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Everard Ferguson Calthrop

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CLASSIC OF THE FAR EAST\*\*\*

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Transcriber's note:

Text enclosed by underscores is in italics (\_italics\_).

Changes made are listed at the end of the text.

THE BOOK OF WAR

The Military Classic of the Far East

Translated from the Chinese by

CAPTAIN E. F. CALTHROP, R.F.A.

London

John Murray, Albemarle St., W.

1908

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THE BOOK OF WAR

INTRODUCTION

I

Written in the fifth century B.C., Suntzu and Wutzu still remain the

most celebrated works on war in the literature of China. While the

chariot has gone, and weapons have changed, these ancient masters have

held their own, since they deal chiefly with the fundamental principles

of war, with the influence of politics and human nature on military

operations; and they show in a most striking way how unchanging these

principles are.

When these books were written, China was a conglomerate of

principalities in continual ferment. Personal ambition and intrigue,

and not the wishes of the people, were the main factors in these wars.

Patriotism, or a popular cause, could not, therefore, be relied on

to maintain the \_moral\_ of the levies. Instead of these, what may be

called the force of despair is pointed out as the most powerful agent

in giving cohesion and energy to an army. The general is urged to

take a vigorous offensive; and to act at a distance from his base,

where defeat means disaster, and where desertion is minimised owing to

the distance from home. He should, in fact, burn his boats before an

action, or, in Chinese phrase, act as one who removes the ladder from

under those mounted upon the roof.

On the other hand, every care must be taken not to render the enemy

desperate; and, as an instance of this, Sun observes that an opponent

should on no account be completely surrounded. A loop-hole of escape

weakens the resolution of the general and the energy of his troops.

It is interesting to notice that \_moral\_, or the spirit of the troops,

is thus considered a determining factor in war. The Chinese are

perhaps unusually affected by climatic conditions. As is well known,

the umbrella was part of a soldier's equipment; and for the same

reasons, the sunny side of high ground is recommended as most suitable

for defence, tactical considerations permitting.

The large number of bannermen in the Chinese army was out of all

proportion to the service of standards in providing rallying points.

The chief use of banners was to maintain the spirit of the troops.

A forest of banners, held erect, gave a feeling of liveliness and

security to the ranks, in the same way as a military band, and when Sun

remarks that the march of an army should be calm like the forest, he is

using a simile that is not inappropriate.

Probably owing to the fact that the profession of arms has never been

highly regarded in China, we find that the ruler of the state did not

usually take the field, but employed a professional to command the

army--one of the masters of war who wandered from state to state at

that time with the secrets of victory to impart to the highest bidder.

The question of political interference with the general in the field

naturally arises under these conditions. The two sages point out, that

to unite the nation under firm and just government is the business of

the ruler and necessary to victory; but that the general is the best

judge of the questions that arise on a distant field, and that all

interference with him causes delay and disaster.

War meaning ravage, it was essential that the operations should be

conducted in the enemy's territory. Once there, however, a vigorous

offensive is no longer advised. "At first behave with the discretion of

a maiden" is the counsel of Sun. The enemy must be induced to take the

initiative, and when he is worn out by marching, or makes a false move,

"then," says the master, "dart in like a rabbit."

Unlike the tactics of the Japanese, in whom the spirit of attack

burns so strongly, those of Suntzu and Wutzu are essentially of

the offensive-defensive order--manoeuvre before fighting, and

non-committal until the enemy has shown his hand. The business of the

general is to avoid encounter in battle until the enemy is no longer

capable of offering a successful resistance.

The masters do not make, however, the mistake of advocating a passive

defensive. Suntzu lays down that the division of the forces which this

strategy involves, is to be everywhere weak, rendering the army liable

to be taken in detail by the concentrated forces of the enemy. It is

rather the defence which avoids battle by mobility and manoeuvre,

induces the enemy by stratagem to divide his forces, or act in

conformity with our wishes, and then falls upon him.

With regard to the tactics of the battlefield, the pitched battle,

or, in other words, the frontal attack, is considered unworthy of the

skilful general. The plan of attack should consist, broadly speaking,

in the division of the army into two forces. The enemy is "attracted

and engaged by one force, and defeated with the other;" and here we

have the containing or secondary attack, and the main or reserve force

which decides the battle of to-day--a most striking instance of the

continuity of military principles.

Considerable space is devoted to the influence of ground on war. The

passage of defiles and rivers is still conducted in the same way. The

many large rivers of China naturally affected military operations; and,

among other axioms, it is laid down that the passage of a river should

not be disputed, as the enemy will probably give up the attempt, and

make the passage untouched at some other point, but that he should

be attacked when half his force is across the stream. Again, an army

should not encamp on a river below the enemy, as it is thereby liable

to be inundated, or to have its water poisoned; or the enemy may come

down stream and make a sudden attack.

While both writers were professional soldiers, they show a fine

disinterestedness by repeatedly pointing out that even successful

war brings evil in its train. Wu remarks that "few are those who have

gained power on earth by many victories," and he is insistent that war

should not be undertaken until a careful comparison of the two sides

shows that victory is certain; and he adds, "The army which conquers

makes certain of victory and then attacks, while the army that is

defeated fights in the hope of success."

Hence the importance they assign to intelligence of the enemy, and to

the spy; and as the sages dealt with war between members of the same

race, the work of spies was greatly facilitated. The spy was treated

with great honour by his countrymen, and the fact that many of the

national heroes of China were spies, shows that the part that they

played was not forgotten. They frequently toiled for years, and rose

to high rank in the enemy's service; and thus, by wrong counsel and by

spreading mistrust in his ranks, they became a two-edged sword in the

hands of the general. "Wonderful, indeed, is their power," exclaims

Sun; but he also reminds us that their management is the most difficult

and delicate duty of the general.

II

Sun and Wu are perhaps held in even greater reverence in Japan than

in China, where war is looked upon as a troublesome phase in national

life, and victory in battle is not considered the greatest achievement

of a state. Far otherwise is it in Japan; and successive generations

of her soldiers have been brought up on Sun and Wu. Like other arts,

mystery was formerly supposed to surround the art of war, a belief that

was encouraged by the strategist; and for a considerable time, the few

copies of this book, that were brought over from China to Japan, were

jealously guarded by their possessors. Later, as they became known, an

army of Japanese commentators arose--for Chinese literature is thought

compressed, to be unfolded in the mind of the reader.

To-day Sun and Wu have given way to the scientific works of European

writers, but their sayings have become proverbs, and their influence

undoubtedly helped the Japanese to victory in the late war. Belief

in the importance of a knowledge of the enemy and his resources, of

preparation and training, had grown out of a long study of these

ancient masters; and since it was the vital importance of a successful

issue to the Japanese which, after all, fired their resolution and

carried them through, they proved the sage's words that it is the

energy, born of despair, that wins the victory.

III

Little is known of the life of either master. They were in no sense

patriots but professional strategists, continually changing their

employer. Chinese history tells a famous story about Sun. A certain

ruler asked Sun to give a practical demonstration of his principles in

the neighbourhood of the palace, and entrusted him with the women of

the court for this purpose. During the operations, the leader of one of

the sides did not obey the master's instructions, and her execution was

ordered. She happened to be the king's favourite wife, but Sun pointed

out that the king's wish that her life should be spared was a case of

political interference with the general in the field; and the sentence

was carried out.

Wu is represented as a person of low moral character. On two separate

occasions, for fear of giving rise to suspicion, he killed one of his

wives who belonged to a state with which his employer at the time was

at war; and, graver still in the eyes of the Chinese historian, he was

not present at the death-bed of his mother.

E. F. C.

NOTE.

The translator is indebted to Major J. C. Somerville for his kind help

and criticism.

THE ARTICLES OF SUNTZU

I

PRELIMINARY RECKONING

The words of Sun the Master:--

To all nations War is a great matter. Upon the army death or life

depend: it is the means of the existence or destruction \_of the State\_.

Therefore it must be diligently studied.

Now, in war, besides stratagem and the situation, there are five

indispensable matters. The first is called The Way;[1] the second,

Heaven; the third, Earth; the fourth, the Leader; the fifth, Law.

The \_Way\_ or the proper conduct of man. If the ruling authority be

upright, the people are united: fearless of danger, their lives are at

the service of their Lord.

\_Heaven.\_ Yin and Yang;[2] heat and cold; time and season.

\_Earth.\_ Distance; nature; extent; strategic position.

The \_Leader\_. Intelligence; truth; benevolence; courage and strictness.

\_Law.\_ Partition and ordering of troops.

These things must be known by the leader: to know them is to conquer;

to know them not is to be defeated.

Further, with regard to these and the following seven matters, the

condition of the enemy must be compared with our own.

The seven matters are:--

The virtue of the prince; the ability of the general; natural

advantages; the discipline of the armies; the strength of the soldiers;

training of the soldiers; justice both in reward and punishment.

Knowing these things, I can foretell the victor.

If a general under me fight according to my plans, he always conquers,

and I continue to employ him; if he differ from my plans, he will be

defeated and dismissed from my service.

