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—*Newsweek*

THE ART OF WAR

SUN TZU

Translated by
THOMAS CLEARY

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- Group 4: The Classified

THE
ART OF WAR

SUN TZU

THE OLDEST MILITARY TREATISE IN THE WORLD

Translated from the Chinese with

Introduction and Critical Notes

BY

LIONEL GILES, M.A.

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

| 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

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] --

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.

[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?

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.

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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."]

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

[Tu Mu explains: "Though the enemy may have clever and capable officers, they will not be able to lay any plans against us."]

26. How victory may be produced for them out of the enemy's own tactics--that is what the multitude cannot comprehend.

27. All men can see the tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved.

[I.e., everybody can see superficially how a battle is won; what they cannot see is the long series of plans and combinations which has preceded the battle.]

28. Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

[As Wang Hsi sagely remarks: "There is but one root- principle underlying victory, but the tactics which lead up to it are infinite in number." With this compare Col. Henderson: "The rules of strategy are few and simple. They may be learned in a week. They may be taught by familiar illustrations or a dozen diagrams. But such knowledge will no more teach a man to lead an army like Napoleon than a knowledge of grammar will teach him to write like Gibbon."]

29. Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards.

30. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak.

[Like water, taking the line of least resistance.]

31. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.

value of a whole army--a mighty host of a million men--is dependent on one man alone: such is the influence of spirit!"]

a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind.

[Chang Yu says: "Presence of mind is the general's most important asset. It is the quality which enables him to discipline disorder and to inspire courage into the panic- stricken." The great general Li Ching (A.D. 571-649) has a saying: "Attacking does not merely consist in assaulting walled cities or striking at an army in battle array; it must include the art of assailing the enemy's mental equilibrium."]

28. Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning;

[Always provided, I suppose, that he has had breakfast. At the battle of the Trebia, the Romans were foolishly allowed to fight fasting, whereas Hannibal's men had breakfasted at their leisure. See Livy, XXI, liv. 8, lv. 1 and 8.]

by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp.

29. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods.

30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy:--this is the art of retaining self-possession.

31. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished:--this is the art of husbanding one's strength.

32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:--this is the art of studying circumstances.

of Chao Ying-ch`i, a general of the Chin State who during a battle with the army of Ch`u in 597 B.C. had a boat kept in readiness for him on the river, wishing in case of defeat to be the first to get across.]

(3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;

[Tu Mu tells us that Yao Hsing, when opposed in 357 A.D. by Huang Mei, Teng Ch`iang and others shut himself up behind his walls and refused to fight. Teng Ch`iang said: "Our adversary is of a choleric temper and easily provoked; let us make constant sallies and break down his walls, then he will grow angry and come out. Once we can bring his force to battle, it is doomed to be our prey." This plan was acted upon, Yao Hsiang came out to fight, was lured as far as San-yuan by the enemy's pretended flight, and finally attacked and slain.]

(4) a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame;

[This need not be taken to mean that a sense of honor is really a defect in a general. What Sun Tzu condemns is rather an exaggerated sensitiveness to slanderous reports, the thin-skinned man who is stung by opprobrium, however undeserved. Mei Yao- ch`en truly observes, though somewhat paradoxically: "The seek after glory should be careless of public opinion."]

(5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

[Here again, Sun Tzu does not mean that the general is to be careless of the welfare of his troops. All he wishes to emphasize is the danger of sacrificing any important military advantage to the immediate comfort of his men. This is a shortsighted policy, because in the long run the troops will suffer more from the defeat, or, at best, the prolongation of the war, which will be the consequence. A mistaken feeling of pity will often induce a general to relieve a beleaguered city, or to reinforce a hard-pressed detachment, contrary to his military instincts. It is now generally admitted that our repeated efforts to relieve Ladysmith in the South African War were so many strategical blunders which defeated their own purpose. And in the end, relief came through the very man who started out with the distinct resolve no longer to subordinate the interests of the whole to

"What I dread most is that the men of Yen may dig up the ancestral tombs outside the town, and by inflicting this indignity on our forefathers cause us to become faint-hearted.' Forthwith the besiegers dug up all the graves and burned the corpses lying in them. And the inhabitants of Chi-mo, witnessing the outrage from the city-walls, wept passionately and were all impatient to go out and fight, their fury being increased tenfold. T`ien Tan knew then that his soldiers were ready for any enterprise. But instead of a sword, he himself too a mattock in his hands, and ordered others to be distributed amongst his best warriors, while the ranks were filled up with their wives and concubines. He then served out all the remaining rations and bade his men eat their fill. The regular soldiers were told to keep out of sight, and the walls were manned with the old and weaker men and with women. This done, envoys were dispatched to the enemy's camp to arrange terms of surrender, whereupon the Yen army began shouting for joy. T`ien Tan also collected 20,000 ounces of silver from the people, and got the wealthy citizens of Chi-mo to send it to the Yen general with the prayer that, when the town capitulated, he would allow their homes to be plundered or their women to be maltreated. Ch`i Chieh, in high good humor, granted their prayer; but his army now became increasingly slack and careless. Meanwhile, T`ien Tan got together a thousand oxen, decked them with pieces of red silk, painted their bodies, dragon-like, with colored stripes, and fastened sharp blades on their horns and well-greased rushes on their tails. When night came on, he lighted the ends of the rushes, and drove the oxen through a number of holes which he had pierced in the walls, backing them up with a force of 5000 picked warriors. The animals, maddened with pain, dashed furiously into the enemy's camp where they caused the utmost confusion and dismay; for their tails acted as torches, showing up the hideous pattern on their bodies, and the weapons on their horns killed or wounded any with whom they came into contact. In the meantime, the band of 5000 had crept up with gags in their mouths, and now threw themselves on the enemy. At the same moment a frightful din arose in the city itself, all those that remained behind making as much noise as possible by banging drums and hammering on bronze vessels, until heaven and earth were convulsed by the uproar. Terror-stricken, the Yen army fled in disorder, hotly pursued by the men of Ch`i, who succeeded in

15. Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the FLIGHT of the former.

16. When the common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak, the result is INSUBORDINATION.

[Tu Mu cites the unhappy case of T`ien Pu [HSIN T`ANG SHU, ch. 148], who was sent to Wei in 821 A.D. with orders to lead an army against Wang T`ing-ts`ou. But the whole time he was in command, his soldiers treated him with the utmost contempt, and openly flouted his authority by riding about the camp on donkeys, several thousands at a time. T`ien Pu was powerless to put a stop to this conduct, and when, after some months had passed, he made an attempt to engage the enemy, his troops turned tail and dispersed in every direction. After that, the unfortunate man committed suicide by cutting his throat.]

When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak, the result is COLLAPSE.

[Ts`ao Kung says: "The officers are energetic and want to press on, the common soldiers are feeble and suddenly collapse."]

17. When the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, and on meeting the enemy give battle on their own account from a feeling of resentment, before the commander-in-chief can tell whether or no he is in a position to fight, the result is RUIN.

[Wang Hsi`s note is: "This means, the general is angry without cause, and at the same time does not appreciate the ability of his subordinate officers; thus he arouses fierce resentment and brings an avalanche of ruin upon his head."]

18. When the general is weak and without authority; when his orders are not clear and distinct;

[Wei Liao Tzu (ch. 4) says: "If the commander gives his orders with decision, the soldiers will not wait to hear them twice; if his moves are

[Because the attempt would be futile, and would expose the blocking force itself to serious risks. There are two interpretations available here. I follow that of Chang Yu. The other is indicated in Ts`ao Kung's brief note: "Draw closer together"--i.e., see that a portion of your own army is not cut off.]

On the ground of intersecting highways, join hands with your allies.

[Or perhaps, "form alliances with neighboring states."]

13. On serious ground, gather in plunder.

[On this, Li Ch`uan has the following delicious note: "When an army penetrates far into the enemy's country, care must be taken not to alienate the people by unjust treatment. Follow the example of the Han Emperor Kao Tsu, whose march into Ch`in territory was marked by no violation of women or looting of valuables. [Nota bene: this was in 207 B.C., and may well cause us to blush for the Christian armies that entered Peking in 1900 A.D.] Thus he won the hearts of all. In the present passage, then, I think that the true reading must be, not 'plunder,' but

'do not plunder.'" Alas, I fear that in this instance the worthy commentator's feelings outran his judgment. Tu Mu, at least, has no such illusions. He says: "When encamped on 'serious ground,' there being no inducement as yet to advance further, and no possibility of retreat, one ought to take measures for a protracted resistance by bringing in provisions from all sides, and keep a close watch on the enemy."]

In difficult ground, keep steadily on the march.

[Or, in the words of VIII. ss. 2, "do not encamp.]

14. On hemmed-in ground, resort to stratagem.

[Ts`au Kung says: "Try the effect of some unusual artifice;" and Tu Yu amplifies this by saying: "In such a position, some scheme must be devised which will suit the circumstances, and if we can succeed in deluding the enemy, the peril may be escaped." This is exactly what happened on the

