Title: The Art of War

Author: Sun Tzu

Translator: Lionel Giles

Release Date: May 1994 [eBook #132]
[Most recently updated December 28, 2005]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-646-US (US-ASCII)

Note: Please see Project Gutenberg's eBook #17405 for a version of
this eBook without the Giles commentary (that is, with only the
Sun Tzu text).

SUN TZU ON THE ART OF WAR

THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

Translated from the Chinese with Introduction
and Critical Notes

BY

LIONEL GILES, M.A.

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

First Published in 1910

To my brother
Captain Valentine Giles, R.G.

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

Preface to the Project Gutenburg Etext

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

The first translation into English was published in 1905 in Tokyo by Capt. E. F. Calthrop, R.F.A. However, this translation is, in the words of Dr. Giles, "excessively bad." He goes further in this criticism: "It is not merely a question of downright blunders, from which none can hope to be wholly exempt. Omissions were frequent; hard passages were willfully distorted or slurred over. Such offenses are less pardonable. They would not be tolerated in any edition of a Latin or Greek classic, and a similar standard of honesty ought to be insisted upon in translations from Chinese." In 1908 a new edition of Capt. Calthrop's translation was published in London. It was an improvement on the first -- omissions filled up and numerous mistakes corrected -- but new errors were created in the process. Dr. Giles, in justifying his translation, wrote: "It was not undertaken out of any inflated estimate of my own powers; but I could not help feeling that Sun Tzu deserved a better fate than had befallen him, and I knew that, at any rate, I could hardly fail to improve on the work of my predecessors."

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

The Giles' edition of the ART OF WAR, as stated above, was a scholarly work. Dr. Giles was a leading sinologue at the time and an assistant in the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts in the British Museum. Apparently he wanted to

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

Dr. Giles produced a work primarily intended for scholars of the Chinese civilization and language. It contains the Chinese text of Sun Tzu, the English translation, and voluminous notes along with numerous footnotes. Unfortunately, some of his notes and footnotes contain Chinese characters; some are completely Chinese. Thus, a conversion to a Latin alphabet etext was difficult. I did the conversion in complete ignorance of Chinese (except for what I learned while doing the conversion). Thus, I faced the difficult task of paraphrasing it while retaining as much of the important text as I could. Every paraphrase represents a loss; thus I did what I could to retain as much of the text as possible. Because the 1910 text contains a Chinese concordance, I was able to transliterate proper names, books, and the like at the risk of making the text more obscure. However, the text, on the whole, is quite satisfactory for the casual reader, a transformation made possible by conversion to an etext. However, I come away from this task with the feeling of loss because I know that someone with a background in Chinese can do a better job than I did; any such attempt would be welcomed.

Bob Sutton
al876@cleveland.freenet.edu
bobs@gnu.ai.mit.edu

INTRODUCTION

Sun Wu and his Book

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

Sun Tzu Wu was a native of the Ch`i State. His ART OF

WAR brought him to the notice of Ho Lu, [2] King of Wu. Ho Lu said to him: "I have carefully perused your 13 chapters. May I submit your theory of managing soldiers to a slight test?"

Sun Tzu replied: "You may."

Ho Lu asked: "May the test be applied to women?"

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

The girls replied: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

Accordingly, he had the two leaders beheaded, and straightway installed the pair next in order as leaders in their place. When this had been done, the drum was sounded for the drill once more; and the girls went through all the

evolutions, turning to the right or to the left, marching ahead or wheeling back, kneeling or standing, with perfect accuracy and precision, not venturing to utter a sound. Then Sun Tzu sent a messenger to the King saying: "Your soldiers, Sire, are now properly drilled and disciplined, and ready for your majesty's inspection. They can be put to any use that their sovereign may desire; bid them go through fire and water, and they will not disobey."

But the King replied: "Let our general cease drilling and return to camp. As for us, We have no wish to come down and inspect the troops."

Thereupon Sun Tzu said: "The King is only fond of words, and cannot translate them into deeds."

After that, Ho Lu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and finally appointed him general. In the west, he defeated the Ch`u State and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the States of Ch`i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad amongst the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the King.

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

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

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

followed this advice, [beat Ch`u in five pitched battles and marched into Ying.] [5]

This is the latest date at which anything is recorded of Sun Wu. He does not appear to have survived his patron, who died from the effects of a wound in 496.

In another chapter there occurs this passage: [6]

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

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

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

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

Teng Ming-shih informs us that the surname "Sun" was bestowed on Sun Wu's grandfather by Duke Ching of Ch`i [547-490 B.C.]. Sun Wu's father Sun P`ing, rose to be a Minister of State in Ch`i, and Sun Wu himself, whose style was Ch`ang-ch`ing, fled to Wu on account of the rebellion which was being fomented by the kindred of T`ien Pao. He had three sons, of whom the second, named Ming, was the father of Sun Pin. According to this account then, Pin was the grandson of Wu, which, considering that Sun Pin's victory over Wei was gained in 341 B.C., may be dismissed as chronological impossible. Whence these data were obtained by Teng Ming-shih I do not know, but of course no reliance whatever

can be placed in them.

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

> I have heard that the ancients used bows and arrows to their advantage. [10] The SHU CHU mentions "the army" among the "eight objects of government." The I CHING says: "'army' indicates firmness and justice; the experienced leader will have good fortune." The SHIH CHING says: "The King rose majestic in his wrath, and he marshaled his troops." The Yellow Emperor, T`ang the Completer and Wu Wang all used spears and battle-axes in order to succor their generation. The SSU-MA FA says: "If one man slay another of set purpose, he himself may rightfully be slain." He who relies solely on warlike measures shall be exterminated; he who relies solely on peaceful measures shall perish. Instances of this are Fu Ch`ai [11] on the one hand and Yen Wang on the other. [12] In military matters, the Sage's rule is normally to keep the peace, and to move his forces only when occasion requires. He will not use armed force unless driven to it by necessity.
>
> Many books have I read on the subject of war and fighting; but the work composed by Sun Wu is the profoundest of them all. [Sun Tzu was a native of the Ch`i state, his personal name was Wu. He wrote the ART OF WAR in 13 chapters for Ho Lu, King of Wu. Its principles were tested on women, and he was subsequently made a general. He led an army westwards, crushed the Ch`u state and entered Ying the capital. In the north, he kept Ch`i and Chin in awe. A hundred years and more after his time, Sun Pin lived. He was a descendant of Wu.] [13] In his treatment of deliberation and planning, the importance of rapidity in taking the field, [14] clearness of conception, and depth of design, Sun Tzu stands beyond the reach of carping criticism. My contemporaries, however, have failed to grasp the full meaning of his instructions, and while putting into practice the smaller details in which his work abounds, they have overlooked its essential purport. That is the motive which has led me to outline a rough explanation of the whole.