Wherefore, with regard to the foregoing, considering that with us

lies the advantage, and the generals agreeing, we create a situation

which promises victory; but as the moment and method cannot be fixed

beforehand, the plan must be modified according to circumstances.

War is a thing of pretence: therefore, when capable of action, we

pretend disability; when near to the enemy, we pretend to be far; when

far away, we pretend to be near.

Allure the enemy by giving him a small advantage. Confuse and capture

him. If there be defects, give an appearance of perfection, and awe the

enemy. Pretend to be strong, and so cause the enemy to avoid you. Make

him angry, and confuse his plans. Pretend to be inferior, and cause him

to despise you. If he have superabundance of strength, tire him out;

if united, make divisions in his camp. Attack weak points, and appear

in unexpected places.

These are the secrets of the successful strategist, therefore they must

not be made known beforehand.

At the reckoning in the Sanctuary before fighting, victory is to the

side that excels \_in the foregoing matters\_. They that have many of

these will conquer; they that have few will not conquer; hopeless,

indeed, are they that have none.

If the condition of both sides with regard to these matters be known, I

can foretell the victor.

II

OPERATIONS OF WAR

Sun the Master said:--

Now the requirements of war are such that we need a thousand light

chariots with four horses each; a thousand leather-covered chariots,

and one hundred thousand armoured men; and we must send supplies to

distant fields. Wherefore the cost at home and in the field, the

entertainment of guests, glue and lacquer for repairs, and necessities

for the upkeep of waggons and armour are such that in one day a

thousand pieces of gold are spent. With that amount a force of one

hundred thousand men can be raised:--you have the instruments of

victory.

But, even if victorious, let the operations long continue, and the

soldiers' ardour decreases, the weapons become worn, and, if a siege be

undertaken, strength disappears.

Again, if the war last long, the country's means do not suffice.

Then, when the soldiers are worn out, weapons blunted, strength gone

and funds spent, neighbouring princes arise and attack that weakened

country. At such a time the wisest man cannot mend the matter.

For, while quick accomplishment has been known to give the victory to

the unskilful, the skilful general has never gained advantage from

lengthy operations.

In fact, there never has been a country which has benefited from a

prolonged war.

He who does not know the evils of war will not reap advantage thereby.

He who is skilful in war does not make a second levy, does not load his

supply waggons thrice.

War material and arms we obtain from home, but food sufficient for the

army's needs can be taken from the enemy.

The cost of supplying the army in distant fields is the chief drain

on the resources of a state: if the war be distant, the citizens are

impoverished.

In the neighbourhood of an army prices are high, and so the money

of the soldiers and followers is used up. Likewise the state funds

are exhausted, and frequent levies must be made; the strength of the

army is dissipated, money is spent, the citizen's home swept bare: in

all, seven-tenths of his income is forfeited. Again, as regards State

property, chariots are broken, horses worn out, armour and helmet,

arrow and bow, spear, shield, pike and fighting tower, waggon and oxen

used and gone, so that six-tenths of the Government's income is spent.

Therefore the intelligent general strives to feed on the enemy; one

bale of the enemy's rice counts as twenty from our own waggons; one

bundle of the enemy's forage is better than twenty of our own.

Incitement must be given to vanquish the enemy.

They who take advantage of the enemy should be rewarded.

They who are the first to lay their hands on more than ten of the

enemy's chariots should be rewarded; the enemy's standard on the

chariots exchanged for our own; the captured chariots mixed with our

own chariots and taken into use.

The accompanying warriors must be treated well, so that, while the

enemy is beaten, our side increases in strength.

Now the object of war is victory; not lengthy operations, even

skilfully conducted.

The good general is the lord of the people's lives, the guardian of the

country's welfare.

III

THE ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

Sun the Master said:--

Now by the laws of war, better than defeating a country by fire and the

sword, is to take it without strife.

Better to capture the enemy's army intact than to overcome it after

fierce resistance.

Better to capture the "Lu,"[3] the "Tsu" or the "Wu" whole, than to

destroy them in battle.

To fight and conquer one hundred times is not the perfection of

attainment, for the supreme art is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

Wherefore the most skilful warrior outwits the enemy by superior

stratagem; the next in merit prevents the enemy from uniting his

forces; next to him is he who engages the enemy's army; while to

besiege his citadel is the worst expedient.

A siege should not be undertaken if it can possibly be avoided. For,

before a siege can be commenced, three months are required for the

construction of stages, battering-rams and siege engines; then a

further three months are required in front of the citadel, in order to

make the "Chuyin."[4] Wherefore the general is angered, his patience

exhausted, his men surge like ants against the ramparts \_before the

time is ripe\_, and one-third of them are killed to no purpose. Such are

the misfortunes that sieges entail.

Therefore the master of war causes the enemy's forces to yield, but

without fighting; he captures his fortress, but without besieging

it; and without lengthy fighting takes the enemy's kingdom. Without

tarnishing his weapons he gains the complete advantage.

This is the assault by stratagem.

By the rules of war, if ten times as strong as the enemy, surround him;

with five times his strength, attack; with double his numbers, divide.

If equal in strength, exert to the utmost, and fight; if inferior in

numbers, manoeuvre \_and await the opportunity\_; if altogether inferior,

offer no chance of battle. A determined stand by inferior numbers does

but lead to their capture.

The warrior is the country's support. If his aid be entire, the country

is of necessity strong; if it be at all deficient, then is the country

weak.

Now a prince may embarrass his army in three ways, namely:--

Ignorant that the army in the field should not advance, to order it to

go forward; or, ignorant that the army should not retreat, order it to

retire.

This is to tie the army as with a string.

Ignorant of military affairs, to rule the armies in the same way as the

state.

This is to perplex the soldiers.

Ignorant of the situation of the army, to settle its dispositions.

This is to fill the soldiers with distrust.

If the army be perplexed and distrustful, then dangers from neighbouring

princes arise. The army is confounded, and offered up to the enemy.

There are five occasions when victory can be foretold:--

When the general knows the time to fight and when not to fight; or

understands when to employ large or small numbers; when government

and people are of one mind; when the state is prepared, and chooses

the enemy's unguarded moment for attack; when the general possesses

ability, and is not interfered with by his prince.

These five things are the heralds of victory.

It has been said aforetime that he who knows both sides has nothing

to fear in a hundred fights; he who is ignorant of the enemy, and

fixes his eyes only on his own side, conquers, and the next time is

defeated; he who not only is ignorant of the enemy, but also of his own

resources, is invariably defeated.

IV

THE ORDER OF BATTLE

Sun the Master said:--

The ancient masters of war first made their armies invincible, then

waited until the adversary could with certainty be defeated.

The causes of defeat come from within; victory is born in the enemy's

camp.

Skilful soldiers make defeat impossible, and further render the enemy

incapable of victory.

But, as it is written, the conditions necessary for victory may be

present, but they cannot always be obtained.

If victory be unattainable, we stand on the defensive; if victory be

sure, we attack.

Deficiency compels defence; super-abundance permits attack.

The skilful in defence crouch, hidden in the deepest shades; the

skilful in attack push to the topmost heaven.[5]

If these precepts be observed, victory is certain.

A victory, even if popularly proclaimed as such by the common folk, may

not be a true success. To win in fight, and for the kingdom to say,

"Well done," does not mark the summit of attainment. To lift an autumn

fleece[6] is no proof of strength; the eyes that only see the sun and

moon are not the eagle's; to hear the thunder is no great thing.

As has been said aforetime, the able warrior gains the victory without

desperate and bloody engagements, and wins thereby no reputation for

wisdom or brave deeds. To fight is to win, for he attacks only when the

enemy has sown the seeds of defeat.

Moreover, the skilful soldier in a secure position does not let pass

the moment when the enemy should be attacked.

The army that conquers makes certain of victory, and then seeks battle.

The army destined to defeat, fights, trusting that chance may bring

success to its arms.

The skilful leader is steadfast in the "Way"; upholds the Law, and

thereby controls the issue.

Touching the laws of war, it is said: first, the rule; second, the

measure; third, the tables; fourth, the scales; fifth, the foretelling

of victory.

For the rule is the survey of land; the measure tells the amount of

that land's produce; the tables its population; from the scales their

weight or quality is made known; and then can we calculate victory or

defeat.

The army that conquers as against the army destined to defeat, is as a

beam against a feather in the scales. The attack of conquering forces

is as the outburst of long-pent-up waters into sunken valleys.

Such are the orders of battle.

V

THE SPIRIT OF THE TROOPS

Sun the Master said:--

The control of large numbers is possible, and like unto that of small

numbers, if we subdivide them.

By means of drum, bell and flag,[7] the direction of large forces in

battle is possible, and like unto the direction of small forces.

By the skilful interchange of normal and abnormal manoeuvres are the

armies certainly preserved from defeat.

The enemy is crushed, like the fall of a grindstone upon an egg, by

knowledge of his strength and weakness, and by the employment of truth

and artifice.

Moreover, in battle the enemy is engaged with the normal and defeated

by the abnormal force.[8]

The abnormal force, skilfully handled, is like the heaven and earth,

eternal; as the tides and the flow of rivers, unceasing; like the sun

and moon, for ever interchanging; coming and passing, as the seasons.

