

ely to some extent on external aid; if he dispenses with this, and with overweening confidence in his own strength, simply tries to intimidate the enemy, he will surely be defeated." Chang Yu puts his view thus: "If we recklessly attack a large state, our own people will be discontented and hang back. But if (as will then be the case) our display of military force is inferior by half to that of the enemy, the other chieftains will take fright and refuse to join us."]

55. Hence he does not strive to ally himself with all and sundry, nor does he foster the power of other states. He carries out his own secret designs, keeping his antagonists in awe.

[The train of thought, as said by Li Ch'uan, appears to be this: Secure against a combination of his enemies, "he can afford to reject entangling alliances and simply pursue his own secret designs, his prestige enable him to dispense with external friendships."]

Thus he is able to capture their cities and overthrow their kingdoms.

[This paragraph, though written many years before the Ch'in State became a serious menace, is not a bad summary of the policy by which the famous Six Chancellors gradually paved the way for her final triumph under Shih Huang Ti. Chang Yu, following up his previous note, thinks that Sun Tzu is condemning this attitude of cold-blooded selfishness and haughty isolation.]

56. Bestow rewards without regard to rule,

[Wu Tzu (ch. 3) less wisely says: "Let advance be richly rewarded and retreat be heavily punished."]

issue orders

[Literally, "hang" or post up."]

without regard to previous arrangements;

["In order to prevent treachery," says Wang Hsi. The general meaning is made clear by Ts'ao Kung's quotation from the SSU-MA FA: "Give instructions only on sighting the enemy; give rewards when you see deserving deeds." Ts'ao Kung's paraphrase: "The final instructions you give to your army should not correspond with those that have been previously posted up." Chang Yu simplifies this into "your arrangements should not be divulged beforehand." And Chia Lin says: "there should be no fixity in your rules and arrangements." Not only is there danger in letting your plans be known, but war often necessitates the entire reversal of them at the last moment.]

and you will be able to handle a whole army as though you had to do with but a single man.

[Cf. supra, ss. 34.]

57. Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design.

[Literally, "do not tell them words;" i.e. do not give your reasons for any order. Lord Mansfield once told