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

In the bibliographic section of the HAN SHU, there is an entry which has given rise to much discussion: "The works of Sun Tzu of Wu in 82 P`IEN (or chapters), with diagrams in 9 CHUAN." It is evident that this cannot be merely the 13 chapters known to

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

Tu Mu's conjecture seems to be based on a passage which states: "Wei Wu Ti strung together Sun Wu's Art of War," which in turn may have resulted from a misunderstanding of the final words of Ts`ao King's preface. This, as Sun Hsing-yen points out, is only a modest way of saying that he made an explanatory paraphrase, or in other words, wrote a commentary on it. On the whole, this theory has met with very little acceptance. Thus, the SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU says: "The mention of the 13 chapters in the SHIH CHI shows that they were in existence before the HAN CHIH, and that latter accretions are not to be considered part of the original work. Tu Mu's assertion can certainly not be taken as proof."

There is every reason to suppose, then, that the 13 chapters existed in the time of Ssu-ma Ch`ien practically as we have them now. That the work was then well known he tells us in so many words. "Sun Tzu's 13 Chapters and Wu Ch`i's Art of War are the

two books that people commonly refer to on the subject of military matters. Both of them are widely distributed, so I will not discuss them here." But as we go further back, serious difficulties begin to arise. The salient fact which has to be faced is that the TSO CHUAN, the greatest contemporary record, makes no mention whatsoever of Sun Wu, either as a general or as a writer. It is natural, in view of this awkward circumstance, that many scholars should not only cast doubt on the story of Sun Wu as given in the SHIH CHI, but even show themselves frankly skeptical as to the existence of the man at all. The most powerful presentment of this side of the case is to be found in the following disposition by Yeh Shui-hsin: [17] --

> It is stated in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history that Sun Wu was a native of the Ch`i State, and employed by Wu; and that in the reign of Ho Lu he crushed Ch`u, entered Ying, and was a great general. But in Tso's Commentary no Sun Wu appears at all. It is true that Tso's Commentary need not contain absolutely everything that other histories contain. But Tso has not omitted to mention vulgar plebeians and hireling ruffians such as Ying K`ao-shu, [18] Ts`ao Kuei, [19], Chu Chih-wu and Chuan She-chu [20]. In the case of Sun Wu, whose fame and achievements were so brilliant, the omission is much more glaring. Again, details are given, in their due order, about his contemporaries Wu Yuan and the Minister P`ei. [21] Is it credible that Sun Wu alone should have been passed over?
>
> In point of literary style, Sun Tzu's work belongs to the same school as KUAN TZU, [22] LIU T`AO, [23] and the YUEH YU [24] and may have been the production of some private scholar living towards the end of the "Spring and Autumn" or the beginning of the "Warring States" period. [25] The story that his precepts were actually applied by the Wu State, is merely the outcome of big talk on the part of his followers.
>
> From the flourishing period of the Chou dynasty [26] down to the time of the "Spring and Autumn," all military commanders were statesmen as well, and the class of professional generals, for conducting external campaigns, did not then exist. It was not until the period of the "Six States" [27] that this custom changed. Now although Wu was an uncivilized State, it is conceivable that Tso should have left unrecorded the fact that Sun Wu was a great general and yet held no civil office? What we are told, therefore, about Jang-chu [28] and Sun Wu, is not authentic matter, but the reckless fabrication of theorizing pundits. The story of Ho Lu's experiment on the women, in particular, is utterly preposterous and incredible.

Yeh Shui-hsin represents Ssu-ma Ch`ien as having said that Sun Wu crushed Ch`u and entered Ying. This is not quite correct.

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

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

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

He also says: --

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

It is noticeable that both Yeh Shui-hsin and Ch`en Chen-sun, while rejecting the personality of Sun Wu as he figures in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history, are inclined to accept the date traditionally assigned to the work which passes under his name. The author of the HSU LU fails to appreciate this distinction, and consequently his bitter attack on Ch`en Chen-sun really misses its mark. He makes one of two points, however, which certainly tell in favor of the high antiquity of our "13 chapters." "Sun Tzu," he says, "must have lived in the age of Ching Wang [519-476], because he is frequently plagiarized in subsequent works of the Chou, Ch`in and Han dynasties." The two most shameless offenders in this respect are Wu Ch`i and Huai-nan Tzu, both of them important historical personages in their day. The former lived only a century after the alleged date of Sun Tzu, and his death is known to have taken place in 381 B.C. It was to him, according to Liu Hsiang, that Tseng Shen delivered the TSO CHUAN, which had been entrusted to him by its author. [29] Now the fact that quotations from the ART OF WAR, acknowledged or otherwise, are to be found in so many authors of different epochs, establishes a very strong anterior to them all, -- in other words, that Sun Tzu's treatise was already in existence towards the end of the 5th century B.C. Further proof of Sun Tzu's antiquity is furnished by the archaic or wholly obsolete meanings attaching to a number of the words he uses. A list of these, which might perhaps be extended, is given in the HSU LU; and though some of the interpretations are doubtful, the main argument is hardly affected thereby. Again, it must not be forgotten that Yeh Shui-hsin, a scholar and critic of the first rank, deliberately

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

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

> Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing

in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.

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

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

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

B.C. |
|
514 | Accession of Ho Lu.
512 | Ho Lu attacks Ch`u, but is dissuaded from entering Ying,
| the capital. SHI CHI mentions Sun Wu as general.
511 | Another attack on Ch`u.
510 | Wu makes a successful attack on Yueh. This is the first
| war between the two states.
509 |
or | Ch`u invades Wu, but is signally defeated at Yu-chang.
508 |
506 | Ho Lu attacks Ch`u with the aid of T`ang and Ts`ai.
| Decisive battle of Po-chu, and capture of Ying. Last
| mention of Sun Wu in SHIH CHI.
505 | Yueh makes a raid on Wu in the absence of its army. Wu
| is beaten by Ch`in and evacuates Ying.
504 | Ho Lu sends Fu Ch`ai to attack Ch`u.

497 | Kou Chien becomes King of Yueh.
496 | Wu attacks Yueh, but is defeated by Kou Chien at Tsui-li.
| Ho Lu is killed.
494 | Fu Ch`ai defeats Kou Chien in the great battle of Fu-
| chaio, and enters the capital of Yueh.
485 |
or | Kou Chien renders homage to Wu. Death of Wu Tzu-hsu.
484 |
482 | Kou Chien invades Wu in the absence of Fu Ch`ai.
478 |
to | Further attacks by Yueh on Wu.
476 |
475 | Kou Chien lays siege to the capital of Wu.
473 | Final defeat and extinction of Wu.

