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SUN TZU ON THE ART OF WAR

THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

Translated from the Chinese

By LIONEL GILES, M.A. (1910)

[This is the basic text of Sun Tzu on the Art of War. It was extracted from Mr. Giles' complete work in eleven ebooks. The commentary itself, which has been released as *Project Gutenberg's eBook #17452*.]

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I. LAYING PLANS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.

2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

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

5-8. The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, unmoved by any danger.

Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and confined passes; the chances of life and death.

The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.

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 the roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

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

9. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:--

10. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law? (2) Which of the two generals has most ability? (3) Which has been the recipient of favorable winds from Heaven and Earth? (4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced? (5) Which side is the 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?

By the means of these seven considerations I can foresee who is to win.

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

12. 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 deceit.

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; when far away, we must make the enemy 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 at ease, keep him in motion. If his forces are united, separate them.

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

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

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

II. WAGING WAR

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers, with provisions enough to carry them a thousand li, the expenditure at home and at the front, including incidental expenses, such as entertainment of envoys and visitors, guest as chariots and armour, will reach the total of a thousand pieces 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 drawn, the man's weapons will grow dull and their ardour 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 ardour damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will arise to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must follow.

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 those who are 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. Being war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy's country, the army will be provided with both.

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

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

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

13-14. With the loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three-tenths of their incomes will be dissipated; while Government expenses for broken chariots, worn out horses, breastplates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantlets, draught-oxen and heavy wagons, will amount to four-tenths of its total revenue.

15. Let a wise general feed his men upon the enemy's spoil: one cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty from one's own; and likewise a single quart of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own.

16. Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who were the first to mount the chariot captured. Let the flags of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be treated with kindness, and retained.

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

19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.

20. Thus it may be known that the leader of the people is master of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be a peace or in peril.

III. ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

1. Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and entire; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recover a army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

2. For 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 baffle the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent his junction of his forces; the next is to attack in the enemy's army; the lowest, and the worst of all, is to besiege walled cities.

4. The art of besieging walled cities is taught by the rules, which should be studied by the commander-in-chief; the preparing of shelter for the army, and fitting out with 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 impatience, will cause men to scale the walls 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 forces by strategy; he capitulates their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without prolonged hostilities.

7. Sheathing the edge of his weapon, he will march to the empire of the enemy; 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 one forces an army to the enemy's one, to surround it, but let there be an outlet left free; if one's force be ten to the enemy's one, to attack him;

9. If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if in every respect inferior, we can flee from him.

10. Hence, though an obstinate fight may be made by a small force, in the end it must be captured by the larger force.

11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State: if the bulwark is broad and strong, the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.

12. There are four ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:--

(1) By commanding the army to advance or retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey. This is called hobbling the army.--

(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 soldiers.--

(3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the fact that there are men who are able to assume responsibility, and who are jealous of such.--

(4) By taking command of an army, and yielding to the temptation offered by an enemy to flee or march at his command, without knowing that there are occasions when it is expedient to do so.--

13. These are the ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army.

14. Now there are five conditions by which victory may be foreseen. I say then that victory will be with the side whose general is competent and not hampered by the sovereign.

15. Victory will be with the side whose forces are disposed in accordance with the Tao.

16. It will be with the side whose officers are competent and not hindered by the sovereign.

17. These five things are the paths to victory.

18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, your war not kept the result of a hundred battles. If you know heaven and Earth, you may count on victory.

19. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself; your victory will never be endangered; if you know your own ground and the conditions of your battlefield, your victory will be complete.

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 conquer oneself is no less than to conquer the foe.

3. The skillful fighter puts himself in a position which makes victory certain. He does not overlook the chance of defeating the enemy.

4. Victory may be seen by the ordinary multitude; but to win victory by skillful generalship is not the highest pinnacle of excellence.

5. To lift up a hair is no sign of great strength; to see sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.

6. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but wins with ease.

7. Hence his victories bring him neither reputation for wisdom nor credit for courage.

8. He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy who is already defeated.

9. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes him impregnable, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.

10. Thus it is that in 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.

11. The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success.

12. In respect of military method, we have, firstly, Measurement; secondly, Estimation of quantity; thirdly, Calculation; fourthly, Balancing of chances; fifthly, Victory.

13. 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.

