. Appear at places which he is unable to rescue; move swiftly in a direction where you are least expected.

That you may march a thousand li without tiring yourself is because you travel where there is no enemy. To be certain to take what you attack is to attack a place the enemy does not or cannot protect. To be certain to hold what you defend is to defend a place the enemy dares not or is not able to attack. Therefore, against those skilled in attack, the enemy does not know where to defend, and against the experts in defense, the enemy does not know where to attack. How subtle and insubstantial, that the expert leaves no trace.

How divinely mysterious, that he is inaudible. Thus, he is master of his enemy's fate. His offensive will be irresistible if he makes for his enemy's weak positions; he cannot be overtaken when he withdraws if he moves swiftly. When I wish to give battle, my enemy, even though protected by high walls and deep moats, cannot help but engage me, for I attack a position he must relieve. When I wish to avoid battle, I may defend myself simply by drawing a line on the ground- the enemy will be unable to attack me because I divert him from going where he wishes. If I am able to determine the enemy's dispositions while, at the same time, I conceal my own, then I can concentrate my forces and his must be divided. And if I concentrate while he divides, I can use my entire strength to attack a fraction of his. Therefore, I will be numerically superior. Then, if I am able to use many to strike few at the selected point, those I deal with will fall into hopeless straits. The enemy must not know where I intend to give battle. For if he does not know where I intend to give battle, he must prepare in a great many places. And when he prepares in a great many places, those I have to fight will be few. For if he prepares to the front, his rear will be weak, and if to the rear, his front will be fragile. If he strengthens his left, his right will be vulnerable, and if his right, there will be few troops on his left. And when he sends troops everywhere, he will be weak everywhere. Numerical weakness comes from having to guard against possible attacks; numerical strength from forcing the enemy to make these preparations against us.

If one knows where and when a battle will be fought, his troops can march a thousand li and meet on the field. But if one knows neither the battleground nor the day of battle, the left will be unable to aid the right and the right will be unable to aid the left, and the van will be unable to support the rear and the rear, the van. How much more is this so when separated by several tens of li or, indeed, by even a few! Although I estimate the troops of Yüe as many, of what benefit is this superiority with respect to the outcome of war? Thus, I say that victory can be achieved. For even if the enemy is numerically stronger, I can prevent him from engaging.

Therefore, analyze the enemy's plans so that you will know his shortcomings as well as strong points. Agitate him in order to ascertain the pattern of his movement. Lure him out to reveal his dispositions and ascertain his position. Launch a probing attack in order to learn where his strength is abundant and where deficient. The ultimate in disposing one's troops is to conceal them without ascertainable shape. Then the most penetrating spies cannot pry nor can the

wise lay plans against you. It is according to the situations that plans are laid for victory, but the multitude does not comprehend this. Although everyone can see the outward aspects, none understands how the victory is achieved. Therefore, when a victory is won, one's tactics are not repeated. One should always respond to circumstances in an infinite variety of ways.

Now, an army may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an arm, should avoid strength and strike weakness. And as water shapes its flow in accordance with the ground, so an army manages its victory, in accordance with the situation of the enemy. And as water has no constant form, there are in warfare no constant conditions. Thus, one able to win the victory, by modifying his tactics in accordance with the enemy situation may be said to be divine. Of the five elements (water, fire, metal, wood and earth), none is always predominant; of the four seasons, none lasts forever; of the days, some are long and some short, and the moon waxes and wanes. That is also the law of employing troops.

CHAPTER 7 Maneuvering

Normally, in war the general receives his commands from the sovereign. During the process from assembling the troops and mobilizing the people to blending the army into a harmonious entity and encamping it, nothing is more difficult than the art of maneuvering for advantageous positions. What is difficult about it is to make the devious route the most direct and to turn disadvantage to advantage. Thus, march by an indirect route and divert the enemy by enticing him with a bait. So doing, you may set out after he does and arrive at the battlefield before him. One able to do this shows the knowledge of the artifice of diversion.