The sentence quoted above from VI. ss. 21 hardly strikes me as one that could have been written in the full flush of victory. It seems rather to imply that, for the moment at least, the tide had turned against Wu, and that she was getting the worst of the struggle. Hence we may conclude that our treatise was not in existence in 505, before which date Yueh does not appear to have scored any notable success against Wu. Ho Lu died in 496, so that if the book was written for him, it must have been during the period 505-496, when there was a lull in the hostilities, Wu having presumably exhausted by its supreme effort against Ch`u. On the other hand, if we choose to disregard the tradition connecting Sun Wu's name with Ho Lu, it might equally well have seen the light between 496 and 494, or possibly in the period 482-473, when Yueh was once again becoming a very serious menace. [33] We may feel fairly certain that the author, whoever he may have been, was not a man of any great eminence in his own day. On this point the negative testimony of the TSO CHUAN far outweighs any shred of authority still attaching to the SHIH CHI, if once its other facts are discredited. Sun Hsing-yen, however, makes a feeble attempt to explain the omission of his name from the great commentary. It was Wu Tzu-hsu, he says, who got all the credit of Sun Wu's exploits, because the latter (being an alien) was not rewarded with an office in the State.

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

actually carried out by him in conjunction with Wu Yuan, [34] Po P`ei and Fu Kai?

It is obvious that any attempt to reconstruct even the outline of Sun Tzu's life must be based almost wholly on conjecture. With this necessary proviso, I should say that he probably entered the service of Wu about the time of Ho Lu's accession, and gathered experience, though only in the capacity of a subordinate officer, during the intense military activity which marked the first half of the prince's reign. [35] If he rose to be a general at all, he certainly was never on an equal footing with the three above mentioned. He was doubtless present at the investment and occupation of Ying, and witnessed Wu's sudden collapse in the following year. Yueh's attack at this critical juncture, when her rival was embarrassed on every side, seems to have convinced him that this upstart kingdom was the great enemy against whom every effort would henceforth have to be directed. Sun Wu was thus a well-seasoned warrior when he sat down to write his famous book, which according to my reckoning must have appeared towards the end, rather than the beginning of Ho Lu's reign. The story of the women may possibly have grown out of some real incident occurring about the same time. As we hear no more of Sun Wu after this from any source, he is hardly likely to have survived his patron or to have taken part in the death-struggle with Yueh, which began with the disaster at Tsui-li.

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

The Text of Sun Tzu

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

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

As we have already seen, there is no reasonable ground to suppose that Ts`ao Kung tampered with the text. But the text itself is often so obscure, and the number of editions which appeared from that time onward so great, especially during the T`ang and Sung dynasties, that it would be surprising if numerous corruptions had not managed to creep in. Towards the middle of the Sung period, by which time all the chief commentaries on Sun Tzu were in existence, a certain Chi T`ien-pao published a work in 15 CHUAN entitled "Sun Tzu with the collected commentaries of ten writers." There was another text, with variant readings put forward by Chu Fu of Ta-hsing, which also had supporters among the scholars of that period; but in the Ming editions, Sun Hsing-yen tells us, these readings were for some reason or other no longer put into circulation. Thus, until the end of the 18th century, the text in sole possession of the field was one derived from Chi T`ien-pao's edition, although no actual copy of that important work was known to have survived. That, therefore, is the text of Sun Tzu which appears in the War section of the great Imperial encyclopedia printed in 1726, the KU CHIN T`U SHU CHI CH`ENG. Another copy at my disposal of what is practically the same text, with slight variations, is that contained in the "Eleven philosophers of the Chou and Ch`in dynasties" [1758]. And the Chinese printed in Capt. Calthrop's first edition is evidently a similar version which has filtered through Japanese channels. So things remained until Sun Hsing-yen [1752-1818], a distinguished antiquarian and classical scholar, who claimed to be an actual descendant of Sun Wu, [36] accidentally discovered a copy of Chi T`ien-pao's long-lost work, when on a visit to the library of the Hua-yin temple. [37] Appended to it was the I SHUO of Cheng Yu-Hsien, mentioned in the T`UNG CHIH, and also believed to have perished. This is what Sun Hsing-yen designates as the "original edition (or text)" -- a rather misleading name, for it cannot by any means claim to set before us the text of Sun Tzu in its pristine purity. Chi T`ien-pao was a careless compiler, and appears to have been content to reproduce the somewhat debased version current in his day, without troubling to collate it with the earliest editions then available. Fortunately, two versions of Sun Tzu, even older than the newly discovered work, were still extant, one buried in the T`UNG TIEN, Tu Yu's great treatise on the Constitution, the other similarly enshrined in the T`AI P`ING YU LAN encyclopedia. In both the complete text is to be found, though split up into fragments, intermixed with other matter, and scattered piecemeal over a number of different sections. Considering that the YU LAN takes us back to the year 983, and the T`UNG TIEN about 200 years further still, to the middle of the T`ang dynasty, the value of these early transcripts of Sun Tzu can hardly be overestimated. Yet the idea of utilizing them does not seem to have occurred to anyone until Sun Hsing-yen, acting under Government instructions, undertook a thorough recension of the text. This is his own

account: --

> Because of the numerous mistakes in the text of Sun Tzu which his editors had handed down, the Government ordered that the ancient edition [of Chi T`ien-pao] should be used, and that the text should be revised and corrected throughout. It happened that Wu Nien-hu, the Governor Pi Kua, and Hsi, a graduate of the second degree, had all devoted themselves to this study, probably surpassing me therein. Accordingly, I have had the whole work cut on blocks as a textbook for military men.

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

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

The Commentators

Sun Tzu can boast an exceptionally long distinguished roll of commentators, which would do honor to any classic. Ou-yang Hsiu remarks on this fact, though he wrote before the tale was

complete, and rather ingeniously explains it by saying that the artifices of war, being inexhaustible, must therefore be susceptible of treatment in a great variety of ways.