There are five notes; but by combinations, innumerable harmonies are

produced. There are but five colours; but if we mix them, the shades

are infinite. There are five tastes, but if we mix them there are more

flavours than the palate can distinguish.[9]

In war there are but two forces, the normal and the abnormal; but they

are capable of infinite variation. Their mutual interchange is like a

wheel, having neither beginning or end. They are a mystery that none

can penetrate.

As the rush of rock-shouldering torrents, so is the spirit of the

troops.

Like the well-judged flight of the falcon, in a flash crushing its

quarry, so should the stroke be timed.

Wherefore the spirit of the good fighter is terrifying, his occasions

sudden; like the stretched cross-bow, whose string is released at the

touch of the trigger.

In the maze and tumult of the battle, there is no confusion; in the

thick of action the battle array is impenetrable.

If discipline be perfect, disorder can be simulated; if truly bold, we

can feign fear; if really strong, we can feign weakness.

We simulate disorder by subdivision; fear, by spirit; weakness, by

battle formation.

We set the enemy in motion by adopting different formations to which he

must conform.

If we offer the enemy a point of advantage, he will certainly take it:

we give him an advantage, set him in motion and then fall upon him.

Wherefore the good fighter seeks victory from spirit, and does not

depend entirely upon the skill of his men. He is careful in his choice,

and leaves the rest to battle force; yet, when an opening or advantage

shows, he pushes it to its limits.

As a log or rock which, motionless on flat ground, yet moves with

ever-increasing force when set on an incline, so await the opportunity,

and so act when the opportunity arrives.

If the general be skilful, the spirit of his troops is as the impetus

of a round stone rolled from the top of a high mountain.

VI

EMPTINESS AND STRENGTH

Sun the Master said:--

To be the first in the field, and there to await the enemy, is to

husband strength.

To be late, and hurrying to advance to meet the foe, is exhausting.

The good fighter contrives to make the enemy approach; he does not

allow himself to be beguiled by the enemy.

By offering an apparent advantage, he induces the enemy to take up a

position that will cause his defeat; he plants obstructions to dissuade

him from acting in such a way as to threaten his own dispositions.

If the enemy be at rest in comfortable quarters, harass him; if he be

living in plenty, cut off his supplies; if sitting composedly awaiting

attack, cause him to move.

This may be done by appearing where the enemy is not, and assaulting

unexpected points.

If we go where the enemy is not, we may go a thousand leagues without

exhaustion.

If we attack those positions which the enemy has not defended, we

invariably take them: but on the defence we must be strong, even where

we are not likely to be attacked.

Against those skilful in attack, the enemy does not know where to

defend: against those skilful in defence, the enemy does not know where

to attack.

Now the secrets of the art of offence are not to be easily apprehended,

as a certain shape or noise can be understood, of the senses; but when

these secrets are once learnt, the enemy is mastered.

We attack, and the enemy cannot resist, because we attack his

insufficiency; we retire, and the enemy cannot pursue, because we

retire too quickly.

Again, when we are anxious to fight, but the enemy is serenely secure

behind high walls and deep moats; we attack some such other place that

he must certainly come out to relieve.

When we do not want to fight, we occupy an unfortified line; and

prevent the enemy from attacking by keeping him in suspense.

By making feints, and causing the enemy to be uncertain as to our

movements, we unite, whilst he must divide.

We become one body; the enemy being separated into ten parts. We

attack the divided ten with the united one. We are many, the enemy is

few, and in superiority of numbers there is economy of strength.

The place selected for attack must be kept secret. If the enemy know

not where he will be attacked, he must prepare in every quarter, and so

be everywhere weak.

If the enemy strengthen his front, he must weaken his rear; if he

strengthen his right, his left is weakened; and if he strengthen his

left, his right is weakened.

Everywhere to make preparations, is to be everywhere weak. The enemy is

weakened by his extended preparations, and we gain in strength.

Having decided on the place and day of attack, though the enemy be a

hundred leagues away, we can defeat him.

If the ground and occasion be not known, the front cannot help the

rear; the left cannot support the right, nor the right the left, nor

the rear the front. For on occasion, the parts of the army are two

score leagues apart, while a distance of four or five leagues is

comparatively close.

The soldiers of Wu[10] are less than the soldiers of Yueh; but as

superiority in numbers does not of necessity bring victory, I say,

then, that we may obtain the victory.

If the enemy be many in number, prevent him from taking advantage of

his superiority, and ascertain his plan of operations. Provoke the

enemy and discover the state of his troops; feint and discover the

strength of his position. Flap the wings, and unmask his sufficiency or

insufficiency. By constant feints and excursions, we may produce on the

enemy an impression of intangibility, which neither spies nor art can

dispel.

The general makes his plans in accordance with the dispositions of

the enemy, and puts his hosts in motion; but the multitude cannot

appreciate the general's intention; they see the signs of victory, but

they cannot discover the means.

If a victory be gained by a certain stratagem, do not repeat it. Vary

the stratagem according to circumstances.

An army may be likened to water.

Water leaves dry the high places, and seeks the hollows. An army turns

from strength and attacks emptiness.

The flow of water is regulated by the shape of the ground; victory is

gained by acting in accordance with the state of the enemy.

The shape of water is indeterminate; likewise the spirit of war is not

fixed.

The leader who changes his tactics in accordance with his adversary,

and thereby controls the issue, may be called the God of war.

Among the five elements[11] there is no settled precedence; the four

seasons come and go; the days are long and short; and the moon waxes

and wanes. \_So in war there is no fixity.\_

VII

BATTLE TACTICS

Sun the Master said:--

For the most part, military procedure is as follows:--

The general receives orders from his lord; assembles and settles

harmony among the forces, and takes the field.

There is nothing more difficult than Battle Tactics. Their difficulty

lies in the calculation of time and distance, and the reversal of

misfortune.

To make the enemy take a circuitous route by a show of gain, and then,

whilst starting after him, to arrive before him, is to be a master of

the art of manoeuvre.

The operations of an army may reap advantage; the wrangles of a

multitude are fraught with peril.

Employing our whole force at one time in order to gain advantage over

the enemy, we may not have time enough to gain our object. If we push

on with a portion of the force only, the transport is lost. Discarding

helmet and armour; stopping neither day nor night; marching double

distance; doing double work; and finally contending with the enemy at

a distance of a hundred leagues: results in the loss of the general.

Since the strong men arrive first, and the tired drop in rear, only

one-tenth of the forces is available.

A forced march of fifty leagues to secure an advantage may result in

failure to the leader of the vanguard, for only half his men will

arrive.

After a forced march of thirty leagues to secure an advantage, only

two-thirds of the army will be available.

Further, a lack of ammunition, of supplies, or of stores, may lead to

disaster.

The ruler who is ignorant of the designs of neighbouring princes,

cannot treat with them.

He who is ignorant of mountain and forest, defile and marsh, cannot

lead an army.

He who does not employ a guide, cannot gain advantage from the ground.

Disguise your movements; await a favourable opportunity; divide or

unite according to circumstance.

Let your attack be swift as the wind; your march calm like the

forest;[12] your occupation devastating as fire. In defence, as a

mountain rest firm; like darkness impenetrable to the enemy. Let your

movements be swift as the lightning.

Let as many as possible take part in the plunder: distribute the profit

from the captured territory.

So he who understands the crooked and the straight way conquers.

These are the methods of Battle Tactics.

According to the ancient books on war, the drum and bell are used,

because the voice does not carry; the flag is used to assist the

sight. The use of bell, drum, banner and flag is to attract the united

attention of eye and ear.

When all are united, the strong are not left to go forward alone,

the cowardly are not free to retreat unrestricted. In this way can a

multitude be used.

Therefore in night fighting, beacons and drums are largely used; in day

fighting, a great number of banners and flags and the enemy's eyes and

ears are confounded.

We thus awe his army, and defeat his general's ambition.

In the morning the spirits are keen; at midday there is a laziness; in

the evening a desire to return. Wherefore, he who uses his soldiers

well, avoids the time when the spirits are keen; but attacks the enemy

when he is languid or seeking his camp.

Thus should the nature of energy be turned to account.

To oppose confusion with order, clamour with quiet, is to have the

heart under control.

To await an enemy from a distance, to oppose hunger with satiety, rest

with fatigue, is the way to husband strength.

Do not attack where lines of banners wave, nor the serried ranks of

battle spread, but patiently await your time.

Do not attack an enemy on high ground, nor one who has high ground at

his back. Do not pursue an enemy who is imitating flight; do not attack

a spirited enemy.

If the enemy offer an allurement, do not take it.

Do not interfere with an enemy who has struck camp, and is about to

retire. When surrounding an enemy, allow him an outlet. Do not press a

desperate enemy.

These are the methods of employing troops.

VIII

THE NINE CHANGES

Sun the Master said:--

In general, the procedure of war is:--the Leader, having received

orders from his lord, assembles the armies.

Do not camp on marshy or low-lying ground; enter into friendly

relations with neighbouring states; do not linger in a far country;

use stratagem in mountainous and wooded country; on death ground, fight.