Therefore, both advantage and danger are inherent in maneuvering for an advantageous position. One who sets the entire army in motion with impediments to pursue an advantageous position will not attain it. If he abandons the camp and all the impediments to contend for advantage the stores will be lost. Thus, if one orders, his men to make forced marches without armor, stepping neither day nor night, covering double the usual distance at a stretch, and doing a hundred li to wrest an advantage, it is probable that the commanders will be captured. The stronger men will arrive first and the feeble ones will struggle along behind; so, if this method is used, only one-tenth of the army will reach its destination. In a forced march of fifty li, the commander of the van will probably fall, but half the army will

arrive. In a forced march of thirty li, just two-thirds will arrive. It follows that an army which lacks heavy equipment, fodder, food and stores will be lost. One who is not acquainted with the designs of his neighbors should not enter into alliances with them. Those who do not know the conditions of mountains and forests, hazardous defiles, marshes and swamps, cannot conduct the march of an army. Those who do not use local guides are unable to obtain the advantages of the ground. Now, war is based on deception. Move when it is advantageous and create changes in the situation by dispersal and concentration of forces. When campaigning, be swift as the wind; in leisurely marching, majestic as the forest; in raiding and plundering, be fierce as fire; in standing, firm as the mountains. When hiding, be as unfathomable as things behind the clouds; when moving, fall like a thunderbolt. When you plunder the countryside, divide your forces. When you conquer territory, defend strategic points. Weigh the situation before you move. He who knows the artifice of diversion will be victorious. Such is the art of maneuvering.

The book of military Administration says- As the voice cannot be heard in battle, drums and gongs are used. As troops cannot see each other clearly in battle, flags and banners are used.' Now, gongs and drums, banners and flags are used to unify the action of the troops. When the troops can be thus united, the brave cannot advance alone, nor can the cowardly withdraw. This is the art of directing large masses of troops. In night fighting, use many torches and drums, in day fighting, many banner, and flags, in order to guide the sight and hearing of our troops.

Now, an army may be robbed of its spirit and its commander deprived of his confidence. At the beginning of a campaign, the spirits of soldiers are keen; after a certain period time, they flag, and in the later stage thoughts turn towards home. And therefore, those skilled in war avoid the enemy when his spirit is keen and attack him when it is sluggish and his soldiers homesick. This is control of the moral factor. In good order, they await a disorderly enemy; in serenity, a clamorous one. This is control of the mental factor. Close to the field of battle, they await an enemy coming from afar- at rest, they await an exhausted enemy; with well-fed troops, they await hungry ones. This is control of the physical factor. They do not engage an enemy advancing with well-ordered banners nor one whose formations are in impressive array. This is control of the factor of changing circumstances.

Therefore, the art of employing troops is that when the enemy occupies high ground, do not Yi confront him uphill, and when his back is resting on hills, do not make a frontal attack. When he pretends to flee, do not pursue. Do not attack troops whose spirits are keen. Do not swallow bait. Do not thwart an enemy who is returning homewards.

Leave a way of escape to a surrounded enemy, and do not press a desperate enemy too hard. Such is the art of employing troops.

CHAPTER 8

The Nine Variables

In general, the system of employing troops is that the commander receives his mandate from the sovereign to mobilize the people and assemble the army.

You should not encamp on grounds hard to approach. Unite with your allies on grounds intersected with highways. Do not linger on desolate ground. In enclosed ground, resort to stratagem. In death ground, fight a last-ditch battle. There are some roads which must not be followed, some troops which must not be attacked, some cities which must not be assaulted, and some ground which should not be contested. There are also occasions when the commands of the sovereign need not be obeyed. Therefore, a general thoroughly versed in the advantages of the nine variable factors knows how to employ troops. One who does not understand their advantages will not be able to use the terrain to his advantage even though he is well acquainted with it. in the direction of military operations, one who does not understand the tactics suitable to the nine variable situations will be unable to use troops effectively, even if he understands the 'five advantages' (referring to the five situations mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph). And for this reason, a wise general in his deliberations must consider both favorable and unfavorable factors,. By taking into account the favorable factors, he makes his plan feasible; by taking into account the unfavorable, he may avoid possible disasters.

He who wants to subdue dukes in neighboring states does so by inflicting injury upon them. He who wants to control them does so by keeping them constantly occupied, and he who makes them rush about does so by offering them ostensible advantages.

It is a doctrine of war not to assume the enemy will not come but rather to rely on one's readiness to meet him, and not to presume that he will not attack but rather to make oneself invincible.

