

COLLECTION

SUN TZU

The Art of War

NICCOLÒ

MACHIAVELLI

The Prince



Sun Tzu

The Art of War

Niccolò Machiavelli

The Prince

The Art of War, literally The Laws of War (military methods) by Master Sun is the most famous ancient Chinese treatise, dedicated to a military strategy and policy, written by Sun Tzu.

The treatise by Sun Tzu influenced crucially on a whole military art of the East. Although it is the first treatise on the military art, it includes clearly expressed common principles of strategy as well as tactics. A special place in a military theoretical literature belongs to comments on Sun Tzu, the earliest of which appeared in the Han era (206-220 AD), and the new ones are still being created...

The Prince is a 16th-century political treatise by the Italian diplomat and political theorist Niccolo Machiavelli. From correspondence a version appears to have been distributed in 1513, using a Latin title, De Principatibus (Of Principalities). However, the printed version was not published until 1532, five years after Machiavelli's death. This was done with the permission of the Medici pope Clement VII, but «long before then, in fact since the first appearance of The Prince in manuscript, controversy had swirled about his writings».

The Prince is sometimes claimed to be one of the first works of modern philosophy, especially modern political philosophy, in which the effective truth is taken to be more important than any abstract ideal. It was also in direct conflict with the dominant Catholic and scholastic doctrines of the time concerning politics and ethics.

Table of Contents

Sun Tzu The Art of War Translated by LIONEL GILES, M.A

- I. Laying Plans
- II. Waging War
- III. Attack by Stratagem
- IV. Tactical Dispositions
- V. Energy
- VI. Weak Points and Strong
- VII. Manœuvering
- VIII. Variation of Tactics
- IX. The Army on the March
- X. Terrain
- XI. The Nine Situations
- XII. The Attack by Fire
- XIII. The Use of Spies

Niccolò Machiavelli The Prince

- I. How Many Kinds of Principalities there are, and by What Means They are Acquired
- II. Concerning Hereditary Principalities
- III. Concerning Mixed Principalities
- IV. Why The Kingdom of Darius, Conquered by Alexander, Did Not Rebel Against the Successors of Alexander at His Death
- V. Concerning the Way to Govern Cities or Principalities which Lived Under their Own Laws Before They Were Annexed
- VI. Concerning New Principalities which are Acquired by One's Own Arms and Ability
- VII. Concerning New Principalities which are Acquired Either by the Arms of Others or by Good Fortune
- VIII. Concerning Those Who Have Obtained a Principality by Wickedness
- IX. Concerning a Civil Principality

X. Concerning the Way in Which the Strength of All Principalities Ought to be Measured
XI. Concerning Ecclesiastical Principalities
XII. How Many Kinds of Soldiery there are, and Concerning Mercenaries
XIII. Concerning Auxiliaries, Mixed Soldiery, and One's Own
XIV. That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War
XV. Concerning Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, are Praised or Blamed
XVI. Concerning Liberality and Meanness
XVII. Concerning Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether It is Better to be Loved than Feared
XVIII. Concerning the Way in Which Princes Should Keep Faith
XIX. That One Should Avoid Being Despised and Hated
XX. Are Fortresses, and Many Other Things to Which Princes Often Resort, Advantageous or Hurtful?
XXI. How a Prince Should Conduct Himself So as to Gain Renown
XXII. Concerning the Secretaries of Princes
XXIII. How Flatterers Should be Avoided
XXIV. Why the Princes of Italy Have Lost Their States
XXV. What Fortune Can Effect in Human Affairs and How to Withstand Her
XXVI. An Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians

Sun Tzu

The Art of War

Translated by LIONEL GILES,
M.A

To my brother

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

I. Laying Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. By *Method and discipline* are to be understood the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

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

12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the

basis of a comparison, in this wise —

13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law?

[I.e., «is in harmony with his subjects.» Cf. § 5.]

(2) Which of the two generals has most ability?

(3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?

[See §§ 7, 8]

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

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

(5) Which army is stronger?

[Morally as well as physically. As Mei Yao-ch'en puts it, freely rendered, «esprit de corps and 'big battalions.'»]