There are always roads that must be avoided; forces that must not be

attacked; castles that must not be besieged; ground that must not be

chosen for encounter; orders from the lord that must not be obeyed.

The general who knows the Nine Changes understands the use of troops;

on the contrary, he who does not understand them, can make no use of

his topographical knowledge.

In the management of armies, if the art of the Nine Changes be

understood, a knowledge of the Five Advantages is of no avail.

The wise man considers well both advantage and disadvantage. He sees a

way out of adversity, and on the day of victory to danger is not blind.

In reducing an enemy to submission, inflict all possible damage upon

him; make him undertake useless adventures; also make neighbouring

rulers move as you would desire them by tempting them with gain.

Wherefore in the conduct of war do not depend on the enemy's not

coming, but rely on your own preparations; do not count on the enemy

not attacking your fortress, but leave nothing undefended.

Generals must be on their guard against these five dangerous faults:--

Blind impetuosity, which leads to death.

Over-cautiousness, which leads to capture.

Quick temper, which brings insult.

A too rigid propriety, which invites disgrace.

Over-regard for the troops, which causes inconvenience.

These five faults in the leader are disastrous in war. The overthrow of

the army and the slaughter of the general arise from them. Therefore

they must be carefully considered.

IX

MOVEMENT OF TROOPS

Sun the Master said:--

Touching the disposal of troops and observation of the enemy in

relation to mountain warfare:--

Cross mountains and camp in valleys, selecting positions of safety.

Place the army on high ground, and avoid an enemy in high places.

In relation to water:--

After crossing waters, pass on immediately to a distance. When the

enemy is crossing a stream, do not meet and engage him in the waters,

but strike when half his force has passed over. Do not advance on an

enemy near water, but place the army on high ground, and in safety.

Do not fight when the enemy is between the army and the source of the

river.

With regard to marshes:--

Cross salty marshes quickly; do not linger near them.

If by chance compelled to fight in the neighbourhood of a marsh, seek a

place where there is water and grass, and trees in plenty in the rear.

In open country place the army in a convenient place with rising ground

in the right rear; so that while in front lies death, behind there is

safety.

Such is war in flat country.

Huangti, by observing these things, gained the victory over four

Princes.

As a rule, the soldiers prefer high ground to low. They prefer sunny

places to those the sun does not reach.

If the health of the troops be considered, and they are encamped on

high and sunny ground, diseases will be avoided, and victory made

certain.

If there be rising ground, encamp on its sunny side and in front of

it; for thereby the soldiers are benefited, and the ground used to our

advantage.

If, owing to rains in the upper reaches, the river become turbulent, do

not cross until the waters have quieted.

Steep and impassable valleys; well-like places; confined places;

tangled impenetrable ground; swamps and bogs; narrow passages with

pitfalls:--quickly pass from these, and approach them not. Cause the

enemy to approach near to them, but keep yourself from these places;

face them, so that the enemy has them in his rear.

If there be near to the army, precipices, ponds, meres, reeds and

rushes, or thick forests and trees, search them thoroughly. These are

places where the enemy is likely to be in ambush.

When the enemy is close, but quiet, he is strong in reliance on natural

defences.

If the enemy challenge to fight from afar, he wishes you to advance.

If the enemy be encamped in open country, it is with some special

object in view.

Movement among the trees shows that the enemy is advancing. Broken

branches and trodden grass, as of the passing of a large host, must be

regarded with suspicion.

The rising of birds shows an ambush.

Startled beasts show that the enemy is stealthily approaching from

several sides.

High, straight spurts of dust betoken that chariots are coming.

Long, low masses of dust show the coming of infantry.

Here and there, thin and high columns of dust are signs that firewood

and fodder are being collected.

Small clouds of dust moving to and fro are signs that the enemy is

preparing to encamp for a short time.

Busy preparations and smooth words show that the enemy is about to

advance to attack.

Big words, and the spurring forward of horsemen, are signs that the

enemy is about to retire.

An advance of the light chariots to the flanks of the camp is a sign

that the enemy is coming forth to fight.

Without consultation, suddenly to desire an armistice, is a mark of

ulterior design.

The passing to and fro of messengers, and the forming up of troops,

show that the enemy has some movement on foot.

An advance, followed by sudden retirement, is a lure to attack.

When the enemy use their weapons to rest upon, they are hungry.

If the drawers of water drink at the river, the enemy is suffering from

thirst.

Disregard of booty that lies ready at hand is a sign of exhaustion.

The clustering of birds round a position shows that it is unoccupied.

Voices calling in the night betoken alarm.

Disorder in the army is a sign that the general is disregarded.

A changing about of flags and banners is a sign that the army is

unsettled.

If the officers be angry, it is because the soldiers are tired, \_and

slow to obey\_.

The killing of horses for food shows that the enemy is short of

provisions.

When the cooking-pots are hung up on the wall and the soldiers turn

not in again, the enemy is at an end of his resources.

Exceeding graciousness and familiarity on the part of the general show

that he has lost the confidence of the soldiers.

Frequent rewards show that discipline is at an end.

Frequent punishments are a sign that the general is in difficulties.

The general who first blusters, and then is obsequious, is without

perception.

He who offers apologies and hostages is anxious for a truce.

When both sides, eager for a fight, face each other for a considerable

time, neither advancing nor retiring, the occasion requires the utmost

vigilance and circumspection.

Numbers are no certain mark of strength.

Even if incapable of a headlong assault, if the forces be united, and

the enemy's condition ascertained, victory is possible.

He who without taking thought makes light of the enemy is certain to be

captured.

If a general who is strange to the troops punish them, they cease to

obey him. If they are not obedient, they cannot be usefully employed.

If the troops know the general, but are not affected by his punishments,

they are useless.

By humane treatment we obtain obedience; authority brings uniformity.

Thus we obtain victory.

If the people have been trained in obedience from the beginning, they

respect their leader's commands.

If the people be not early trained to obedience, they do not respect

their leader's commands.

Orders are always obeyed, if general and soldiers are in sympathy.

X

GROUND

Sun the Master said:--

With regard to the different natures of ground there are:--

Open ground; broken ground; suspended ground; defiles; precipices; far

countries.

Open ground is that where either side has liberty of movement: be

quick to occupy any high ground in the neighbourhood and consider well

the line of supplies.

Broken ground. Advance is easy, but retreat from it is difficult. Here,

if the enemy be not prepared, we may win: but should he be prepared,

and defeat us, and retreat be impossible, then there is disaster.

Suspended ground. The side that takes the initiative is under a

disadvantage. Here, if the enemy offer some allurement, we should not

advance: but rather, by feigning retreat, wait until he has put forth

half his force. Then we may attack him with advantage.

Defiles, make haste to occupy; garrison strongly and await the enemy.

Should the enemy be before you, and in strength, do not engage him; but

if there be unoccupied points, attack him.

In precipitous ground quickly occupy a position on a sunny height, and

await the enemy. If the enemy be before you, withdraw and do not attack

him.

If distant from the enemy, and the forces be equal, to take the

initiative is disadvantageous.

Now, these are the six kinds of ground. It is the duty of generals to

study them.

Again, there are six calamities among the troops, arising, not from

defect of ground, or lack of opportunity, but from the general's

incapacity.

These are: repulse, relaxation, distress, disorganisation, confusion

and rout.

If troops be sent to attack an enemy of equal quality, but ten times

their number, they retire discomfited.

Strong soldiers with weak officers cause relaxation.

Able officers with feeble soldiers cause distress.

Enraged senior officers, who fall upon the enemy without orders, and

obey not the general because he does not recognise their abilities,

produce disorganisation.

Weak and amiable generals, whose directions and leadership are vague,

whose officers' and men's duties are not fixed, and whose dispositions

are contradictory, produce confusion.

Generals, who are unable to estimate the enemy, who oppose small

numbers to large, weakness to strength, and who do not put picked men

in the van of the army, cause it to be routed.

These six things lead to defeat. It is the duty of the general to study

them carefully.

Ground is the handmaid of victory.

Ability to estimate the enemy, and plan the victory; an eye for

steepness, command and distances: these are the qualities of the good

general.

Whosoever knows these things, conquers; he who understands them not, is

defeated.

If victory be certain from the military standpoint, fight, even if the

lord forbid.

If defeat be certain from the military standpoint, do not fight, even

though the lord commands it.

The general who advances, from no thought of his own glory, or retires,

regardless of punishment; but only strives for the people's welfare,

and his lord's advantage, is a treasure to the state.

The good general cares for his soldiers, and lovingly treats them as

his children; as a consequence they follow him through deep valleys,

and are beside him in death.

Nevertheless, over-care for the soldiers may cause disobedience;

over-attention may make them unserviceable; over-indulgence may produce

disorder: they become like spoilt children, and cannot be used.

He who is confident of his own men, but is ignorant that the enemy

should not be attacked, has no certainty of victory.

He who knows that the enemy may be attacked with advantage, but knows

not his own men, has no certainty of victory.

Confidence in the troops, right judgment when to attack the enemy, but

ignorance of the ground, bring uncertain victory.

The wise soldier, once in motion, does not waver, and is never at a

loss.