There are five qualities which are fatal in the character of a general: if reckless, he can be killed; if cowardly, captured; if quick-tempered, he can be provoked to rage and make a fool of himself, if he has too delicate a sense of honor, he can be easily insulted- if he is of a compassionate nature, you can harass him.

Now these five traits of character are serious faults in a general and in military operations are calamitous. The ruin of the army and the death of the general are inevitable results of these shortcomings.

CHAPTER 9

On the March

When an army takes up a position and confronts the enemy, it has to observe and judge the enemy situation. In doing so, it should pay attention to the following:

When crossing the mountains, be sure to stay close to valleys-, when encamping, select high ground facing the sunny side; when high ground is occupied by the enemy, do not ascend to attack. So much for taking a position in mountains.

After crossing a river, you must move some distance away from it. When an advancing enemy crosses water, do not meet him in midstream. It is advantageous to allow half his force to cross and then strike. If you wish to give battle, do not confront your enemy near the water. Take a position on high ground facing the sun. Do not take a position at the lower reaches of the enemy. This relates to positions near a river.

Cross salt marshes speedily. Do not linger in them. If you encounter the enemy in the middle of a salt marsh, you must take a position close to grass and water with trees to your rear. This has to do with taking up a position in salt marshes. is it On level ground, occupy a position which facilitates your action. With heights to your rear and right, the field of battle is to the front and the rear is safe. This is how to take up a position on level ground.

Generally, these are advantageous principles for encamping in the four situations named. By using them, the Yellow Emperor conquered his four neighboring sovereigns. (Legend has it that the Yellow Emperor was the most ancient emperor in China; he reigned about five thousand years ago.)

in battle, all armies prefer high ground to low, an sunny to shady.

If an army occupies high ground, which is convenient for living, it will not suffer from countless diseases, and this will spell victory. When you come to hills, dikes, or embankments, you must take a position on the sunny side. These are all advantageous methods, gained from the help the ground afford. When rain falls in the upper reaches of a river and foaming water descends, those who wish to ford must wait until the waters subside. Where there are precipitous torrents such as 'heavenly wells', 'heavenly prisons', 'heavenly nets', 'heavenly traps' and 'heavenly cracks'-you must match speedily away from them. Do not approach them, Keep a distance from them and draw the enemy towards them. Face them and cause the enemy to put his back to them. When, on the flanks of the army, there are dangerous defiles or ponds covered with aquatic grasses where reeds and rushes grow, or forested mountains with dense tangled undergrowth, you must carefully search them out, for these are places where ambushes are laid and spies are hidden.

When the enemy is nearby but remains calm, he is depending on a favorable position. When he challenges battle from afar, he wishes to lure you to advance; when he is on easy ground, he must be in an advantageous position. When the trees are seen to move, it means the enemy is advancing. When many screens have been placed in the undergrowth, it is for the purpose of deception. Birds rising in flight are a sign that the enemy is lying in ambush-, when the wild animals are startled and flee, the enemy is trying to take you unawares.

Dust spurting upwards in high straight columns indicates the approach of chariots. When it hangs low and is widespread, it betokens that infantry is approaching.

When dust rises in scattered areas, the enemy is collecting and bringing in firewood; when there are numerous small patches which seem to come and go, he is encamping the army. When the enemy's envoys speak in humble terms, but the army continues preparations, that means it will advance. When their language is strong and the enemy pretentiously advances, these may be signs that the enemy will retreat. When light chariots first go out and take position on the flanks, the enemy is forming. When without a previous understanding the enemy asks for a truce, he

must be plotting. When his troops march speedily and he parades his battle chariots, he is expecting to rendezvous with reinforcements. When half his force advances and half withdraws, he is attempting to decoy you. When his troops lean on their weapons, they are famished. When drawers of water drink before carrying it

to camp, his troops are suffering from thirst. When the enemy sees an advantage but does not advance to seize it, he is fatigued. When birds gather above the enemies camp sites, they are unoccupied. When at night the enemy's camp is clamorous, it betokens nervousness. When his troops are disorderly, the general has no prestige. When his flags and banner-, are shifted about constantly, he is in disarray. If the officers are short-tempered, they are exhausted. When the enemy feeds grain to the horses and kills its cattle for food, and when his troops neither hang up their cooking pots nor return to their shelters, the enemy is desperate. When the troops continually gather in small groups and whisper together, the general has lost the confidence of the army. Too frequent rewards indicate that the general is at the end of his resources; too frequent punishments that he is in acute distress. If the officers at first treat the men violently and later are fearful of them, it shows supreme lack of intelligence.