1. TS`AO TS`AO or Ts`ao Kung, afterwards known as Wei Wu Ti [A.D. 155-220]. There is hardly any room for doubt that the earliest commentary on Sun Tzu actually came from the pen of this extraordinary man, whose biography in the SAN KUO CHIH reads like a romance. One of the greatest military geniuses that the world has seen, and Napoleonic in the scale of his operations, he was especially famed for the marvelous rapidity of his marches, which has found expression in the line "Talk of Ts`ao Ts`ao, and Ts`ao Ts`ao will appear." Ou-yang Hsiu says of him that he was a great captain who "measured his strength against Tung Cho, Lu Pu and the two Yuan, father and son, and vanquished them all; whereupon he divided the Empire of Han with Wu and Shu, and made himself king. It is recorded that whenever a council of war was held by Wei on the eve of a far-reaching campaign, he had all his calculations ready; those generals who made use of them did not lose one battle in ten; those who ran counter to them in any particular saw their armies incontinently beaten and put to flight." Ts`ao Kung's notes on Sun Tzu, models of austere brevity, are so thoroughly characteristic of the stern commander known to history, that it is hard indeed to conceive of them as the work of a mere LITTERATEUR. Sometimes, indeed, owing to extreme compression, they are scarcely intelligible and stand no less in need of a commentary than the text itself. [40]

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

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

4. TU YU (died 812) did not publish a separate commentary

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

5. TU MU (803-852) is perhaps the best known as a poet -- a bright star even in the glorious galaxy of the T`ang period. We learn from Ch`ao Kung-wu that although he had no practical experience of war, he was extremely fond of discussing the subject, and was moreover well read in the military history of the CH`UN CH`IU and CHAN KUO eras. His notes, therefore, are well worth attention. They are very copious, and replete with historical parallels. The gist of Sun Tzu's work is thus summarized by him: "Practice benevolence and justice, but on the other hand make full use of artifice and measures of expediency." He further declared that all the military triumphs and disasters of the thousand years which had elapsed since Sun Tzu's death would, upon examination, be found to uphold and corroborate, in every particular, the maxims contained in his book. Tu Mu's somewhat spiteful charge against Ts`ao Kung has already been considered elsewhere.

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

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

8. MEI YAO-CH`EN (1002-1060), commonly known by his "style" as Mei Sheng-yu, was, like Tu Mu, a poet of distinction. His commentary was published with a laudatory preface by the great

Ou-yang Hsiu, from which we may cull the following: --

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

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

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

10. HO YEN-HSI of the Sung dynasty. The personal name of this commentator is given as above by Cheng Ch`iao in the TUNG CHIH, written about the middle of the twelfth century, but he appears simply as Ho Shih in the YU HAI, and Ma Tuan-lin quotes Ch`ao Kung-wu as saying that his personal name is unknown. There seems to be no reason to doubt Cheng Ch`iao's statement, otherwise I should have been inclined to hazard a guess and identify him with one Ho Ch`u-fei, the author of a short treatise on war, who lived in the latter part of the 11th century. Ho

Shih's commentary, in the words of the T`IEN-I-KO catalogue, "contains helpful additions" here and there, but is chiefly remarkable for the copious extracts taken, in adapted form, from the dynastic histories and other sources.

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

It is rather remarkable that the last-named four should all have flourished within so short a space of time. Ch`ao Kung-wu accounts for it by saying: "During the early years of the Sung dynasty the Empire enjoyed a long spell of peace, and men ceased to practice the art of war. but when [Chao] Yuan-hao's rebellion came [1038-42] and the frontier generals were defeated time after time, the Court made strenuous inquiry for men skilled in war, and military topics became the vogue amongst all the high officials. Hence it is that the commentators of Sun Tzu in our dynasty belong mainly to that period. [47]

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

Appreciations of Sun Tzu

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

essays on military topics, all of which owe their chief inspiration to Sun Tzu. The following short passage by him is preserved in the YU HAI: [54] --

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

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

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

Chu Hsi, commenting on this, fully admits the first part of the criticism, although he dislikes the audacious comparison with the venerated classical works. Language of this sort, he says, "encourages a ruler's bent towards unrelenting warfare and reckless militarism."

Apologies for War

Accustomed as we are to think of China as the greatest peace-loving nation on earth, we are in some danger of forgetting that her experience of war in all its phases has also been such as no modern State can parallel. Her long military annals stretch back to a point at which they are lost in the mists of time. She had built the Great Wall and was maintaining a huge standing army along her frontier centuries before the first Roman legionary was seen on the Danube. What with the perpetual collisions of the ancient feudal States, the grim conflicts with Huns, Turks and other invaders after the centralization of government, the terrific upheavals which accompanied the overthrow of so many dynasties, besides the countless rebellions and minor disturbances that have flamed up and flickered out

again one by one, it is hardly too much to say that the clash of arms has never ceased to resound in one portion or another of the Empire.

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

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

> Military weapons are the means used by the Sage to punish violence and cruelty, to give peace to troublous times, to remove difficulties and dangers, and to succor those who are in peril. Every animal with blood in its veins and horns on its head will fight when it is attacked. How much more so will man, who carries in his breast the faculties of love and hatred, joy and anger! When he is pleased, a feeling of affection springs up within him; when angry, his poisoned sting is brought into play. That is the natural law which governs his being.... What then shall be said of those scholars of our time, blind to all great issues, and without any appreciation of relative values, who can only bark out their stale formulas about "virtue" and "civilization," condemning the use of military weapons? They will surely bring our country to impotence and dishonor and the loss of her rightful heritage; or, at the very least, they will bring about invasion and rebellion, sacrifice of territory and general enfeeblement. Yet they obstinately refuse to modify the position they have taken up. The truth is that, just as in the family the teacher must not spare the rod, and punishments cannot be dispensed with in the State,

so military chastisement can never be allowed to fall into abeyance in the Empire. All one can say is that this power will be exercised wisely by some, foolishly by others, and that among those who bear arms some will be loyal and others rebellious. [58]

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

War may be defined as punishment, which is one of the functions of government. It was the profession of Chung Yu and Jan Ch`iu, both disciples of Confucius. Nowadays, the holding of trials and hearing of litigation, the imprisonment of offenders and their execution by flogging in the market-place, are all done by officials. But the wielding of huge armies, the throwing down of fortified cities, the hauling of women and children into captivity, and the beheading of traitors -- this is also work which is done by officials. The objects of the rack and of military weapons are essentially the same. There is no intrinsic difference between the punishment of flogging and cutting off heads in war. For the lesser infractions of law, which are easily dealt with, only a small amount of force need be employed: hence the use of military weapons and wholesale decapitation. In both cases, however, the end in view is to get rid of wicked people, and to give comfort and relief to the good....

Chi-sun asked Jan Yu, saying: "Have you, Sir, acquired your military aptitude by study, or is it innate?" Jan Yu replied: "It has been acquired by study." [59] "How can that be so," said Chi-sun, "seeing that you are a disciple of Confucius?" "It is a fact," replied Jan Yu; "I was taught by Confucius. It is fitting that the great Sage should exercise both civil and military functions, though to be sure my instruction in the art of fighting has not yet gone very far."

Now, who the author was of this rigid distinction between the "civil" and the "military," and the limitation of each to a separate sphere of action, or in what year of which dynasty it was first introduced, is more than I can say. But, at any rate, it has come about that the members of the governing class are quite afraid of enlarging on military topics, or do so only in a shamefaced manner. If any are bold enough to discuss the subject, they are at once set down as eccentric individuals of coarse and brutal propensities. This is an extraordinary instance in which, through sheer lack of reasoning, men unhappily lose sight of fundamental principles.