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

[Tu Yu quotes Wang Tzu as saying: «Without constant practice, the officers will be nervous and undecided

when mustering for battle; without constant practice, the general will be wavering and irresolute when the crisis is at hand.»]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Sun Tzu, as a practical soldier, will have none of the «bookish theoric.» He cautions us here not to pin our faith to abstract principles; «for,» as Chang Yu puts it, «while the main laws of strategy can be stated clearly enough for the benefit of all and sundry, you must be guided by the actions of the enemy in attempting to secure a favorable position in actual warfare.» On the eve of the battle of Waterloo, Lord Uxbridge,

commanding the cavalry, went to the Duke of Wellington in order to learn what his plans and calculations were for the morrow, because, as he explained, he might suddenly find himself Commander-in-chief and would be unable to frame new plans in a critical moment. The Duke listened quietly and then said: «Who will attack the first tomorrow — I or Bonaparte?» «Bonaparte,» replied Lord Uxbridge. «Well,» continued the Duke, «Bonaparte has not given me any idea of his projects; and as my plans will depend upon his, how can you expect me to tell you what mine are?»^[1]]

18. All warfare is based on deception.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If his forces are united, separate them.

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

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

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

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

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

The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no

calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.

II. Waging War

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

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

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

with provisions enough to carry them a thousand *li*,

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

the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint,

and sums spent on chariots and armor, will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.

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

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

4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardor damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.

5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.

[This concise and difficult sentence is not well explained by any of the commentators. Ts'ao Kung, Li Ch'uan, Meng Shih, Tu Yu, Tu Mu and Mei Yao-ch'en have notes to the effect that a general, though naturally stupid, may nevertheless conquer through sheer force of rapidity. Ho Shih says: «Haste may be stupid, but at any rate it saves expenditure of energy and treasure; protracted operations may be very clever, but they bring calamity in their train.» Wang Hsi evades the difficulty by remarking: «Lengthy operations mean an army growing old, wealth being expended, an empty exchequer and distress among the people; true cleverness insures against the occurrence of such calamities.» Chang Yu says: «So long as victory can be attained, stupid haste is preferable to clever dilatoriness.» Now Sun Tzu says nothing whatever, except possibly by implication, about ill-considered haste being better than ingenious but lengthy

operations. What he does say is something much more guarded, namely that, while speed may sometimes be injudicious, tardiness can never be anything but foolish — if only because it means impoverishment to the nation. In considering the point raised here by Sun Tzu, the classic example of Fabius Cunctator will inevitably occur to the mind. That general deliberately measured the endurance of Rome against that of Hannibal's isolated army, because it seemed to him that the latter was more likely to suffer from a long campaign in a strange country. But it is quite a moot question whether his tactics would have proved successful in the long run. Their reversal it is true, led to Cannae; but this only establishes a negative presumption in their favour.]

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

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

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

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

[Once war is declared, he will not waste precious time in waiting for reinforcements, nor will he return his army back for fresh supplies, but crosses the enemy's frontier without delay. This may seem an audacious

policy to recommend, but with all great strategists, from Julius Caesar to Napoleon Bonaparte, the value of time — that is, being a little ahead of your opponent — has counted for more than either numerical superiority or the nicest calculations with regard to commissariat.]

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

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

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

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

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

substance to be drained away.

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

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

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

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

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

15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single *picul* of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one's own store.

[Because twenty cartloads will be consumed in the process of transporting one cartload to the front. A picul is a unit of measure equal to 133.3 pounds (65.5 kilograms).]

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

defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

[Tu Mu says: «Rewards are necessary in order to make the soldiers see the advantage of beating the enemy; thus, when you capture spoils from the enemy, they must be used as rewards, so that all your men may have a keen desire to fight, each on his own account.»]

17. Therefore in chariot fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.

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

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

[As Ho Shih remarks: «War is not a thing to be trifled with.» Sun Tzu here reiterates the main lesson which this chapter is intended to enforce.»]

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

III. Attack by Stratagem

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

[The equivalent to an army corps, according to Ssu-ma Fa, consisted nominally of 12500 men; according to Ts'ao Kung, the equivalent of a regiment contained 500 men, the equivalent to a detachment consists from any number between 100 and 500, and the equivalent of a company contains from 5 to 100 men. For the last two, however, Chang Yu gives the exact figures of 100 and 5 respectively.]

2. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

[Here again, no modern strategist but will approve the words of the old Chinese general. Moltke's greatest triumph, the capitulation of the huge French army at Sedan, was won practically without bloodshed.]

3. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans;

[Perhaps the word «balk» falls short of expressing the full force of the Chinese word, which implies not an attitude of defense, whereby one might be content to foil the enemy's stratagems one after another, but an active policy of counter-attack. Ho Shih puts this very

clearly in his note: «When the enemy has made a plan of attack against us, we must anticipate him by delivering our own attack first.»]

the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces;

[Isolating him from his allies. We must not forget that Sun Tzu, in speaking of hostilities, always has in mind the numerous states or principalities into which the China of his day was split up.]

the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field;

[When he is already at full strength.]

and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

4. The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided.

[Another sound piece of military theory. Had the Boers acted upon it in 1899, and refrained from dissipating their strength before Kimberley, Mafeking, or even Ladysmith, it is more than probable that they would have been masters of the situation before the British were ready seriously to oppose them.]