When the enemy's troops march up angrily and, although facing you, neither join battle for a long time nor leave, the situation requires great vigilance and thorough investigation.

In war, numbers alone confer no advantage. It is sufficient if you do not advance relying on sheer military power. If you estimate the enemy situation correctly and then concentrate your strength to overcome the enemy, there is no more to it than this. He who lacks foresight and underestimates his enemy will surely be captured by him.

If troops are punished before their loyalty is disobedient, If not obedient, it is difficult to employ them. If troops have become attached to you, but discipline cannot be enforced, you cannot employ them. Thus, command them with civility but keep them under control by iron discipline, and it may be said that victory is certain. If orders are consistently carried out to instruct the troops, they will be obedient. If orders are not consistently carried out to instruct them, they will be disobedient.

If orders are consistently trustworthy and carried out, it shows that the relationship of a commander with his troops is satisfactory.

CHAPTER 10 Terrain

Ground may be classified according to its nature as accessible, entangling, temporizing, precipitous, distant, or having narrow passes. Ground which both we and the enemy can traverse with equal ease is called accessible. On such ground,

he who first takes high sunny positions, and keeps his supply routes unimpeded, can fight advantageously. Ground easy to reach but difficult to get out of is called entangling. The nature of this ground is such that if the enemy is unprepared and you sally out, you may defeat him. If the enemy is prepared and you sally out, but do not win, and it is difficult for you to return, it is unprofitable. Ground equally disadvantageous for both the enemy and ourselves to enter is called temporizing. The nature of this ground is such that Although the enemy holds out a bait, I do not go forth but entice him by marching off, When I have drawn out half his force, I can strike him advantageously. If I first occupy narrow passes, I must block the passes and await the enemy. If the enemy first occupies such ground and blocks the defiles, I should not attack him; if he does not block them completely, I may do so. On precipitous ground, I must take a position on the sunny heights and await the enemy. If he first occupies such ground, I march off, I do not attack him. When at a distance from an enemy of equal strength, It is difficult to provoke battle and unprofitable to engage him.

These are the principles relating to six different types of ground. It is the highest responsibility of the general to inquire into them with the utmost care.

There are six conditions in which troops fail. These are: flight, insubordination, collapse in disorder, distress, disorganization, and rout. None of these disasters can be attributed to natural causes, but to the fault of the general.

Other conditions being equal, if a force attacks one ten times its size, the result is flight. When soldiers are strong and officers weak, the army is insubordinate. When the officers are valiant and the soldiers ineffective, the result is collapse. When officers are angry and insubordinate, and on encountering the enemy rush into battle with no understanding of the feasibility of engaging and without awaiting orders from the commander, the army is in distress. When the general is morally weak and without authority, when his instructions and guidance are not enlightened, when there are no consistent rules to guide the officers and men, and when the formations are slovenly, the result is disorganization. When a commander unable to estimate his enemy uses a small force to engage a large one, or weak troops to strike the strong, or when he fails to select shock troops for the van, the result is rout. When any of these six conditions prevails, the army is on the road to defeat. It is the highest responsibility of the general that he examine them carefully. Conformation of the ground is of the greatest assistance in battle. Therefore, virtues of a Superior general are to estimate the enemy situation, and to calculate

distances and the degree of difficulty of the terrain so as to control victory. He who fights with full knowledge of these factors is certain to win; he who does not will surely be defeated. If the situation is one of victory, but the Sovereign has issued orders not to engage, the general may decide to fight. If the situation is such that he cannot win, but the sovereign has issued orders to engage, he need not do so. And therefore, the general who in advancing does not seek personal fame, and in retreating is not concerned with disgrace, but whose only purpose is to protect the country and promote the best interests of his sovereign, is the precious jewel of the state. A general regards his men as infants who will march with him into the deepest valleys. He treats them as his own beloved sons and they will stand by him unto death. If a general indulges his men but is unable to employ them, if he loves them but cannot enforce his commands, if the men are disorderly and he is unable to control them, they may be compared to spoiled children, and are useless. If I know that my troops are capable of striking the enemy, but do not know that he is invulnerable to attack, my chance of victory is but half. If I know that the enemy is vulnerable to attack, but do not know that my troops are incapable of striking him, my chance of victory is but half. If I know that the enemy can be attacked and that my troops are capable of attacking him, but do not realize that the Conformation of the ground makes fighting impracticable, my chance of victory is but half. Therefore, when those experienced in war move, they are never bewildered- when they act, their resources are limitless. And therefore, I say: Know the enemy, know yourself, your victory will never be endangered. Know the ground, know the weather; your victory will then be complete.

