

the enemy
to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can
make it impossible for the enemy to draw near.

[In the first case, he will entice him with a bait; in the
second, he will strike at some important point which the enemy
will have to defend.]

4. If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him;

[This passage may be cited as evidence against Mei Yao-
Ch'en's interpretation of I. ss. 23.]

if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly
encamped, he can force him to move.

5. Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend;
march swiftly to places where you are not expected.

6. An army may march great distances without distress, if
it marches through country where the enemy is not.

[Ts'ao Kung sums up very well: "Emerge from the void [q.d.
like "a bolt from the blue"], strike at vulnerable points, shun
places that are defended, attack in unexpected quarters."]

7. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you
only attack places which are undefended.

[Wang Hsi explains "undefended places" as "weak points; that
is to say, where the general is lacking in capacity, or the
soldiers in spirit; where the walls are not strong enough, or the
precautions not strict enough; where relief comes too late, or
provisions are too scanty, or the defenders are variance amongst
themselves."]

You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold
positions that cannot be attacked.

[I.e., where there are none of the weak points mentioned
above. There is rather a nice point involved in the
interpretation of this later clause. Tu Mu, Ch'en Hao, and Mei
Yao-ch'en assume the meaning to be: "In order to make your
defense quite safe, you must defend EVEN those places that are
not likely to be attacked;" and Tu Mu adds: "How much more,
then, those that will be attacked." Taken thus, however, the
clause balances less well with the preceding--always a
consideration in the highly antithetical style which is natural
to the Chinese. Chang Yu, therefore, seems to come nearer the
mark in saying: "He who is skilled in attack flashes forth from
the topmost heights of heaven [see IV. ss. 7], making it
impossible for the enemy to guard against him. This being so,
the places that I shall attack are precisely those that the enemy
cannot defend.... He who is skilled in defense hides in the most
secret recesses of the earth, making it impossible for the enemy
to estimate his whereabouts. This being so, the places that I
shall hold are precisely those that the enemy cannot attack."]