14. A victorious army opposed to a routed one, is as a pound's weight placed in the scale against a single grain.

15. The conduct of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a fathom deep: So much for tactical dispositions.

V. ENERGY

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few: it is a matter of question of dividing up the numbers.

2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of dividing up your men.

3. To ensure that your whole force may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken--this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.

4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg--this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.

5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they die but to come back to life again.

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 colours (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen.

9. There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet the combinations of these give rise to more than can ever be tasted.

10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack--the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like the quick revolving of a ring; we can't see the end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike down its quarry.--

14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his wrath, and prompt in his decision.

15. Let his force be concealed in the bending of a crossbow; decision, in the stooping of the hawk.--

16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your army may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.--

17. Simulated disorder presupposes perfect discipline; simulated fear presupposes courage; simulated weakness presupposes strength.--

18. Order or disorder depends on organization; courage or cowardice on the psychological moment; strength or weakness, on disposition.--

19. Hence the skillful leader puts his army in such a position that it must inevitably be overcome by the enemy.--

20. Then one who is skilled in leading the enemy on the same momentum described appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something that he may secure an advantage.--

21. He holdeth out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a picked force he awaits the coming of the foe.--

22. 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 their combined energy.--

23. 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 when at rest to remain motionless on level ground, and if on a slope, if free, to remain so; to remain motionless if it be square, but if round, to roll on rolling down.--

24. 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 battle; 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 himself to be imposed upon by the enemy.

3. By holding out advantages to him, he can induce 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 provisioned, he can starve him out; if he is quiet, he can make him 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. To insure safety in your defense, you must be master of your ground, which can understand from your choice of ground the time 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 invisible; and hence we can hold the enemy's fate in our hands.

10. You may advance and be 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 your pursuers.

11. If we wish to fight, the enemy can be forced to an engagement even though he be safe behind his entrenchments, if we attack some place which he must rescue.

12. If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from engaging us even though the line of our encampment be merely marked out on the ground. All we need do is to throw something odd and unexpected across his path.

13. By marching continually in_ echelon_ and covering the advance of the enemy's weak points, we can ensure victory.

14. Be as secret and silent as the grave, thus you will be able to keep your counsel. Be as swift as lightning, thus you will be able to frustrate your opponent's plans.

15. Be as imperturbable as the maiden, till the enemy gives you an opening; be as swift as a runaway hare, and it will be too late for the enemy to oppose your entrance.

16. My plan is to force the enemy to adopt a course of action by which he loses the control of his own movements.

17. Let your plan be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

18. Hence the saying: If we know the quarter from which we are to meet the enemy, we can muster our forces from the ends of the earth.

19. Let us make our plans against the enemy's country, so that we may be secure in the knowledge that we can count on victory.

20. Let us concentrate our forces against those of the enemy, so that we may be certain of victory.

21. Let us be so secret and silent that we may be invisible; let us be so mysterious and mysterious that we may be inaudible; and we will be able to dictate to our opponent, the enemy.

22. Let us cut off his communications with his allies, so that he will be unable to form a coalition against us; let us be beforehand in the world at large, so that we may be free from the danger of being forestalled by our rivals; let us increase our own power, so that we may be free from the danger of being overwhelmed by our opponent.

23. Let us be so secret and so mysterious that we may be free from the danger of being spied upon by our opponent; let us be so subtle and mysterious that we may be free from the danger of being known by our opponent.

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can use to the strategy out of which victory is evolved.

2. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but be your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

3. It is the quality of the troops, more than the quantity of the army that counts most for success; it is not the quantity of a river that bears down all before it.

4. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.

5. 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.

6. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions.

7. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain.

8. The five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth) are not always equally predominant; the four seasons make way for one another in turn. There are short days and long; the moon has its periods of waning and waxing.

VII. MANEUVERING

1. Sun Tzû said: In 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 then to contrive to reach the goal after others have got hot before, shows knowledge of the artifice of devious.

5. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, it is 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. We may thus see that your mere 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 invert an advantage, the leaders of all your three armies 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 force 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 safely.

11. We may take it then that an army without its baggage train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost.

12. We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.

13. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.

14. We shall be unable to avail himself of these advantages to account unless we make use of local guides.

15. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed. Move only on occasion; it is advantage to be gained.