As has been said: "Know thyself; know the enemy; fear not for victory."

Also, if the season and the opportunity be realised, and the ground

known, complete victory is certain.

XI

THE NINE GROUNDS

Sun the Master said:--

In respect to the conduct of war there are:--

Distracting ground; disturbing ground; ground of contention;

intersecting ground; path-ridden ground; deeply-involved ground;

difficult ground; enclosed ground; death ground.

At all times, when the prince fights in his own territory, it is called

distracting[13] ground.

That ground a short way inside the enemy's border is called disturbing

ground.

Ground giving advantage to whichever side is in possession, is called

ground of contention.

Ground to which either side has access, is called intersecting ground.

Ground between three provinces first possession of which enables the

peoples of the earth to be controlled, is called path-ridden ground.

The interior of the enemy's country with many of his fortified towns in

rear, is called deeply-involved ground.

Mountain and forest, precipices, ravines, marsh and swamp, all places

where passage is hard, are called difficult ground.

A narrow entrance and winding outlet, where a small number can oppose a

large force, is called enclosed ground.

That ground where delay means disaster, is called death ground.

Wherefore, do not fight on distracting ground; do not linger on

disturbing ground.

If the enemy be in possession of disputed ground, do not attack.

In intersecting ground, do not interrupt the highways.

At the crossing of highways, cultivate intercourse.

When deeply involved, levy and store up the enemy's property.

Quickly depart from difficult ground.

On enclosed ground, use stratagem.

On death ground, fight.

The skilful fighters of old were at pains to disconnect the enemy's

front and rear; they cut asunder small and large forces of the enemy;

prevented mutual help between his officers and men; spread mistrust

between high and low. They scattered the enemy, and prevented him from

concentrating; if his soldiers were assembled, they were without unity.

If there be a chance of victory, move; if there be no chance of

success, stand fast.

If I were asked how a powerful and united force of the enemy should be

met, I would say: lay hands on what the enemy cherishes and he will

conform to our desires.

In war, above all, speed sustains the spirit of the troops. Strike

before the enemy is ready; and attack his unpreparedness from an

unexpected quarter.

With regard to war in foreign lands. When strangers in a far country

the soldiers are united and are proof against defeat. Plunder fertile

plains so that the army is fed; be careful of the health of the

soldiers; do not tire them uselessly; unite their minds; store up

strength; plan well and secretly. If there be no refuge the soldiers

will not fly from death.

If there be no alternative but death, the soldiers exert themselves to

the utmost.

In desperate places, soldiers lose the sense of fear.

If there be no place of refuge, there will be no wavering.

If deeply involved in the enemy's country, there is unity.

If it be unavoidable, the soldiers will fight their hardest. Even

without warnings they are vigilant; they comply without insistence;

without stipulations they are tractable; without explicit instructions

they will trust the general and obey him.

Prohibit the discussion of signs and omens, and remove the soldiers'

doubts; then to the moment of death they will be undistracted.

Riches are denied the soldiers, not because money is a bad thing; old

age is forbidden them, but not because long life is evil. Hardships

and danger are the proper lot of the soldier.

When the order for attack is given, the collars of those who are

sitting may be wet with tears; tears may roll down the cheeks of those

reclining; yet these men, in a desperate place, will fight with the

courage of Chu and Kuei.

Soldiers should be used like the snakes on Mt. Chang; which, if you hit

on the head, the tail will strike you; if you hit the tail, the head

will strike you; if you strike its middle, head and tail will strike

you together.

Should any one ask me whether men can be made to move like these

snakes, I say, yes. The men of Wu and Yueh hate each other; yet, if

they cross a river in the same boat and a storm overtake them, they

help each other like the two hands.

The horses may be tied, and the chariot wheels sunk in the mud; but

that does not prevent flight.

Universal courage and unity depend on good management.

The best results from both the weak and strong are obtained by a proper

use of the ground.

The skilful warrior can lead his army, as a man leads another by the

hand, because he places it in a desperate position.

The general should be calm, inscrutable, just and prudent. He should

keep his officers and men in ignorance of his plans, and inform no one

of any changes or fresh departures. By changing his camps, and taking

devious and unexpected routes, his plans cannot be guessed.

As one taking away the ladder from under those mounted upon the roof,

so acts the general when his men are assembled to fight. He penetrates

into the heart of the enemy's country and then divulges his plans. He

drives the army hither and thither like a flock of sheep, knowing not

whither they go.

Therefore the general should assemble the armies, and place them in a

desperate position.

The different natures of the Nine Grounds; the suiting of the means to

the occasion; the hearts of men: these are things that must be studied.

When deep in the interior of a hostile country, there is cohesion; if

only on the borders, there is distraction. To leave home and cross the

borders is to be free from interference.

On distracting ground, unite the soldiers' minds.

On disturbing ground, keep together.

On disputed ground, try to take the enemy in rear.

On intersecting ground, look well to the defences.

On path-ridden ground, cultivate intercourse.

On deeply-involved ground be careful of supplies.

On difficult ground, do not linger.

On enclosed ground, close the path of escape.

On death ground, show the soldiers that there is no chance of survival.

It is the nature of soldiers to defend when surrounded, to fight with

energy when compelled thereto, to pursue the enemy if he retreat.

He cannot treat with other rulers who knows not their ambitions.

He who knows not mountain and forest; cliffs; ravines; lakes and

marshes; cannot conduct an army.

He who does not use guides, cannot take advantage of the ground.

He who has not a complete knowledge of the Nine Grounds, cannot gain

military dominion.

The great general, when attacking a powerful nation, prevents the enemy

from concentrating his hosts.

He overawes the enemy so that other states cannot join against him.

He does not struggle for the favour of other states; nor is he careful

of their rights. He has confidence in himself, and awes the enemy.

Therefore he easily takes the fortress, or reduces the country to

subjection.

In the bestowal of rewards, or in his orders, he is not bound by

ancient rule.

He manages his forces as though they were one man.

Orders should direct the soldiers; but while what is advantageous

should be made known, what is disadvantageous should be concealed.

If the forces be plunged into danger, there is survival; from death

ground there is retrieval; for the force in danger gains the victory.

Discover the enemy's intentions by conforming to his movements. When

these are discovered, then, with one stroke, the general may be killed,

even though he be one hundred leagues distant.

When war is declared, close the barriers; destroy passports; prevent

the passage of the enemy's spies; conduct the business of the

government with vigilance.

Take immediate advantage of the enemy's weakness; discover what he most

values, and plan to seize it.

Shape your plans according to rule, and the circumstances of the enemy.

At first behave with the discretion of a maiden; then, when the enemy

gives an opening, dart in like a rabbit.

The enemy cannot defend himself.

XII

ASSAULT BY FIRE

Sun the Master said:--

There are five ways of attack by fire:

The first is called barrack burning; the second, commissariat burning;

the third, equipment burning; the fourth, store burning; the fifth, the

company burning.

The moment for the fire assault must be suitable. Further, appliances

must always be kept at hand.

There is a time and day proper for the setting and carrying out of the

fire assault; namely: such time as the weather is dry; and a day when

the moon is in the quarters of the stars Chi, Pi, I, Chen: for these

are days of wind.

Regard well the developments that will certainly arise from the fire,

and act upon them. When fire breaks out inside the enemy's camp, thrust

upon him with all speed from without; but if his soldiers be quiet,

wait, and do not attack.

When the fire is at its height, attack or not, as opportunity may arise.

If the opportunity be favourable, set fire to the enemy's camp, and do

not wait for it to break out from within.

When fire breaks out on the windward side, do not attack from the

leeward.

Wind that rises in the day lasts long. Wind that rises in the night

time quickly passes away.

The peculiarities of the five burnings must be known, and the calendar

studied, and, if the attack is to be assisted, the fire must be

unquenchable.

If water is to assist the attack, the flood must be overwhelming.

Water may isolate or divide the enemy; fire may consume his camp; but

unless victory or possession be obtained, the enemy quickly recovers,

and misfortunes arise. The war drags on, and money is spent.

Let the enlightened lord consider well; and the good general keep the

main object in view. If no advantage is to be gained thereby, do not

move; without prospect of victory, do not use the soldiers; do not

fight unless the state be in danger.

War should not be undertaken because the lord is in a moment of

passion. The general must not fight because there is anger in his heart.

Do not make war unless victory may be gained thereby; if there be

prospect of victory, move; if there be no prospect, do not move.

For passion may change to gladness, anger passes away; but a country,

once overturned, cannot be restored; the dead cannot be brought to life.

Wherefore it is written, the enlightened lord is circumspect, and

the good general takes heed; then is the state secure, and the army

victorious in battle.

XIII

THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPIES

Sun the Master said:--

Calling 100,000 men to arms, and transporting them a hundred leagues,

is such an undertaking that in one day 1,000 taels of the citizens' and

nobles' money are spent; commotions arise within and without the state;

carriers fall down exhausted on the line of march of the army; and the

occupations of 700,000[14] homes are upset.

Again, for years the armies may face each other; yet the issue may

depend on a single day's victory.