CHAPTER 11

The Nine Varieties of Ground

In respect to the employment of troops, ground may be classified as dispersive, frontier, key, open, focal, serious, difficult, encircled, and desperate.

When a feudal lord fights, in his own territory, he is in depressive ground. When he makes but a shallow penetration into enemy territory, he is in frontier ground.

Ground equally advantageous to occupy is key ground. Ground equally accessible is open. When a state is enclosed by three other states, its territory is focal. He who first gets control of it will gain the support of the majority of neighboring states.

When the army has penetrated deep into hostile territory, leaving far behind many enemy cities and towns, it is in serious ground. When the army traverses

mountains, forests, or precipitous country, or marches through defiles, marshlands or swamps, or any place where the going is hard, it is in difficult ground. Ground to which access is constricted, where the way out is tortuous, and where a small enemy force can strike a larger one, is called encircled. Ground in which the army survives only if it fights with the courage of desperation is called desperate. And therefore, do not fight in dispersive ground; do not stop in the frontier borderlands. Do not attack an enemy who occupies key ground first; in open ground, do not allow your formations to become separated and your communications to be blocked. In focal ground, ally with neighboring states; in serious ground, gather in plunder. In difficult ground, press on; in encircled ground, devise stratagems; in desperate ground, fight courageously.

In ancient times, those described as skilled in war made it impossible for the enemy to unite his front and his rear, for his divisions both large and small to cooperate, for his good troops to succor the poor, and for officers and men to support each other. When the enemy's forces were dispersed, they prevented him from assembling them; even when assembled, they threw him into disorder. They concentrated and moved when it was advantageous to do so; when not advantageous, they halted. Should one ask: 'How do I cope with a well ordered enemy host about to attack me?' I reply: 'Seize something he cherishes and he will conform to your desires.' Speed is the essence of war. Take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack him where he has taken no precautions.

The general principles applicable to an invading force are that when you have penetrated deeply into hostile territory your army is united and the defender cannot overcome you. Plunder fertile country to supply your army with plentiful provisions. Pay heed to nourishing the troops; do not unnecessarily fatigue them. Unite them in spirit-, conserve their strength. Make unfathomable plans for the movements of the army. Throw the troops into a position from which there is no escape, and even when faced with death they will not flee. For if prepared to die, what can they not achieve? Then officers and men together put forth their utmost efforts. In a desperate situation, they fear nothing; when there is no way out, they stand firm. Deep in a hostile land they are bound together, and there, where there is no alternative, they will engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Thus, such troops need no encouragement to be vigilant. Without extorting their support, the general obtains it; without inviting their affection, he gains it; without demanding

their discipline, he wins it. Prohibit superstitious doubts and do away with rumors; then nobody will flee even facing death. My officers have no surplus of wealth, but it is not because they disdain riches; they have no expectation of long life, but it is not because they dislike longevity. On the day the army is ordered to set out, the tears of those seated soak their garments- the tears of those reclining course down their cheeks. But throw them into a situation where there is no escape and they will display the immortal courage of Zhuan Zhu and Cao Kuei. (Zhüan Zhu and Cao Kuei both lived in the Spring and Autumn period, and were said to be brave warriors undaunted in the face of death.)