[Ts`ao Kung gives us one of his excellent apophthegms: "The troops must not be allowed to share your schemes in the beginning; they may only rejoice with you over their happy outcome." "To mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy," is one of the first principles in war, as had been frequently pointed out. But how about the other process--the mystification of one's own men? Those who may think that Sun Tzu is over-emphatic on this point would do well to read Col. Henderson's remarks on Stonewall Jackson's Valley campaign: "The infinite pains," he says, "with which Jackson sought to conceal, even from his most trusted staff officers, his movements, his intentions, and his thoughts, a commander less thorough would have pronounced useless"--etc. etc. [3] In the year 88 A.D., as we read in ch. 47 of the HOU HAN SHU, "Pan Ch`ao took the field with 25,000 men from Khotan and other Central Asian states with the object of crushing Yarkand. The King of Kutcha replied by dispatching his chief commander to succor the place with an army drawn from the kingdoms of Wen-su, Ku-mo, and Wei-t`ou, totaling 50,000 men. Pan Ch`ao summoned his officers and also the King of Khotan to a council of war, and said: 'Our forces are now outnumbered and unable to make head against the enemy. The best plan, then, is for us to separate and disperse, each in a different direction. The King of Khotan will march away by the easterly route, and I will then return myself towards the west. Let us wait until the evening drum has sounded and then start.' Pan Ch`ao now secretly released the prisoners whom he had taken alive, and the King of Kutcha was thus informed of his plans. Much elated by the news, the latter set off at once at the head of 10,000 horsemen to bar Pan Ch`ao's retreat in the west, while the King of Wen-su rode eastward with 8000 horse in order to intercept the King of Khotan. As soon as Pan Ch`ao knew that the two chieftains had gone, he called his divisions together, got them well in hand, and at cock-crow hurled them against the army of Yarkand, as it lay encamped. The barbarians, panic-stricken, fled in confusion, and were closely pursued by Pan Ch`ao. Over 5000 heads were brought back as trophies, besides immense spoils in the shape of horses and cattle and valuables of every description. Yarkand then capitulating, Kutcha and the other kingdoms drew off their respective forces. From that time forward, Pan Ch`ao's prestige completely overawed the countries of the west." In this case, we see that the Chinese general not only kept his own officers in ignorance of his real

cavalry, every man of which was furnished with a red flag. Their instructions were to make their way through narrow defiles and keep a secret watch on the enemy. "When the men of Chao see me in full flight," Han Hsin said, "they will abandon their fortifications and give chase. This must be the sign for you to rush in, pluck down the Chao standards and set up the red banners of Han in their stead." Turning then to his other officers, he remarked: "Our adversary holds a strong position, and is not likely to come out and attack us until he sees the standard and drums of the commander-in-chief, for fear I should turn back and escape through the mountains." So saying, he first of all sent out a division consisting of 10,000 men, and ordered them to form in line of battle with their backs to the River Ti. Seeing this maneuver, the whole army of Chao broke into loud laughter. By this time it was broad daylight, and Han Hsin, displaying the generalissimo's flag, marched out of the pass with drums beating, and was immediately engaged by the enemy. A great battle followed, lasting for some time; until at length Han Hsin and his colleague Chang Ni, leaving drums and banner on the field, fled to the division on the river bank, where another fierce battle was raging. The enemy rushed out to pursue them and to secure the trophies, thus denuding their ramparts of men; but the two generals succeeded in joining the other army, which was fighting with the utmost desperation. The time had now come for the 2000 horsemen to play their part. As soon as they saw the men of Chao following up their advantage, they galloped behind the deserted walls, tore up the enemy's flags and replaced them by those of Han. When the Chao army looked back from the pursuit, the sight of these red flags struck them with terror. Convinced that the Hans had got in and overpowered their king, they broke up in wild disorder, every effort of their leader to stay the panic being in vain. Then the Han army fell on them from both sides and completed the rout, killing a number and capturing the rest, amongst whom was King Ya himself.... After the battle, some of Han Hsin's officers came to him and said: "In the ART OF WAR we are told to have a hill or tumulus on the right rear, and a river or marsh on the left front. [This appears to be a blend of Sun Tzu and T`ai Kung. See IX ss. 9, and note.] You, on the contrary, ordered us to draw up our troops with the river at our back. Under these conditions, how did you manage to gain the victory?" The general replied: "I fear you gentlemen have not studied the Art of War with sufficient care.

know how to assail our opponents with fire, but also be on our guard against similar attacks from them."]

13. Hence those who use fire as an aid to the attack show intelligence; those who use water as an aid to the attack gain an accession of strength.

14. By means of water, an enemy may be intercepted, but not robbed of all his belongings.

[Ts`ao Kung's note is: "We can merely obstruct the enemy's road or divide his army, but not sweep away all his accumulated stores." Water can do useful service, but it lacks the terrible destructive power of fire. This is the reason, Chang Yu concludes, why the former is dismissed in a couple of sentences, whereas the attack by fire is discussed in detail. Wu Tzu (ch. 4) speaks thus of the two elements: "If an army is encamped on low-lying marshy ground, from which the water cannot run off, and where the rainfall is heavy, it may be submerged by a flood. If an army is encamped in wild marsh lands thickly overgrown with weeds and brambles, and visited by frequent gales, it may be exterminated by fire."]

15. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise; for the result is waste of time and general stagnation.

[This is one of the most perplexing passages in Sun Tzu. Ts`ao Kung says: "Rewards for good service should not be deferred a single day." And Tu Mu: "If you do not take opportunity to advance and reward the deserving, your subordinates will not carry out your commands, and disaster will ensue." For several reasons, however, and in spite of the formidable array of scholars on the other side, I prefer the interpretation suggested by Mei Yao-ch`en alone, whose words I will quote: "Those who want to make sure of succeeding in their battles and assaults must seize the favorable moments when they come and not shrink on occasion from heroic measures: that is to say, they must resort to such means of attack of fire, water and the like. What they must not do, and what will prove fatal, is to sit still and simply hold to the advantages they have got."]