The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months;

[It is not quite clear what the Chinese word, here translated as «mantlets», described. Ts'ao Kung simply defines them as «large shields,» but we get a better idea of them from Li Ch'uan, who says they were to protect the heads of those who were assaulting the city walls at close quarters. This seems to suggest a sort of

Roman testudo, ready made. Tu Mu says they were wheeled vehicles used in repelling attacks, but this is denied by Ch'en Hao. See supra II. 14. The name is also applied to turrets on city walls. Of the «movable shelters» we get a fairly clear description from several commentators. They were wooden missile-proof structures on four wheels, propelled from within, covered over with raw hides, and used in sieges to convey parties of men to and from the walls, for the purpose of filling up the encircling moat with earth. Tu Mu adds that they are now called «wooden donkeys.»]

and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more.

[These were great mounds or ramparts of earth heaped up to the level of the enemy's walls in order to discover the weak points in the defense, and also to destroy the fortified turrets mentioned in the preceding note.]

5. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants,

[This vivid simile of Ts'ao Kung is taken from the spectacle of an army of ants climbing a wall. The meaning is that the general, losing patience at the long delay, may make a premature attempt to storm the place before his engines of war are ready.]

with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege.

[We are reminded of the terrible losses of the Japanese before Port Arthur, in the most recent siege which history has to record.]

6. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field.

[Chia Lin notes that he only overthrows the Government, but does no harm to individuals. The classical instance is Wu Wang, who after having put an end to the Yin dynasty was acclaimed «Father and mother of the people.»]

7. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete.

[Owing to the double meanings in the Chinese text, the latter part of the sentence is susceptible of quite a different meaning: «And thus, the weapon not being blunted by use, its keenness remains perfect.»]

This is the method of attacking by stratagem.

8. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him;

[Straightway, without waiting for any further advantage.]

if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.

[Tu Mu takes exception to the saying; and at first sight, indeed, it appears to violate a fundamental principle of war. Ts'ao Kung, however, gives a clue to Sun Tzu's meaning: «Being two to the enemy's one, we may use one part of our army in the regular way, and the other for some special diversion.» Chang Yu thus further elucidates the point: «If our force is twice as numerous as that of the enemy, it should be split up

into two divisions, one to meet the enemy in front, and one to fall upon his rear; if he replies to the frontal attack, he may be crushed from behind; if to the rearward attack, he may be crushed in front.» This is what is meant by saying that 'one part may be used in the regular way, and the other for some special diversion.' Tu Mu does not understand that dividing one's army is simply an irregular, just as concentrating it is the regular, strategical method, and he is too hasty in calling this a mistake.»]

9. If equally matched, we can offer battle;

[Li Ch'uan, followed by Ho Shih, gives the following paraphrase: «If attackers and attacked are equally matched in strength, only the able general will fight.»]

if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy;

[The meaning, «we can watch the enemy,» is certainly a great improvement on the above; but unfortunately there appears to be no very good authority for the variant. Chang Yu reminds us that the saying only applies if the other factors are equal; a small difference in numbers is often more than counterbalanced by superior energy and discipline.]

if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.

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

11. Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak.

[As Li Ch'uan tersely puts it: «Gap indicates deficiency; if the general's ability is not perfect (i. e. if

he is not thoroughly versed in his profession), his army will lack strength.»]

12. There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army —

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

[Li Ch'uan adds the comment: «It is like tying together the legs of a thoroughbred, so that it is unable to gallop.» One would naturally think of «the ruler» in this passage as being at home, and trying to direct the movements of his army from a distance. But the commentators understand just the reverse, and quote the saying of T'ai Kung: «A kingdom should not be governed from without, and army should not be directed from within.» Of course it is true that, during an engagement, or when in close touch with the enemy, the general should not be in the thick of his own troops, but a little distance apart. Otherwise, he will be liable to misjudge the position as a whole, and give wrong orders.]

14. (2) By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army. This causes restlessness in the soldier's minds.

[Ts'ao Kung's note is, freely translated: «The military sphere and the civil sphere are wholly distinct; you can't handle an army in kid gloves.» And Chang Yu says: «Humanity and justice are the principles on which to govern a state, but not an army; opportunism and flexibility, on the other hand, are military rather than

civil virtues to assimilate the governing of an army»—to that of a State, understood.]