Now, the troops of those adept in war are use(! like the 'simultaneously responding snake' of Mount Ch'ang. When struck on the heads, it tail attacks; when struck on the tail, its head attacks; when struck in the center, both head and tail attack. Should one ask: 'Can troops be made capable of such instantaneous coordination?' I reply. 'They can' For, although the men of Wu and Yüe are enemies of another, if together in a boat tossed by the wind they would cooperate as the right hand does with the left. Thus, in order to prevent soldiers from fleeing, it is not sufficient to rely upon hobbled horses or buried chariot wheels. To achieve a uniform level of valor relies on a good military administration. And it is by proper use of the ground that both strong and weak forces are used to the best advantage. Thus, a skillful general conducts his army just as if he were leading a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand. It is the business of a general to be serene and inscrutable, impartial and self-controlled. He should be capable of keeping his officers and men in ignorance of his plans. He changes his methods and alters his plans so that people have no knowledge of what he aims at. He alters his camp sites and marches by devious routes, and thus makes it impossible for others to anticipate his purpose. The business of a general is to kick away the ladder behind soldiers when they have climbed up a height. He leads the army deep into hostile territory and there releases the trigger. He bums his boats and smashes his cooking pots; he drives his men now in one direction, then in another, like a shepherd driving a flock of sheep, and no one knows where he is going. To assemble the army and throw it into a desperate position is the business of the general. To take different measures suited to the mine varieties of ground, to take aggressive or defensive tactics in accordance with different situations, and to understand soldiers' psychological states under different circumstances, are matters that must be studied carefully by a general.

Generally, when invading hostile territory, the deeper one penetrates, the more cohesion it brings; penetrating only a short way causes dispersion. Therefore, in dispersive ground, I would unify the determination of the army. In frontier ground, I would keep my forces closely linked. In key ground, I would hasten into the enemy's rear. In open ground, I would pay strict attention to my defenses. In focal ground, I would consolidate my alliances. In serious ground, I would ensure a continuous flow of provisions.

In difficult ground, I would march past the roads speedily. In encircled ground, I would block the points of access and egress. In desperate ground, I would make it evident that there is no chance of survival. For it is the nature of soldiers to resist when surrounded, to fight to the death when there is no alternative, and when desperate to follow commands implicitly.

One ignorant of the plans of neighboring states cannot make alliances with them; if ignorant of the conditions of mountains, forests, dangerous defiles, swamps and marshes, he cannot conduct the march of an army; if he fails to make use of native spies, he cannot gain the advantages of the ground. A general ignorant of even one of these nine varieties of ground is unfit to command the armies of a hegemonic king. Now, when a hegemonic king attacks a powerful state, he makes it impossible for the enemy to concentrate his troops. He overawes the enemy and prevents his allies from joining him.

It follows that there is no need to contend against powerful combinations, nor is there any need to foster the power of other states. He relies for the attainment of his aims on his ability to overawe his opponents. And so he can take the enemy's cities and overthrow the enemy's state. Bestow rewards without respect to customary practice; publish orders without respect to precedent. Thus, you may employ the entire army as you would one man, set the troops to their tasks without imparting your designs; use them to gain advantage without revealing the dangers involved. Throw them into a perilous situation and they will survive; put them in desperate ground and they will live. For when the army is placed in such a situation, it can snatch victory from defeat. Now, the crux of military operations lies in the pretense of following the designs of the enemy; and once there is a loophole that can be used, concentrate your forces against the enemy. Thus, even marching from a distance of a thousand li, you can kill his general. This is called the ability to achieve one's aim in an artful and ingenious manner. Therefore, when the time comes to execute the plan to attack, you should close the passes,

rescind the passports, have no further intercourse with the enemy's envoys, and exhort the temple council to execute the plans. When the enemy presents an opportunity, speedily take advantage of it. Seize the place which the enemy values without making an appointment for battle with him executing the plan, you should change according to the enemy situation in order to win victory. Therefore, at first you should pretend to be as shy as a maiden. When the enemy gives you opening, be swift as a hare and he will be unable to withstand you

CHAPTER 12 Attack By Fire

There are five ways of attacking with fire. The first is to bum soldiers; the second, to bum provisions; the third, to bum equipment; the fourth, to bum arsenals; and the fifth, to bum tile lines of transportation. To use fire, some medium must be relied upon. Equipment for setting fires must always be at hand. There are suitable times and appropriate days on which to raise fires. 'Times' means when the weather is scorching hot; 'days' means when the moon is in Sagittarius, Alpheratz, I, or Zhen constellations, for these are days of rising winds.

Now, in fire attacks, one must respond to the changing situation.' When fire breaks out in the enemy's camp, immediately coordinate your action from without. But if the enemy troops remain calm, bide your time and do not attack at once. When the fire reaches its height, follow up if you can. If you cannot do so, wait. If you can raise fires outside the enemy camp, it is not necessary to wait until they are started inside. Set fires at suitable times. When fires are raised upwind, do not attack from downwind. When the wind blows during the day, it will die down at night. Now, the army must know the five different fire attack situations and wait for appropriate times.