Wherefore, by grudging slight expense in titles and salaries to spies,

to remain in ignorance of the enemy's circumstances, is to be without

humanity. Such a person is no general; he is no assistance to his lord;

he is no master of victory.

The enlightened ruler and the wise general who act, win, and are

distinguished beyond the common, are informed beforehand.

This knowledge is not to be got by calling on gods and demons; nor does

it come of past experience nor calculation. It is through men that

knowledge of the enemy is gained.

Now the five kinds of spies are these: village spies, inner spies,

converted spies, death spies, living spies.

If these five means be employed simultaneously, none can discover

their working. This is called the Mysterious Thread: it is the Lord's

Treasure.

Village spies are such people of the country as give information.

Inner spies are those of the enemy's officials employed by us.

Converted spies are those of the enemy's spies in our pay.

Death[15] spies are sent to misinform the enemy, and to spread false

reports through our spies already in the enemy's lines.

Living spies[16] return to report.

In connection with the armies, spies should be treated with the

greatest kindness; and in dealing out reward, they should receive the

most generous treatment. All matters relating to spies are secret.

Without infinite capacity in the general, the employment of spies is

impossible. Their treatment requires benevolence and uprightness.

Except they be observed with the closest attention, the truth will not

be obtained from them.

Wonderful indeed is the power of spies.

There is no occasion when they cannot be used.

If a secret matter be spoken of before the time is ripe, the spy who

told the matter, and the man who repeated the same, should be put to

death.

If desirous of attacking an army; of besieging a fortress; or of

killing a certain person; first of all, learn the names of the general

in charge; of his right-hand[17] men; of those who introduce visitors

to the Presence; of the gate keeper and the sentries. Then set the

spies to watch them.

Seek out the enemy's spies who come to spy on us; give them money;

cause them to be lodged and cared for; and convert them to the service.

Through them we are enabled to obtain spies among the enemy's villagers

and officials.

By means of the converted spy, we can construct a false story for the

death spy to carry to the enemy.

It is through the converted spy that we are able to use the five

varieties, to their utmost advantage; therefore he must be liberally

treated.

In ancient times the rise to power of the province of Yin was due

to Ichih, who was sent to the country of Hsia. Likewise during the

foundation of the state of Chu, Luya lived among the people of Shang.

Wherefore, intelligent rulers and wise generals use the cleverest men

as spies, and invariably acquire great merit. The spy is a necessity to

the army. Upon him the movement of the army depends.

THE SAYINGS OF WUTZU

INTRODUCTION

Now Wu, albeit clothed in the raiment of a scholar, was a man skilled

in the art of war.

And Wen, Lord of Wei, came unto him and said:--

"I am a man of peace, caring not for military affairs."

And Wu said:--

"Your actions are witnesses of your mind; why do your words say not

what is in your heart?

"You do prepare and dress hides and leather through the four seasons,

ornamenting them with red lacquer and the figures of panthers and

elephants; which give not warmth in winter, neither in summer,

coolness. Moreover, you make halberds, 24[18] feet long, and pikes 12

feet long, and leather (covered) chariots so large as to fill up the

gateways, wheels with ornament, and naves capped with leather. Now,

these are neither beautiful to the eye nor light in the chase; I know

not for what use my lord makes these things.

"But, although provided with these instruments of war, if the leader be

not competent, a brooding hen might as well strike a badger, or a dog

with young challenge the tiger: the spirit of encounter may be present,

but there is no end but death.

"In ancient times, the Prince Chengsang cultivated virtue, and put away

military things, and his kingdom fell.

"The Prince Yuhu put his trust in numbers, and delighted in war and was

driven from the throne.

"Therefore the enlightened ruler should ponder over these things;

encourage learning and virtue in the kingdom, and be prepared against

war from without.

"To hesitate before the enemy is not a cause for righteousness; remorse

for the fallen is not true humanity."

And when Lord Wen heard these words, he himself spread a seat, and his

wife offered up a cup, and Wu was appointed general before the altar.

Now, in the defence of Hsihe against different states there were fought

seventy-six great fights, of which sixty-four were complete victories,

and the remainder undecided. And the kingdom grew and stretched 1,000

leagues on every side, which was all due to the virtue of Wu.

I

THE GOVERNMENT OF A COUNTRY

And Wu the Master said:--

The mighty rulers of old first trained their retainers, and then

extended their regard to their outlying feudatories.

There are four discords:--

Discord in the state: then never make war.

Discord in the army: then do not strike camp.

Discord in the camp: then do not advance to attack.

Discord in the battle array: then seek not to decide the issue.

Therefore, wise rulers who would employ their subjects in great

endeavours, should first establish harmony among them.

Lend not a ready ear to human counsellors, but lay the matter before

the altar; seek inside the turtle,[19] and consider well the time and

season. Then, if all be well, commit ourselves to the undertaking.

If the people know that their lord is careful of their lives, and

laments their death beyond all else; then, in the time of danger, the

soldiers advance, and, advancing, find glory in death; and in survival

after retreat, dishonour.

The Master said:--

The Way must follow the only true path: righteousness lies at the root

of achievement and merit.

The object of stratagem is to avoid loss and gain advantage.

The object of government is to guard enterprise and to preserve the

state.

If conduct depart from the Way, and the undertaking accord not with

righteousness, then disaster befalls the mighty.

Therefore, wise men maintain order by keeping in the Way, and governing

with righteousness; they move with discretion, and with benevolence

they make the people amenable.

If these four virtues be practised, there is prosperity; if they be

neglected, there is decay.

For, when Lord Tang of Cheng defeated Lord Chieh, the people of Hsia

rejoiced, and when Wu of Chou defeated Lord Chou, the people of

Yin were not discomfited. And this was because it was ordained by

Providence and human desire.

The Master said:--

In the government of a country and command of an army, the inculcation

of propriety, stimulation of righteousness, and the promotion of a

sense of shame are required.

When men possess a sense of shame, they will attack with resolution

when in strength, and when few in number defend to the last.

But while victory is easy in attack, it is difficult in defence.

Now, of the fighting races below heaven; those who gained five

victories have been worn out; those who have won four victories have

been impoverished; three victories have given dominion; two victories

have founded a kingdom; and upon one victory an empire has been

established.

For those who have gained power on earth by many victories are few; and

those who have lost it, many.

The Master said:--

The causes of war are five:--

First, ambition; second, profit; third, overburdened hate; fourth,

internal disorder; fifth, famine.

Again, the natures of war are five:--

First, a righteous war; second, a war of might; third, a war of

revenge; fourth, a war of tyranny; fifth, an unrighteous war.

The prevention of tyranny and the restoration of order is just; to

strike in reliance on numbers is oppression; to raise the standard for

reasons of anger is a war of revenge; to quit propriety, and seize

advantage is tyranny; when the state is disordered and the people worn

out, to harbour designs, and set a multitude in motion, is a war of

unrighteousness.

There is a way of overcoming each of these five.

Righteousness is overcome by propriety; might by humanity; revenge by

words; tyranny by deception; unrighteousness by strategy.

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"I would know the way to control an army, to measure men, and make the

country strong."

Wu answered and said:--

"The enlightened rulers of antiquity respected propriety between

sovereign and people; established etiquette between high and low;

settled officials and citizens in close accord; gave instruction in

accordance with custom; selected men of ability, and thereby provided

against what should come to pass.

"In ancient times, Prince Huan of Chi assembled 50,000 men at arms, and

became chief among the princes; Prince Wen of Chin put 40,000 mighty

men in the van, and gained his ambition; Prince Mu of Chin gathered

together 30,000 invincibles, and subdued his neighbouring foes.

Wherefore, the princes of powerful states must consider their people,

and assemble the valiant and spirited men by companies.

"Those who delight to attack, and to display their valour and fealty

should be formed in companies.

"Those skilful in scaling heights, or covering long distances, and who

are quick and light of foot must be collected in companies.

"Retainers who have lost their rank, and who are desirous of displaying

their prowess before their superiors should be gathered into companies.

"Those who have abandoned a castle, or deserted their trust, and are

desirous of atoning for their misconduct, should be collected and

formed into companies.

"These five bodies form the flower of the army. With 3,000 of such

troops, if they issue from within, an encompassing enemy can be burst

asunder; if they enter from without, a castle can be overthrown."

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"I desire to know how to fix the battle array, render defence secure,

and attack with certainty of victory."

Wu answered and said:--

"To see with the eye is better than ready words. Yet, I say, if the

wise men be put in authority and the ignorant in low places, then the

army is already arranged.

"If the people be free from anxiety about their estates, and love their

officials, then defence is already secure.

"If all the lieges be proud of their lord, and think ill of neighbouring

states, then is the battle already won."

The Lord Wen once assembled a number of his subjects to discuss affairs

of state: and none could equal him in wisdom, and when he left the

council chamber his face was pleased.

Then Wu advanced and said:--

In ancient times, Lord Chuang of Chu once consulted with his lieges,

and none were like unto him in wisdom; and when the Lord left the

council chamber his countenance was troubled. Then the Duke Shen asked

and said: "Why is my Lord troubled?" And he answered: "I have heard

that the world is never without sages, and that in every country there

are wise men; that good advisers are the foundation of an empire; and

friends of dominion. Now, if I, lacking wisdom, have no equal among

the multitude of my officers, dangerous indeed is the state of Chu. It

grieves me that whereas Prince Chuang of Chu was troubled in a like

case my Lord should be pleased."