16. Let your movements be as rapidly as divine power is swift. Let your attack be as fierce as a mountain torrent, that overwhelms all in its path.

17. Let your plunder be divided among your men; let your country be at peace.

18. Let your plunder be duly and impartially distributed among your men. Let the situation be carefully weighed before you move.

19. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided among your men; when you conquer new territory, set it in the right allotments for the benefit of the military.

20. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.

21. He who knows the art of maneuvering with direct and devious, knows the art of maneuvering.

22. The Book of Army Management says: On the field of battle, the ears and eyes of the men in the ranks must be instructed; all must be made to see the flag and hear the drum, for men cannot be brought to act as one unless they are stimulated by the sound of drum and the sight of the flag. Now, these drums and flags are the instruction of banner and flags.

23. Gongs and drums, banners and flags, are means whereby the ears and eyes of the host may be focussed on one particular point.

24. The host may be deprived of its courage, and the commander robbed of his presence of mind, or, if he be a man of resolute character, alone. This is the art of handling large masses of men.

25. In the morning, the spirit of the host is keen; at midday, it flags and drooms, and in the evening, all is given to thoughts of home. Hence, the man who is skilled in the art of war will not attack an army when it is fresh and full of spirit, but will wait till it has become jaded and depleted.

26. The general who thoroughly understands the advantages that accompany variations of tactics knows how to handle his troops.

27. 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 account.

28. So, the student of war who is unversed in the art of war of maneuvering, may be well versed in the theory of war, but he will be a bungler in the practical business of war.

29. Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and disadvantage will be blended together.

30. If our expectation of advantage be tempered in this way, we may succeed in accomplishing the essential part of our schemes.

31. If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an advantage, we may extricate ourselves from difficulties and dangers.

32. Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them; make trouble for them, and keep them constantly engaged; hold out specious allurements, and make the enemy rush to your quarters.

33. 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.

34. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general:

(1) Recklessness, which leads to destruction;

(2) cowardice, which leads to capture;

(3) a quick temper, which can be provoked by insults;

(4) a delicacy of honour which is sensitive to shame;

(5) over solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

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

36. When an army is overthrown and its leader slain, the cause will nearly be found among these dangerous faults. Let them be a subject of meditation.

IX. THE ARMY ON THE MARCH

1. Sun Tzû said: We come now to the question of encamping the army, and observing signs of the enemy. Pass quickly over mountains, and keep to the neighborhood of valleys.

2. Camp in high places, facing the sun. Do not climb heights in order to fight. So much for occupying an army.

3. After crossing a river, you should get away from it.

4. When an invading force crosses a river in its onward march, do not station yourself in the midst of the stream. It will be best to let the enemy get across, and then attack a force that is in the water.

5. If you are anxious to fight, you should not go to meet the invader near a river which he has crossed.

6. Move your craft higher up than the enemy, and facing the sun. Do this for the benefit of your men. So much for rivers and streams.

7. In crossing salt marshes, your sole concern should be to get over them quickly. Without any delay.

8. If, in the midst of a salt marsh, you should have water and grass to hand, and grass within reach, it will be a place of toil. So much for operations in salt marshes.

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 in behind. So much for campaigning in open country.

10. These are the four useful branches of military knowledge which enable the three fighting forces to avail themselves of mountains.

11. All armies prefer high ground to low and same places to dales.

12. If you are careful of your men, and camp on hard ground, the host will be free from disease of every kind, and this will be a great victory.

13. When you come to a hill or a bank, occupy the sunny side, with the slope on your right rear. Thus will all evil to accrue be the benefit of your soldiers and utilize the natural advantages of the ground.

14. In the case of an inundation, it is expedient to wait until the water ceases to flow in order to ford the flooded stream, you must wait for the subsiding of the waters.

15. Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep ravines, dangerous defiles, confined passes, thickets, quagmires and crevasses, should be left with all possible speed and avoided by all means.

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, marshy ground, or pools surrounded by reeds, or even places with trees in them, such localities must be carefully searched out, and searched, for these are places where men in ambush or spies are wont to lurk. So much for the military advantage to be derived from a country.