Those who use fire to assist their attacks can achieve good results; those who use inundation's produce a powerful effect. Water can isolate an enemy, but cannot destroy his supplies or equipment as fire can.

Now, to win battles and take your objectives but to fail to consolidate these achievements is ominous and may be described as a waste of time. And therefore, it is said that enlightened rulers must deliberate upon the plans to go to battle, and good generals carefully execute them. If not in the interests of the state, do not act. If you cannot succeed, do not use troops. If you are not in danger, do not fight a war. A sovereign cannot launch a war because he is enraged, nor can a general fight a war because he is resentful. For while an angered man may again ' be

happy, and a resentful man again be pleased, a state that has perished cannot be restored, nor can the dead be brought back to life. Therefore, the enlightened ruler is prudent and the good general is warned against rash action. Thus the state is kept secure and the army preserved.

CHAPTER 13 Use of Spies

Now, when an army of one hundred thousand is raised and dispatched on a distant campaign, the expenses borne by the people together with disbursements of the treasury will amount to a thousand pieces of gold daily. In addition, there will be continuous commotion both at home and abroad, people will be exhausted by the corvée of transport, and the farm work of seven hundred thousand households will be disrupted. (In ancient times, eight rashes comprised a community. When one family sent a man to the army, the remaining seven contributed to its support. Thus, when an army of one hundred thousand was raised, those unable to attend fully to their own ploughing and sowing amounted to seven hundred thousand households.)

Hostile armies confront each other for years in order to struggle for victory in a decisive battle; yet if one who begrudges rank, honors and a few hundred pieces of gold remains ignorant of his enemy's situation, he is completely unaware of the interest of the state and the people. Such a man is no general, no good assistant to his sovereign, and such a sovereign no master of victory. Now, the reason a brilliant sovereign and a wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move, and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men, is their foreknowledge of the enemy situation. This 'foreknowledge' cannot be elicited from spirits, nor from gods, nor by analogy with past events, nor by astrologic calculations. It must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation.

Now, there are five sorts of spies. These are native spies, internal spies, double spies, doomed spies, and surviving spies. When all these five types of spies are at work and their operations are clandestine, it is called the 'divine manipulation of threads' and is the treasure of a sovereign. Native spies are those from the enemy's country whom we employ. Internal spies are enemy officials whom we employ. Double spies are enemy spies whom we employ. Doomed spies are those of our own spies who are deliberately given false information and told to report it to the enemy. Surviving spies are those who return from the enemy camp to report information.

Of all those in the army close to the commander, none is more intimate than the spies; of all rewards, none more liberal than those given to spies; of all matters, none is more confidential than those relating to spy operations. He who is not sage and wise, humane and just, cannot use spies. And he who is not delicate and subtle cannot get the truth out of them. , Delicate, indeed! Truly delicate! There is no place where espionage is not possible. If plans relating to spy operations are, prematurely divulged, the agent and all those to whom he spoke of them should be put to death. Generally, in the case of armies you wish to strike, cities you wish to attack, and people you wish to assassinate, it is necessary to find out the names of the garrison commander, the aides-decamp, the ushers, gatekeepers and bodyguards. You must instruct your spies to ascertain these matters in minute detail. It is essential to seek out enemy spies who have come to conduct espionage against you and to bribe them to serve you. Give them instructions and care for them. Thus, double spies are recruited and used. It is by means of the double spies that native and internal spies can be recruited and employed. And it is by this means that the doomed spies, armed with false information, can be sent to convey it to the enemy. It is by this means also that surviving spies can come back and give information as scheduled.

The sovereign must have full knowledge of the activities of the five sorts of spies. And the key is the skill to use the double spies, Therefore, it is mandatory that they be treated with the utmost liberality.

In old times, the rise of the Shang Dynasty was due to Yi Zhi, who had served under the Xia likewise, and the rise of the Zhou Dynasty was due to Lu Ya, who had served under the Yin. And therefore, only the enlightened sovereign and the wise general who are able to use the most intelligent people as spies can achieve great results. Spy operations are essential in war; upon them the army relies to make its every move.