And hearing this Lord Wen was inwardly troubled.

II

ESTIMATION OF THE ENEMY

And Lord Wen said to Wu:--

"Chin threatens us on the west; Chu surrounds us on the south; Chao

presses us in the north; Chi watches us in the east; Yen stops our

rear, and Han is posted in our front. Thus, the armies of six nations

encompass us on every side, and our condition is very unpropitious.

Canst thou relieve my anxiety?"

Wu answered and said:--

"The path of safety of a state lies first of all in vigilance. Now my

Lord has already taken warning, wherefore misfortunes are yet distant.

"Let me state the habits of these six countries. The forces of Chi are

weighty but without solidity; the soldiers of Chin are scattered, and

fight each of his own accord: the army of Chu is well ordered, but

cannot endure: the soldiers of Yen defend well, but are without dash:

the armies of the three Chins are well governed, but cannot be used.

"The nature of Chi is stubborn and the country rich, but prince and

officials are proud and luxurious, and neglectful of the common people;

government is loose and rewards not impartial; in one camp there are

two minds; the front is heavy, but the rear is light. Therefore it is

ponderous without stability. To attack it, the force must be divided

into three parts, and, by threatening it on three sides, its front can

be broken.

"The nature of Chin is strong, the country rugged, and the government

firm; rewards and punishments just, the people indomitable, and all

have the fighting spirit; wherefore, when separated, each fights of his

own accord.

"To defeat this people, they must first be tempted by gain to leave

their cause, so that the soldiers, greedy of profit, desert their

general: then, taking advantage of their disobedience, their scattered

forces can be chased, ambushes laid, favourable opportunities taken,

and their general captured.

"The nature of Chu is weak, its territory wide, the government weak,

and the people exhausted; the troops are well ordered but of short

endurance.

"The way to defeat them is to assault their camp, throw it into

confusion and crush their spirit, advance softly, and retire quickly;

tire them out, avoid a serious encounter, and they may be defeated.

"The nature of Yen is straightforward; its people are cautious, loving

courage and righteousness, and without guile; wherefore they defend but

are not daring.

"The way to defeat them is to draw close and press them; tease them and

pass to a distance; move quickly, and appear in the rear, thus causing

bewilderment to their officers and fear in their ranks. Our chariots

and horsemen will act with circumspection and avoid encounter. Thus

their general can be captured.

"The three Chins are the middle kingdom: their nature is peaceful

and their rule just. Their people are tired of war; their troops are

trained, but their leaders are despised; pay is small, and the soldiers

lack the spirit of sacrifice, thus they are well governed but cannot be

used.

"The way to defeat them is to threaten them from afar. If a multitude

attack--defend; if they retreat--pursue, and tire them out.

"In every army there are mighty warriors with strength to lift the

Censer, swifter of foot than the war horse; who can take the enemy's

standard, or slay his general. If such men be selected, and set apart,

cared for and honoured, they are the life of the army.

"Those who use the five arms[20] with skill, who are clever, strong and

quick, and careless of the enemy, should be given rank and decoration,

and used to decide the victory. Their parents and families should be

cared for, encouraged by rewards, and kept in fear of punishment. These

men consolidate the battle array; their presence causes endurance.

"If these men be well selected, double their number can be defeated."

And Lord Wen said:--

"It is good!"

Wu the Master said:--

"In the estimation of the enemy there are eight cases when, without

consulting the oracles, he may be attacked.

"First, an enemy who, in great wind and cold, has risen early, started

forth across ice and rivers, and braved stress and hardships.

"Second, an enemy who, in the height of summer, and in great heat, has

risen early, has travelled incessantly, is hungry and without water,

and is striving to reach a distance.

"Third, an enemy who has been encamped long in one place, who is

without provisions, when the farmers are vexed and indignant, who

has suffered frequent calamities, and whose officers are unable to

establish confidence.

"Fourth, when the enemy's funds are exhausted, fuel and fodder scarce;

when the heavens have been overcast by long continued rain; when there

is the desire to loot, but no place to loot withal.

"Fifth, when their numbers are few; when water is scarce; when men and

horses are scourged by pestilence, and from no quarter is succour at

hand.

"Sixth, when night falls, and the way is yet far; when officers and men

are worn out and fearful, weary and without food, and have laid aside

their armour and are resting.

"Seventh, when the general's authority is weak, the officials false,

and the soldiers unsettled; when their army has been alarmed, and no

help is forthcoming.

"Eighth, when the battle formation is not yet fixed, or camp pitched;

when climbing a hill, or passing through a difficult place; when half

is hidden and half exposed.

"An enemy in these situations may be smitten without hesitation.

"There are six enemies, that, without consulting oracles, should be

avoided.

"First, wide and vast territories, and a large and rich population.

"Second, where the officials care for the people, and bestow bountiful

favours and rewards.

"Third, where rewards are well deserved, punishment accurately

apportioned, and operations undertaken only when the time is fitting.

"Fourth, where merit is recognised and given rank, wise men appointed,

and ability employed.

"Fifth, where the troops are many and their weapons excellent.

"Sixth, when help is at hand on every side, or from a powerful ally.

"For, if the enemy excel in the foregoing, he must be avoided without

hesitation. As it is written, if it be judged good, advance; if it be

known to be difficult, retreat."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"I desire to know how the interior of the enemy can be known from his

outer appearance; the form of his camp by observing his advance, and

how victory may be determined?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"If the coming of the enemy be reckless like roaring waters, his

banners and pennons disordered, and horses and men frequently looking

behind, then ten can be struck with one. Panic will certainly seize

them.

"Before the various princes have assembled, before harmony has been

established between lord and lieges, before ditches have been dug, or

regulations established, and the army is alarmed; wishing to advance,

but unable; wishing to retreat, but unable: then the force can strike

twice their numbers, and in a hundred fights there is no fear of

retreat."

Lord Wen asked:--

"How can the enemy be certainly defeated?"

Wu answered and said:--

"Make certain of the enemy's real condition and quickly strike his

weak point; strike an enemy who has just arrived from afar, before his

ranks are arranged; or one who has eaten and has not completed his

dispositions; or an enemy who is hurrying about, or is busily occupied;

or has not made favourable use of the ground, or has let pass the

opportunity; or one who has come a long distance, and those in rear are

late and have not rested.

"Strike an enemy who is half across waters; or who is on a difficult

or narrow road; or whose flags and banners are in confusion; or who is

frequently changing position; or whose general is not in accord with

the soldiers; or who is fearful.

"All such should be assaulted by the picked men; and the remainder of

the army should be divided, and follow after them. They may be attacked

at once without hesitation."

III

CONTROL OF THE ARMY

Lord Wen said:--

"What is of first importance in operations of war?"

Wu answered and said:--

"Lightness, of which there are four natures, Weight, of which there

are two natures, and Confidence must be clearly comprehended."

And Wen said:--

"What are these?"

And Wu answered:--

"If the way be easy, the horses are light of foot; if the horses be

light of foot, the chariots travel freely; if the chariots travel

easily, men can ride in them without difficulty; if the men be free

to move, the fight prospers. If the difficult and easy ways be known,

the horses are lightened; if the horses be fed at proper intervals,

the chariots are swift; if there be plenty of oil on the axles of the

chariots, the riders are quickly conveyed; if the spears be sharp and

the armour strong, the men make the fight easy.

"Large rewards in advance, heavy punishment in retreat, and impartiality

in their bestowal are required.

"He who well understands these things is the master of victory."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"By what means can the army gain the victory?"

And Wu answered:--

"The foundation of victory is good government."

Again, Wen asked and said:--

"Is it not determined by numbers?"

And Wu replied:--

"If laws and orders be not clear; if rewards and punishments be not

just; if the bell be sounded and they halt not, or drum be beaten and

men do not advance; even if there be a hundred thousand men at arms,

they are of no avail.

"Where there is order, then there is propriety at rest, and dignity in

motion; none can withstand the attack, and retreat forbids pursuit;

motion is regulated, and movements to right and left are made in answer

to the signal; if the ranks be cut asunder, formation is preserved;

if scattered, they are maintained; in fortune or in danger, there is

unity; if a number be collected, they cannot be separated; they may be

used but not wearied; in whatever situation they are placed, nothing

under heaven can withstand them. The army may be called a father and

his children."

And Wu said:--

"In marching, movements and halts must be properly adjusted, suitable

occasions for rationing not missed; the strength of men and horses

not exhausted. If these three things be observed, the commands of

the superior can be carried out; if the commands of the superior be

carried out, order is maintained. If advances and halts be without

method, victualling unsuitable, horses and men tired and weary--neither

unsaddled or housed--it is because the orders cannot be obeyed;

if the orders be set aside, there is disorder in the camp, and in

battle--defeat."