When the Duke of Chou was minister under Ch`eng Wang, he regulated ceremonies and made music, and venerated the arts of scholarship and learning; yet when the barbarians of the

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

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

Our Master Confucius, answering Duke Ling of Wei, said: "I have never studied matters connected with armies and battalions." [62] Replying to K`ung Wen-tzu, he said: I have not been instructed about buff-coats and weapons." But if we turn to the meeting at Chia-ku, we find that he used armed force against the men of Lai, so that the marquis of Ch`i was overawed. Again, when the inhabitants of Pi revolted, the ordered his officers to attack them, whereupon they were defeated and fled in confusion. He once uttered the words: "If I fight, I conquer." [63] And Jan Yu also said: "The Sage exercises both civil and military functions." [64] Can it be a fact that Confucius never studied or received instruction in the art of war? We can only say that he did not specially choose matters connected with armies and fighting to be the subject of his teaching.

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

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

The men of the present day, however, willfully interpret these words of Confucius in their narrowest sense, as though he meant that books on the art of war were not worth reading. With blind persistency, they adduce the example of Chao Kua, who pored over his father's books to no purpose, [67] as a proof that all military theory is useless. Again, seeing that books on war have to do with such things as opportunism

in designing plans, and the conversion of spies, they hold that the art is immoral and unworthy of a sage. These people ignore the fact that the studies of our scholars and the civil administration of our officials also require steady application and practice before efficiency is reached. The ancients were particularly chary of allowing mere novices to botch their work. [68] Weapons are baneful [69] and fighting perilous; and useless unless a general is in constant practice, he ought not to hazard other men's lives in battle. [70] Hence it is essential that Sun Tzu's 13 chapters should be studied.

Hsiang Liang used to instruct his nephew Chi [71] in the art of war. Chi got a rough idea of the art in its general bearings, but would not pursue his studies to their proper outcome, the consequence being that he was finally defeated and overthrown. He did not realize that the tricks and artifices of war are beyond verbal computation. Duke Hsiang of Sung and King Yen of Hsu were brought to destruction by their misplaced humanity. The treacherous and underhand nature of war necessitates the use of guile and stratagem suited to the occasion. There is a case on record of Confucius himself having violated an extorted oath, [72] and also of his having left the Sung State in disguise. [73] Can we then recklessly arraign Sun Tzu for disregarding truth and honesty?

Bibliography

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

1. WU TZU, in 1 CHUAN or 6 chapters. By Wu Ch`i (d. 381 B.C.). A genuine work. See SHIH CHI, ch. 65.

2. SSU-MA FA, in 1 CHUAN or 5 chapters. Wrongly attributed to Ssu-ma Jang-chu of the 6th century B.C. Its date, however, must be early, as the customs of the three ancient dynasties are constantly to be met within its pages. See SHIH CHI, ch. 64.

The SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU (ch. 99, f. 1) remarks that the oldest three treatises on war, SUN TZU, WU TZU and SSU-MA FA, are, generally speaking, only concerned with things strictly military -- the art of producing, collecting, training and drilling troops, and the correct theory with regard to measures of expediency, laying plans, transport of goods and the handling of soldiers -- in strong contrast to later works, in which the science of war is usually blended with metaphysics, divination

and magical arts in general.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

T`UNG TIEN (circa 800 A.D.), ch. 148-162.
T`AI P`ING YU LAN (983), ch. 270-359.
WEN HSIEN TUNG K`AO (13th cent.), ch. 221.
YU HAI (13th cent.), ch. 140, 141.
SAN TS`AI T`U HUI (16th cent).
KUANG PO WU CHIH (1607), ch. 31, 32.
CH`IEN CH`IO LEI SHU (1632), ch. 75.
YUAN CHIEN LEI HAN (1710), ch. 206-229.
KU CHIN T`U SHU CHI CH`ENG (1726), section XXX, esp. ch. 81-90.
HSU WEN HSIEN T`UNG K`AO (1784), ch. 121-134.
HUANG CH`AO CHING SHIH WEN PIEN (1826), ch. 76, 77.

The bibliographical sections of certain historical works also deserve mention: --

CH`IEN HAN SHU, ch. 30.
SUI SHU, ch. 32-35.
CHIU T`ANG SHU, ch. 46, 47.
HSIN T`ANG SHU, ch. 57,60.
SUNG SHIH, ch. 202-209.
T`UNG CHIH (circa 1150), ch. 68.

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

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

Footnotes
---

1. SHI CHI, ch. 65.

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

3. SHI CHI, ch. 130.

4. The appellation of Nang Wa.

5. SHI CHI, ch. 31.

6. SHI CHI, ch. 25.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15. See chap. XI.

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

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

18. He hardly deserves to be bracketed with assassins.

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

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

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

22. The nucleus of this work is probably genuine, though large

additions have been made by later hands. Kuan chung died in 645 B.C.

23. See infra, beginning of INTRODUCTION.

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

25. About 480 B.C.

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

27. In the 3rd century B.C.

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

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

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

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

32. This is explicitly stated in the TSO CHUAN, XXXII, 2.

33. There is this to be said for the later period, that the feud would tend to grow more bitter after each encounter, and thus more fully justify the language used in XI. ss. 30.

34. With Wu Yuan himself the case is just the reverse: -- a spurious treatise on war has been fathered on him simply because he was a great general. Here we have an obvious inducement to forgery. Sun Wu, on the other hand, cannot have been widely known to fame in the 5th century.

35. From TSO CHUAN: "From the date of King Chao's accession [515] there was no year in which Ch`u was not attacked by Wu."

36. Preface ad fin: "My family comes from Lo-an, and we are really descended from Sun Tzu. I am ashamed to say that I only read my ancestor's work from a literary point of view, without comprehending the military technique. So long have we been enjoying the blessings of peace!"

37. Hoa-yin is about 14 miles from T`ung-kuan on the eastern border of Shensi. The temple in question is still visited by those about the ascent of the Western Sacred Mountain. It is mentioned in a text as being "situated five LI east of the district city of Hua-yin. The temple contains the Hua-shan tablet inscribed by the T`ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung [713-755]."

38. See my "Catalogue of Chinese Books" (Luzac & Co., 1908), no. 40.

39. This is a discussion of 29 difficult passages in Sun Tzu.

40. Cf. Catalogue of the library of Fan family at Ningpo: "His commentary is frequently obscure; it furnishes a clue, but does not fully develop the meaning."

41. WEN HSIEN T`UNG K`AO, ch. 221.

42. It is interesting to note that M. Pelliot has recently discovered chapters 1, 4 and 5 of this lost work in the "Grottos of the Thousand Buddhas." See B.E.F.E.O., t. VIII, nos. 3-4, p. 525.