18. Moreover, when the host is halted and remains quiet, he is relying on the natural strength of his position.

19. He who keeps aloof and tries to provoke a battle, he is anxious for the enemy to come on.

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 coming; the appearance of a multitude of screens in the midst of a dense jungle indicates the presence of the enemy. If birds rise from their resting places, there is an ambush lurking underneath. If beasts run startled, it betokens a sudden attack. If dust be high but not very extensive, it betokens the approach of chariots. When it is low but spreads over a wide area, it betokens the approach of footmen. When it is broken into patches and is seen in different places, it betokens that men are busy cutting firewood. Small patches of dust coming and going betoken that the army is encamping.

22. Humble words and increased preparations are signs that the enemy is about to advance. When the envoy speaks in a high strain and pushes ahead with his chariots, it is a sign that he is about to retire.

23. When there is much rumour among the host and lights are seen at night, it means that the critical moment has arrived. When the officers are angry, it means that the army is wearied. When grain is killed and the men refuse to drink from their water-holes, it means that they are starving.

24. If birds gather on any spot, it is unoccupied. Clamour by night betokens nervousness.

25. 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 tired.

26. 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 their camp-fires, showing that they will not return to their tents, you may know that they are determined to fight to the death.

27. The appearance of a large number of officers and men, speaking in subdued tones points to disaffection amongst the rank and file.

28. Too frequent rewards signify that the enemy is at the end of his resources; too many punishments betoken (extreme) distress. Violent language, coupled with a show of force, betokens a state of panic; if the envoys, however, shows a supreme lack of intelligence.

29. When envoys are sent with complimentary terms in their mouths, it is a sign that the enemy wishes a truce.

30. If the troops are angry and face the enemy and remain facing once for a long time without either joining battle or taking themselves off again, the situation is one that demands great vigilance and circumspection.

31. If our troops are numerically superior to number than the enemy, their simply sufficient, it only means that no direct attack can be made. What we can do is to concentrate our men and keep a watchful eye upon the enemy, keep a close watch on the enemy, and obtain reinforcements.

32. He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by the latter.

33. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove docile, and if they cannot be made docile they are practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.

34. So, soldiers may be regarded as children; if they are in accordance with humanity, but light under control, they will be of the greatest service.

35. If our orders are clear, and the commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad.

36. If a general shows confidence in his men but omits to enforce his orders, then the gain will be mutual.

X. TERRAIN

1. Sun Tzû 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 provide your supply routes. 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 leading out 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 wise not to stir out of our quarters but to withdraw our troops and lead the enemy on till some opportunity shall arise when we can strike with advantage.

8. With regard to narrow passes, if you can occupy them first, let your main force be strongly posted in the passes, and await the coming of the enemy.

9. Should the enemy forestall you in occupying a pass, do not follow him, if the pass is fully garrisoned, but only if it is weakly garrisoned.

10. With regard to precipitous heights, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up.

11. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but withdraw your troops and march 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 it would be bad for your army to do so.

13. These are the principles concerning the handling of troops in ground which has attained a responsible post must be careful to study them.

14. There are in all six kinds of situation, which are arising from the nature of the ground, and each one of them calls for careful study. The six kinds of terrain 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 tenfold its strength, the result will be to cause flight.

16. When the officers are strong and the soldiers weak, the result is insubordination. When the officers are too strong and the soldiers too weak, the result is collapse. When the officers are angry and insubordinate, and they meet the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the general in command can tell whether or not he is in a position to fight, the result is ruin.

17. When the general is weak and without authority; when his orders are clear and distinct, when he makes no use of his subordinates, the result is disorganization.

18. When a general, unable to estimate the enemy's strength, allows an inferior force to engage a large one, or hurls a weak detachment against a strong battalion, and has no picked troops to back up his front rank, the result is a rout.

19. These are ways of creating defeat, which must be carefully pondered by the general who is in responsible post.

20. The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but the quality of a leader who is able to estimate the enemy, to control the forces of victory, and to shape his course according to the ground, is of a kind to command the admiration of a sovereign.

21. If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not be in danger, and if you know the ground and the weather, your victory will be complete.

22. If the soldiers are well-disciplined, they will be victorious.

23. If they are ill-disciplined, they will be defeated.

24. If the ground is favorable, and you do not take advantage of it, you will be guilty of a crime.

25. If you know that your own men are in a condition to attack, but do not know that the enemy is not to be attacked, you have only half a chance of victory.

