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Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

[Li Ch'uan sums up as follows: "Given a knowledge of three things--the affairs of men, the seasons of heaven and the natural advantages of earth--, victory will invariably crown your battles."]

[1] See "Pensees de Napoleon 1er," no. 47.

[2] "The Science of War," chap. 2.

[3] "Aids to Scouting," p. xii.

XI. THE NINE SITUATIONS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground.

2. When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory, it is dispersive ground.

[So called because the soldiers, being near to their homes and anxious to see their wives and children, are likely to seize the opportunity afforded by a battle and scatter in every direction. "In their advance," observes Tu Mu, "they will lack the valor of desperation, and when they retreat, they will find harbors of refuge."]

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

[Li Ch'uan and Ho Shih say "because of the facility for retreating," and the other commentators give similar explanations. Tu Mu remarks: "When your army has crossed the border, you should burn your boats and bridges, in order to make it clear to everybody that you have no hankering after home."]

4. Ground the possession of which imports great advantage to either side, is contentious ground.

[Tu Mu defines the ground as ground "to be contended for." Ts'ao Kung says: "ground on which the few and the weak can defeat the many and the strong," such as "the neck of a pass," instanced by Li Ch'uan. Thus, Thermopylae was of this classification because the possession of it, even for a few days only, meant holding the entire invading army in check and thus gaining invaluable time. Cf. Wu Tzu, ch. V. ad init.: "For those who have to fight in the ratio of one to ten, there is nothing better than a narrow pass." When Lu Kuang was returning from his triumphant expedition to Turkestan in 385 A.D., and had got as far as I-ho, laden with spoils, Liang Hsi, administrator of Liang-chou, taking advantage of the death of Fu Chien, King of Ch'in, plotted against him and was for barring his way into the

province. Yang Han, governor of Kao-ch'ang, counseled him,
saying: "Lu Kuang is fre