43. The Hsia, the Shang and the Chou. Although the last-named was nominally existent in Sun Tzu's day, it retained hardly a vestige of power, and the old military organization had practically gone by the board. I can suggest no other explanation of the passage.

44. See CHOU LI, xxix. 6-10.

45. T`UNG K`AO, ch. 221.

46. This appears to be still extant. See Wylie's "Notes," p. 91 (new edition).

47. T`UNG K`AO, loc. cit.

48. A notable person in his day. His biography is given in the SAN KUO CHIH, ch. 10.

49. See XI. ss. 58, note.

50. HOU HAN SHU, ch. 17 ad init.

51. SAN KUO CHIH, ch. 54.

52. SUNG SHIH, ch. 365 ad init.

53. The few Europeans who have yet had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with Sun Tzu are not behindhand in their praise. In this connection, I may perhaps be excused for quoting from a letter from Lord Roberts, to whom the sheets of the present work were submitted previous to publication: "Many of Sun Wu's maxims are perfectly applicable to the present day, and no. 11 [in Chapter VIII] is one that the people of this country would do well to take to heart."

54. Ch. 140.

55. See IV. ss. 3.

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

57. The TSO CHUAN.

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

59. Cf. SHIH CHI, ch 47.

60. See SHU CHING, preface ss. 55.

61. See SHIH CHI, ch. 47.

62. Lun Yu, XV. 1.

63. I failed to trace this utterance.

64. Supra.

65. Supra.

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

67. See XIII. ss. 11, note.

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

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

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

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

72. SHIH CHI, ch. 47.

73. SHIH CHI, ch. 38.

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

I. LAYING PLANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[The commentators, I think, make an unnecessary mystery of two words here. Meng Shih refers to "the hard and the soft,

waxing and waning" of Heaven. Wang Hsi, however, may be right in saying that what is meant is "the general economy of Heaven," including the five elements, the four seasons, wind and clouds, and other phenomena.]

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

9. The COMMANDER stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerely, 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. ss. 5.]

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

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

[See ss. 7,8]

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

[Tu Mu alludes to the remarkable story of Ts`ao Ts`ao (A.D. 155-220), who was such a strict disciplinarian that once, in accordance with his own severe regulations against injury to standing crops, he condemned himself to death for having allowed him horse to shy into a field of corn! However, in lieu of losing his head, he was persuaded to satisfy his sense of justice by cutting off his hair. Ts`ao Ts`ao's own comment on the

present passage is characteristically curt: "when you lay down a law, see that it is not disobeyed; if it is disobeyed the offender must be put to death."]

(5) Which army is stronger?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Sun Tzu, as a practical soldier, will have none of the "bookish 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.

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

II. WAGING WAR

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

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

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

with provisions enough to carry them a thousand LI,

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

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

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

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

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

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

[This concise and difficult sentence is not well explained by any of the commentators. Ts`ao Kung, Li Ch`uan, Meng Shih, Tu Yu, Tu Mu and Mei Yao-ch`en have notes to the effect that a general, though naturally stupid, may nevertheless conquer through sheer force of rapidity. Ho Shih says: "Haste may be stupid, but at any rate it saves expenditure of energy and treasure; protracted operations may be very clever, but they bring calamity in their train." Wang Hsi evades the difficulty by remarking: "Lengthy operations mean an army growing old, wealth being expended, an empty exchequer and distress among the people; true cleverness insures against the occurrence of such calamities." Chang Yu says: "So long as victory can be attained, stupid haste is preferable to clever dilatoriness." Now Sun Tzu says nothing whatever, except possibly by implication, about ill-considered haste being better than ingenious but lengthy operations. What he does say is something much more guarded, namely that, while speed may sometimes be injudicious, tardiness can never be anything but foolish -- if only because it means impoverishment to the nation. In considering the point raised here by Sun Tzu, the classic example of Fabius Cunctator will inevitably occur to the mind. That general deliberately measured the endurance of Rome against that of Hannibals's isolated army, because it seemed to him that the latter was more likely to suffer from a long campaign in a strange country. But it is quite a moot question whether his tactics would have proved successful in the long run. Their reversal it is true, led to Cannae; but this only establishes a negative presumption in their favor.]

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

prolonged warfare.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. This is called, using the conquered foe to augment

one's own strength.

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

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

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

III. ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

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

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

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

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

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

[Perhaps the word "balk" falls short of expressing the full force of the Chinese word, which implies not an attitude of defense, whereby one might be content to foil the enemy's stratagems one after another, but an active policy of counter-attack. Ho Shih puts this very clearly in his note: "When the enemy has made a plan of attack against us, we must anticipate him by delivering our own attack first."]

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

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

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

[When he is already at full strength.]

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

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

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

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

[It is not quite clear what the Chinese word, here translated as "mantlets", described. Ts`ao Kung simply defines them as "large shields," but we get a better idea of them from Li Ch`uan, who says they were to protect the heads of those who were assaulting the city walls at close quarters. This seems to suggest a sort of Roman TESTUDO, ready made. Tu Mu says they were wheeled vehicles used in repelling attacks, but this is denied by Ch`en Hao. See supra II. 14. The name is also applied to turrets on city walls. Of the "movable shelters" we get a fairly clear description from several commentators. They were wooden missile-proof structures on four wheels, propelled from within, covered over with raw hides, and used in sieges to convey parties of men to and from the walls, for the purpose of filling up the encircling moat with earth. Tu Mu adds that they are now called "wooden donkeys."]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is the method of attacking by stratagem.

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

[Straightway, without waiting for any further advantage.]

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

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

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

9. If equally matched, we can offer battle;

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

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

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

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

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

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

[As Li Ch`uan tersely puts it: "Gap indicates deficiency; if the general's ability is not perfect (i.e. if he is not thoroughly versed in his profession), his army will lack strength."]

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

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

[Li Ch`uan adds the comment: "It is like tying together the legs of a thoroughbred, so that it is unable to gallop." One would naturally think of "the ruler" in this passage as being at home, and trying to direct the movements of his army from a distance. But the commentators understand just the reverse, and quote the saying of T`ai Kung: "A kingdom should not be

governed from without, and army should not be directed from within." Of course it is true that, during an engagement, or when in close touch with the enemy, the general should not be in the thick of his own troops, but a little distance apart. Otherwise, he will be liable to misjudge the position as a whole, and give wrong orders.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

right to take the offensive or the defensive.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Li Ch`uan cites the case of Fu Chien, prince of Ch`in, who in 383 A.D. marched with a vast army against the Chin Emperor. When warned not to despise an enemy who could command the services of such men as Hsieh An and Huan Ch`ung, he boastfully replied: "I have the population of eight provinces at my back, infantry and horsemen to the number of one million; why, they could dam up the 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 ss. 1-3, in spite of the fact that the commentators are all against me. The meaning they give, "He who cannot conquer takes the defensive," is plausible enough.]

6. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength.
7. The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most

secret recesses of the earth;

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

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

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

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

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

[As Ts`ao Kung remarks, "the thing is to see the plant before it has germinated," to foresee the event before the action has begun. Li Ch`uan alludes to the story of Han Hsin who, when about to attack the vastly superior army of Chao, which was strongly entrenched in the city of Ch`eng-an, said to his officers: "Gentlemen, we are going to annihilate the enemy, and shall meet again at dinner." The officers hardly took his words seriously, and gave a very dubious assent. But Han Hsin had already worked out in his mind the details of a clever stratagem, whereby, as he foresaw, he was able to capture the city and inflict a crushing defeat on his adversary."]

9. Neither is it the acme of excellence if you fight and conquer and the whole Empire says, "Well done!"

[True excellence being, as Tu Mu says: "To plan secretly, to move surreptitiously, to foil the enemy's intentions and balk his schemes, so that at last the day may be won without shedding a drop of blood." Sun Tzu reserves his approbation for things that

"the world's coarse thumb
And finger fail to plumb."]

10. To lift an autumn hair is no sign of great strength;

["Autumn" hair" is explained as the fur of a hare, which is finest in autumn, when it begins to grow afresh. The phrase is a very common one in Chinese writers.]

to see the sun and moon is no sign of sharp sight; to hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear.

[Ho Shih gives as real instances of strength, sharp sight and quick hearing: Wu Huo, who could lift a tripod weighing 250 stone; Li Chu, who at a distance of a hundred paces could see objects no bigger than a mustard seed; and Shih K`uang, a blind musician who could hear the footsteps of a mosquito.]

11. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.

[The last half is literally "one who, conquering, excels in easy conquering." Mei Yao-ch`en says: "He who only sees the obvious, wins his battles with difficulty; he who looks below the surface of things, wins with ease."]

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

[Tu Mu explains this very well: "Inasmuch as his victories are gained over circumstances that have not come to light, the world as large knows nothing of them, and he wins no reputation for wisdom; inasmuch as the hostile state submits before there has been any bloodshed, he receives no credit for courage."]

13. He wins his battles by making no mistakes.

[Ch`en Hao says: "He plans no superfluous marches, he devises no futile attacks." The connection of ideas is thus explained by Chang Yu: "One who seeks to conquer by sheer strength, clever though he may be at winning pitched battles, is also liable on occasion to be vanquished; whereas he who can look into the future and discern conditions that are not yet manifest, will never make a blunder and therefore invariably win."]

Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated.

14. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.

[A "counsel of perfection" as Tu Mu truly observes. "Position" need not be confined to the actual ground occupied by the troops. It includes all the arrangements and preparations which a wise general will make to increase the safety of his army.]

15. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.

[Ho Shih thus expounds the paradox: "In warfare, first lay

plans which will ensure victory, and then lead your army to battle; if you will not begin with stratagem but rely on brute strength alone, victory will no longer be assured."]

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

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

18. Measurement owes its existence to Earth; Estimation of quantity to Measurement; Calculation to Estimation of quantity; Balancing of chances to Calculation; and Victory to Balancing of chances.

[It is not easy to distinguish the four terms very clearly in the Chinese. The first seems to be surveying and measurement of the ground, which enable us to form an estimate of the enemy's strength, and to make calculations based on the data thus obtained; we are thus led to a general weighing-up, or comparison of the enemy's chances with our own; if the latter turn the scale, then victory ensues. The chief difficulty lies in third term, which in the Chinese some commentators take as a calculation of NUMBERS, thereby making it nearly synonymous with the second term. Perhaps the second term should be thought of as a consideration of the enemy's general position or condition, while the third term is the estimate of his numerical strength. On the other hand, Tu Mu says: "The question of relative strength having been settled, we can bring the varied resources of cunning into play." Ho Shih seconds this interpretation, but weakens it. However, it points to the third term as being a calculation of numbers.]

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

[Literally, "a victorious army is like an I (20 oz.) weighed against a SHU (1/24 oz.); a routed army is a SHU weighed against an I." The point is simply the enormous advantage which a disciplined force, flushed with victory, has over one demoralized by defeat." Legge, in his note on Mencius, I. 2. ix. 2, makes the I to be 24 Chinese ounces, and corrects Chu Hsi's statement that it equaled 20 oz. only. But Li Ch`uan of the T`ang dynasty here gives the same figure as Chu Hsi.]

20. The onrush of a conquering force is like the bursting of pent-up waters into a chasm a thousand fathoms deep.

V. ENERGY

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

[That is, cutting up the army into regiments, companies, etc., with subordinate officers in command of each. Tu Mu reminds us of Han Hsin's famous reply to the first Han Emperor, who once said to him: "How large an army do you think I could lead?" "Not more than 100,000 men, your Majesty." "And you?" asked the Emperor. "Oh!" he answered, "the more the better."]

2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

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

[We now come to one of the most interesting parts of Sun Tzu's treatise, the discussion of the CHENG and the CH`I." As it is by no means easy to grasp the full significance of these two terms, or to render them consistently by good English equivalents; it may be as well to tabulate some of the commentators' remarks on the subject before proceeding further. Li Ch`uan: "Facing the enemy is CHENG, making lateral diversion is CH`I. Chia Lin: "In presence of the enemy, your troops should be arrayed in normal fashion, but in order to secure victory abnormal maneuvers must be employed." Mei Yao-ch`en: "CH`I is active, CHENG is passive; passivity means waiting for an opportunity, activity beings the victory itself." Ho Shih: "We must cause the enemy to regard our straightforward attack as one that is secretly designed, and vice versa; thus CHENG may also be CH`I, and CH`I may also be CHENG." He instances the famous exploit of Han Hsin, who when marching ostensibly against Lin-chin (now Chao-i in Shensi), suddenly threw a large force across the Yellow River in wooden tubs, utterly disconcerting his opponent. [Ch`ien Han Shu, ch. 3.] Here, we are told, the march on Lin-chin was CHENG, and the surprise maneuver was CH`I." Chang Yu gives the following summary of opinions on the words: "Military writers do not agree with regard to the meaning of CH`I and CHENG. Wei Liao Tzu [4th cent. B.C.] says: 'Direct warfare favors frontal attacks, indirect warfare attacks from the rear.' Ts`ao Kung says: 'Going straight out to join battle is a direct operation; appearing on the enemy's rear is an indirect maneuver.' Li Wei-kung [6th and 7th cent. A.D.] says: 'In war, to march straight ahead is CHENG; turning movements, on the other hand, are CH`I.' These writers simply regard CHENG as CHENG, and

CH`I as CH`I; they do not note that the two are mutually interchangeable and run into each other like the two sides of a circle [see infra, ss. 11]. A comment on the T`ang Emperor T`ai Tsung goes to the root of the matter: 'A CH`I maneuver may be CHENG, if we make the enemy look upon it as CHENG; then our real attack will be CH`I, and vice versa. The whole secret lies in confusing the enemy, so that he cannot fathom our real intent.'" To put it perhaps a little more clearly: any attack or other operation is CHENG, on which the enemy has had his attention fixed; whereas that is CH`I," which takes him by surprise or comes from an unexpected quarter. If the enemy perceives a movement which is meant to be CH`I," it immediately becomes CHENG."]