15. (3) By employing the officers of his army without discrimination,

[That is, he is not careful to use the right man in the right place.]

through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances. This shakes the confidence of the soldiers.

[I follow Mei Yao-ch'en here. The other commentators refer not to the ruler, as in §§ 13, 14, but to the officers he employs. Thus Tu Yu says: «If a general is ignorant of the principle of adaptability, he must not be entrusted with a position of authority.» Tu Mu quotes: «The skillful employer of men will employ the wise man, the brave man, the covetous man, and the stupid man. For the wise man delights in establishing his merit, the brave man likes to show his courage in action, the covetous man is quick at seizing advantages, and the stupid man has no fear of death.»]

16. But when the army is restless and distrustful, trouble is sure to come from the other feudal princes. This is simply bringing anarchy into the army, and flinging victory away.

17. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory: (1) He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.

[Chang Yu says: If he can fight, he advances and takes the offensive; if he cannot fight, he retreats and remains on the defensive. He will invariably conquer who knows whether it is right to take the offensive or the defensive.]

(2) He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

[This is not merely the general's ability to estimate numbers correctly, as Li Ch'uan and others make out. Chang Yu expounds the saying more satisfactorily: «By applying the art of war, it is possible with a lesser force to defeat a greater, and vice versa. The secret lies in an eye for locality, and in not letting the right moment slip. Thus Wu Tzu says: 'With a superior force, make for easy ground; with an inferior one, make for difficult ground.'»]

(3) He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.

(4) He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.

(5) He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

[Tu Yu quotes Wang Tzu as saying: «It is the sovereign's function to give broad instructions, but to decide on battle it is the function of the general.» It is needless to dilate on the military disasters which have been caused by undue interference with operations in the field on the part of the home government. Napoleon undoubtedly owed much of his extraordinary success to the fact that he was not hampered by central authority.]

18. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat.

[Li Ch'uan cites the case of Fu Chien, prince of Ch'in, who in 383 A.D. marched with a vast army against the

Chin Emperor. When warned not to despise an enemy who could command the services of such men as Hsieh An and Huan Ch'ung, he boastfully replied: «I have the population of eight provinces at my back, infantry and horsemen to the number of one million; why, they could dam up the Yangtsze River itself by merely throwing their whips into the stream. What danger have I to fear?» Nevertheless, his forces were soon after disastrously routed at the Fei River, and he was obliged to beat a hasty retreat.]

If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

[Chang Yu said: «Knowing the enemy enables you to take the offensive, knowing yourself enables you to stand on the defensive.» He adds: «Attack is the secret of defense; defense is the planning of an attack.» It would be hard to find a better epitome of the root-principle of war.]

IV. Tactical Dispositions

[Ts'ao Kung explains the Chinese meaning of the words for the title of this chapter: «marching and countermarching on the part of the two armies with a view to discovering each other's condition.» Tu Mu says: «It is through the dispositions of an army that its condition may be discovered. Conceal your dispositions, and your condition will remain secret, which leads to victory; show your dispositions, and your condition will become patent, which leads to defeat.» Wang Hsi remarks that the good general can «secure success by modifying his tactics to meet those of the enemy.»]

1. Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.

2. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.

[That is, of course, by a mistake on the enemy's part.]

3. Thus the good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat,

[Chang Yu says this is done, «By concealing the disposition of his troops, covering up his tracks, and taking unremitting precautions.»]

but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.

4. Hence the saying: One may *know* how to conquer without being able to *do* it.

5. Security against defeat implies defensive tactics; ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.

[I retain the sense found in a similar passage in § § 1-3, in spite of the fact that the commentators are all against me. The meaning they give, «He who cannot conquer takes the defensive,» is plausible enough.]

6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.

7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth;

[Literally, «hides under the ninth earth,» which is a metaphor indicating the utmost secrecy and concealment, so that the enemy may not know his whereabouts.»]

he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven.

[Another metaphor, implying that he falls on his adversary like a thunderbolt, against which there is no time to prepare. This is the opinion of most of the commentators.]

Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.

8. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.

[As Ts'ao Kung remarks, «the thing is to see the plant before it has germinated,» to foresee the event before the action has begun. Li Ch'uan alludes to the story of Han Hsin who, when about to attack the vastly superior army of Chao, which was strongly entrenched in the city of Ch'eng-an, said to his officers: «Gentlemen, we are