26. If you know that the enemy is open to attack, but are unaware that your own men are not in a condition to attack, we have only half a chance of victory.

27. If you 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 half towards victory.

28. Hence the experienced soldier, when he moves, is free from bewildered, once he has broken camp, he is never at a loss.

29. 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, your victory will be complete.

XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

1. Sun Tzû said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Ground of dispersion; (2) facile ground; (3) ground of mutual concern; (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 country, it is ground of dispersion.

3. When he has penetrated into hostile territory, but no great distance, it is facile ground.

4. Ground the possession of which means 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 ground of intersecting highways.

7. When a 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 force, is ground of the nature of a trap.

10. Ground on which we can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay, is desperate ground.

11. On dispersive ground, therefore, fight not. On facile ground, halt not. On contentious ground, attack not.

12. On open ground, do not try to block the enemy's way. On ground of intersecting highways, make your alliances secure.

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 skilful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear; to prevent cooperation between his large and small divisions, to hinder the good officers from rescuing the bad, the officers from rallying their men.

16. When the enemy's men were scattered, they prevented them from concentrating; even when their forces were united, they managed to keep them in disorder.

17. When it was to their advantage, they made a forward movement; when otherwise, they stopped still.

18. If asked how to deal 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 unpreparedness; you can win by unexpected means, and attack unguarded points.

20. The following are the principles to be observed by an invading force: The farther you penetrate into a country, the more firm will be the solidarity of your troops; and thus the defenders will not prevail against you.

21. Let foraging 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 husband your strength. Keep your army constantly moving, and be resourceful in devising means.

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 utmost 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 the heart of a hostile country, they will show a determined front. If there is no help for it, they will fight.

25. Then, without waiting to be marshalled, the soldiers will be found ready at your command; without being asked, they will do your will, without restriction, they will be faithful; without giving orders, they can be trusted.

26. Prohibit the taking of omens, and there will be no superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared.

27. If our men are not long-lived, it is not because they have a dislike for long life, and if their coins are not numerous, it is not because they are indifferent to longevity.

28. On the day they are ordered to battle, your soldiers may sit weeping, tears coursing down their garments, and their faces bedewed with tears; but throw them into a desperate situation, and they will show the fortitude of a Chu or a Kuei.

29. The skilful tactician may be likened to the shuai-jan. Now the shuai-jan is a snake that is found in the Chang mountains. Strike its head, and you will be attacked by its tail; strike at its middle, and you will be attacked by its head and tail; strike at its tail, and you will be attacked by its head.

30. Asked if an army can be made to resemble the shuai-jan, I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies; yet if they happen to be caught by a storm while crossing in a boat, 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 chariots in the earth.

32. The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must conform to.

33. Here is how the best of both strong and weak—that is a question of the ground—may be made to work together.

34. Place the skilful generals so that strong and weak alike will be found fighting a single man, willy-nilly, by the hand.

35. The general who is skilful in leading on his men does not allow enemy's upright ranks and orderly banners to come against him.

36. He must be able to mystify his officers and men by false reports and appearances, and keep them in the dark.

37. By altering his arrangements and changing his plans, he keeps the enemy without knowledge. By shifting his camp and making circuitous marches, he prevents his intelligence from being of any use.

38. When a leader ascends to the height and then kicks away the ladder behind him, he must be prepared to carry his men deep into hostile territory before he can hope to bring his arms into play. He has burnt his boats and broken his rice-pots; he must urge on his men like a herd of sheep, driving them this way and that, and none know whither they are going.

39. To assemble the army and throw it into a critical position, is the duty of a general.

40. The different properties of the nine varieties of ground, the advantages to be derived from expansion and concentration, the laws governing human nature, these are matters that must be carefully studied.

41. When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory, his thoughts are concentrated; the invasion of a neighbouring fief shows that his foothold is insecure. When he marches into hostile territory, the fact that he leaves towns in his rear shows that he has his retreat in view.

42. We know nothing of the designs of our neighbors until we are acquainted with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. We are unable to make use of local guides unless we secure the services of a guide who is familiar with the topography of the country, and who knows how to turn to advantage the nature of the ground. When we have to cross a country belonging to our neighbors, we must be careful to secure the friendship of the chiefs who are in authority there, so as to make our own cause secure. We

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