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

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

[Chang Yu says: "Steadily develop indirect tactics, either by pounding the enemy's flanks or falling on his rear." A brilliant example of "indirect tactics" which decided the fortunes of a campaign was Lord Roberts' night march round the Peiwar Kotal in the second Afghan war. [1]

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhausible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.

[Tu Yu and Chang Yu understand this of the permutations of CH`I and CHENG." But at present Sun Tzu is not speaking of CHENG at all, unless, indeed, we suppose with Cheng Yu-hsien that a clause relating to it has fallen out of the text. Of course, as has already been pointed out, the two are so inextricably interwoven in all military operations, that they cannot really be considered apart. Here we simply have an expression, in figurative language, of the almost infinite resource of a great leader.]

7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.

9 There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more

flavors than can ever be tasted.

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

11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle - you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

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

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

[The Chinese here is tricky and a certain key word in the context it is used defies the best efforts of the translator. Tu Mu defines this word as "the measurement or estimation of distance." But this meaning does not quite fit the illustrative simile in ss. 15. Applying this definition to the falcon, it seems to me to denote that instinct of SELF RESTRAINT which keeps the bird from swooping on its quarry until the right moment, together with the power of judging when the right moment has arrived. The analogous quality in soldiers is the highly important one of being able to reserve their fire until the very instant at which it will be most effective. When the "Victory" went into action at Trafalgar at hardly more than drifting pace, she was for several minutes exposed to a storm of shot and shell before replying with a single gun. Nelson coolly waited until he was within close range, when the broadside he brought to bear worked fearful havoc on the enemy's nearest ships.]

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

[The word "decision" would have reference to the measurement of distance mentioned above, letting the enemy get near before striking. But I cannot help thinking that Sun Tzu meant to use the word in a figurative sense comparable to our own idiom "short and sharp." Cf. Wang Hsi's note, which after describing the falcon's mode of attack, proceeds: "This is just how the 'psychological moment' should be seized in war."]

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

[None of the commentators seem to grasp the real point of the simile of energy and the force stored up in the bent cross-bow until released by the finger on the trigger.]

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

proof against defeat.

[Mei Yao-ch`en says: "The subdivisions of the army having been previously fixed, and the various signals agreed upon, the separating and joining, the dispersing and collecting which will take place in the course of a battle, may give the appearance of disorder when no real disorder is possible. Your formation may be without head or tail, your dispositions all topsy-turvy, and yet a rout of your forces quite out of the question."]

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

[In order to make the translation intelligible, it is necessary to tone down the sharply paradoxical form of the original. Ts`ao Kung throws out a hint of the meaning in his brief note: "These things all serve to destroy formation and conceal one's condition." But Tu Mu is the first to put it quite plainly: "If you wish to feign confusion in order to lure the enemy on, you must first have perfect discipline; if you wish to display timidity in order to entrap the enemy, you must have extreme courage; if you wish to parade your weakness in order to make the enemy over-confident, you must have exceeding strength."]

18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision;

[See supra, ss. 1.]

concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy;

[The commentators strongly understand a certain Chinese word here differently than anywhere else in this chapter. Thus Tu Mu says: "seeing that we are favorably circumstanced and yet make no move, the enemy will believe that we are really afraid."]

masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

[Chang Yu relates the following anecdote of Kao Tsu, the first Han Emperor: "Wishing to crush the Hsiung-nu, he sent out spies to report on their condition. But the Hsiung-nu, forewarned, carefully concealed all their able-bodied men and well-fed horses, and only allowed infirm soldiers and emaciated cattle to be seen. The result was that spies one and all recommended the Emperor to deliver his attack. Lou Ching alone opposed them, saying: "When two countries go to war, they are

naturally inclined to make an ostentatious display of their strength. Yet our spies have seen nothing but old age and infirmity. This is surely some ruse on the part of the enemy, and it would be unwise for us to attack." The Emperor, however, disregarding this advice, fell into the trap and found himself surrounded at Po-teng."]

19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act.

[Ts`ao Kung's note is "Make a display of weakness and want." Tu Mu says: "If our force happens to be superior to the enemy's, weakness may be simulated in order to lure him on; but if inferior, he must be led to believe that we are strong, in order that he may keep off. In fact, all the enemy's movements should be determined by the signs that we choose to give him." Note the following anecdote of Sun Pin, a descendent of Sun Wu: In 341 B.C., the Ch`i State being at war with Wei, sent T`ien Chi and Sun Pin against the general P`ang Chuan, who happened to be a deadly personal enemy of the later. Sun Pin said: "The Ch`i State has a reputation for cowardice, and therefore our adversary despises us. Let us turn this circumstance to account." Accordingly, when the army had crossed the border into Wei territory, he gave orders to show 100,000 fires on the first night, 50,000 on the next, and the night after only 20,000. P`ang Chuan pursued them hotly, saying to himself: "I knew these men of Ch`i were cowards: their numbers have already fallen away by more than half." In his retreat, Sun Pin came to a narrow defile, with he calculated that his pursuers would reach after dark. Here he had a tree stripped of its bark, and inscribed upon it the words: "Under this tree shall P`ang Chuan die." Then, as night began to fall, he placed a strong body of archers in ambush near by, with orders to shoot directly they saw a light. Later on, P`ang Chuan arrived at the spot, and noticing the tree, struck a light in order to read what was written on it. His body was immediately riddled by a volley of arrows, and his whole army thrown into confusion. [The above is Tu Mu's version of the story; the SHIH CHI, less dramatically but probably with more historical truth, makes P`ang Chuan cut his own throat with an exclamation of despair, after the rout of his army.]]

He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.

20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

[With an emendation suggested by Li Ching, this then reads, "He lies in wait with the main body of his troops."]

21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals.

[Tu Mu says: "He first of all considers the power of his army in the bulk; afterwards he takes individual talent into account, and uses each men according to his capabilities. He does not demand perfection from the untalented."]

Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.

[Ts`au Kung calls this "the use of natural or inherent power."]

23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.

[The chief lesson of this chapter, in Tu Mu's opinion, is the paramount import