Wu the Master said:--

"On that depository of corpses, the battlefield, if there be certain

expectation of death, there is life; if there be happy expectation of

life, there is death. The good general is like unto one sitting in

a leaking ship, or lying under a burning roof; the wisest man cannot

contrive against him; the strongest man cannot destroy his composure;

and the enemy's onslaught can be withstood. For procrastination is

the greatest enemy of the general; disasters to the army are born of

indecision."

Wu the Master said:--

"Men meet their death from lack of ability or unskilfulness. Wherefore

training is the first requirement of war. One man with a knowledge of

war can teach ten; ten men skilled in war can teach one hundred; one

hundred can teach one thousand; one thousand can teach ten thousand;

and ten thousand men can train an army.

"An enemy from a distance should be awaited, and struck at short range;

an enemy that is tired should be met in good order; hunger should

be opposed by full bellies; the battle formation should be round or

square, the men should kneel or stand; go or remain; move to the right

or left; advance or retire; concentrate or disperse; close or extend

when the signal is given.

"All these changes must be learnt, and the weapons distributed. This is

the business of the general."

Wu the Master said:--

"In the teaching of war, spears are given to the short; bows and

catapults to the tall; banners and standards to the strong; the

bell and drum to the bold; fodder and provisions to the feeble; the

arrangement of the plan to the wise. Men of the same district should

be united; and groups and squads should help each other. At one beat

of the drum the ranks are put in order; at two beats of the drum,

formation will be made; at three beats of the drum, food will be

issued; at four beats of the drum, the men will prepare to march; at

five beats of the drum, ranks will be formed; when the drums beat

together, then the standards will be raised."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"What is the way of marching and halting an army?"

And Wu answered:--

"Natural ovens and dragons' heads should be avoided. Natural ovens are

the mouths of large valleys. Dragons' heads are the extremities of

large mountains. The green dragons (banners) should be placed on the

left, and the white tigers on the right; the red sparrows in front; the

snakes and tortoises behind; the pole star (standard) above; and the

soldiers will look to the standard.

"When going forth to battle, the direction of the wind must be

studied; if blowing in the direction of the enemy, the soldiers will

be assembled and follow the wind; if a head wind, the position will be

strengthened, and a wait made for the wind to change."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"In what way should horses be treated?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"The places where they are kept should be made comfortable; fodder

should be suitable and timely. In winter their stables should be

warmed, and in summer sheltered from the heat; their coats clipped,

their feet carefully pared, their attention directed so that they

be not alarmed, their paces regulated, and their going and halting

trained; horses and men should be in accord, and then the horses can be

used. The harness, the saddle, bit, bridle, and reins must be strong;

if the horse be without vice at the beginning, he can be used to the

end; if the horse be hungry it is good; if his belly be full, his value

decreases; if the sun be falling and the way still long, dismount

frequently. For it is proper that the men be worked, but the horses

must be used with discretion, so that they may be prepared should the

enemy suddenly attack us.

"If these things be well known, then there is free passage under

heaven."

IV

QUALITIES OF THE GENERAL

Wu the Master said:--

"The leader of the army is one who is master of both arms and letters.

He who is both brave and tender can be entrusted with troops.

"In the popular estimation of generals, courage alone is regarded;

nevertheless, courage is but one of the qualifications of the leader.

Courage is heedless in encounter; and rash encounter, which is ignorant

of the consequences, cannot be called good.

"There are five matters which leaders must carefully consider.

"First, reason; second, preparation; third, determination; fourth,

vigilance; fifth, simplicity.

"With reason, a multitude can be controlled like a small number.

"Preparedness sees an enemy outside the gate.

"Determination before the enemy has no thought of life.

"Even after a victory, vigilance behaves as before the first encounter.

"Simplicity ensures few regulations, and preserves order.

"When the leader receives his orders, he forthwith departs. Not until

the enemy has been vanquished does he speak of return. This is the duty

of the general.

"Wherefore, from the day of departure of the army, the general seeks

glory in death, and dreams not of return in dishonour."

Wu the Master said:--

"In war there are four important influences.

"First, spirit; second, ground; third, opportunity; fourth, force.

"The military value of the nation's forces--of one hundred times ten

thousand fighting men--depends upon the personality of one man alone;

this is called the influence of spirit.

"When the road is steep and narrow, when there are famous mountains and

fastnesses where ten men can defend and one thousand cannot pass them

by; such is the influence of ground.

"When spies have been skilfully sown, and mounted men pass to and from

the enemy's camp, so that his masses are divided, his sovereign and

ministers vexed with each other, and superiors and inferiors mutually

censorious; this is the moment of opportunity.

"When the linch-pins are secure, the oars and sweeps ready for use in

the boats, the armed men trained for war, and the horses exercised, we

have what is called the influence of force.

"He who understands these four matters has the qualifications of a

general. Furthermore, dignity, virtue, benevolence, courage, are needed

to lead the troops, to calm the multitude, to put fear in the enemy,

to remove doubts. When orders are issued, the subordinates do not defy

them. Wheresoever the army is, that place the enemy avoids. If these

four virtues be present, the country is strong; if they be not present,

the country is overthrown.

"Of such is the good general."

Wu the Master said:--

"The use of drums and bells is to attract the ear; of flags, standards,

and banners to strike the eye; of laws and penalties to put fear in the

heart.

"To attract the ear the sound must be clear; to strike the eye the

colours must be bright. The heart is awed by punishment, therefore

punishment must be strict.

"If these three matters be not ordered, the state may, peradventure,

be preserved, but defeat by the enemy is certain. Therefore, as it has

been said (if these three things be present), there is no departing

from the commands of the general; when he orders, there is no going

back from death."

Wu the Master said:--

"The secret of war is, first, to know who is the enemy's general, and

to judge his ability. If our plans depend on his dispositions, then

success will be achieved without toil.

"If their general be stupid, and heedlessly trustful, he may be enticed

by fraud; if he be avaricious and careless of his fame, he may be

bribed with gifts. If he make unconsidered movements without plan, he

should be tired out and placed in difficulties. If the superiors be

wealthy and proud, and the inferiors avaricious and resentful, they

should be set against each other. An enemy that is undetermined, now

advancing and then retreating, whose soldiers have nought wherein to

put their trust, should be alarmed, and put to flight.

"When an enemy thinks lightly of the general, and desires to return

home, the easy roads should be blocked, and the difficult and narrow

roads opened; await their coming and capture them.

"If their advance be easy and retreat difficult, await their coming and

then advance against them.

"If their advance be difficult and retreat easy, then press and strike

them.

"An army that is camped in marshy ground, where there are no

water-courses, and long and frequent rains, should be inundated.

"An army that is camped in wild marshes, covered with dark and

overhanging grass and brambles, and swept by frequent high winds,

should be overthrown by fire.

"An army that has halted long without moving; whose general and

soldiers have grown careless, and neglect precautions, should be

approached by stealth, and taken by surprise."

Lord Wen asked, saying:--

"If the two armies be facing each other, and the name of the enemy's

general unknown, in what manner can we discover it?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"A brave man of low degree, lightly but well equipped, should be

employed. He should think only of flight and naught of advantage. Then,

if he observe the enemy's pursuit, if there be first a halt and then

an advance, order is established. If we retreat and the enemy pursue,

but pretend not to be able to overtake us, see an advantage but pretend

not to be aware of it, then their general may be called a wise general,

and conflict with him must be avoided. If their army be full of uproar;

their banners and standards disordered, their soldiers going about

or remaining of their own accord, some in line, others in column; if

such an enemy be eager to pursue, and see an advantage which they are

desperate to seize, then their general is a fool: even if there be a

host, they may be taken."

V

SUITING THE OCCASION

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If strong chariots, good horses, strong and valiant soldiers suddenly

meet the enemy, and are thrown into confusion, and ranks broken, what

should be done?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"In general, the method of fighting is to effect order in daylight by

means of flags and banners, pennons and batons; at night by gongs and

drums, whistles and flutes. If a signal be made to the left, the troops

move to the left; if to the right, they move to the right. Advance is

made at the sound of the drum; halt at the sound of the gong; one blast

of the whistle is for advance, two for the rally. If those who disobey

be cut down, the forces are subject to authority. If officers and

soldiers carry out orders, a superior enemy cannot exist; no position

is impregnable in the attack."

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"What is to be done if the enemy be many and we be few?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"Avoid such an enemy on open ground, and meet him in the narrow way;

for, as it is written, if 1 is to stand against 1,000, there is naught

better than a pass; if 10 are to hold against 100, there is nothing

better than a steep place; if 1,000 are to strike 10,000, there is

nothing better than a difficult place. If a small force, with beat

of gong and drum, suddenly arise in a narrow way, even a host will

be upset. Wherefore it is written: 'He who has a multitude seeks the

plain, and he who has few seeks the narrow way.'"

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"A mighty host, strong and courageous, which is on the defence with a

mountain behind, a precipice between, high ground on the right, and

a river on the left, with deep moats, and high walls, and which has

artillery; whose retreat is like the removal of a mountain, advance

like the hurricane, and whose supplies are in abundance, is an enemy

against whom long defence is difficult. In effect, what should be done

in such a case?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"This indeed is a great question, whose issue depends, not upon the

might of chariot and horse, but upon the schemes of a wise man.

"Let 1,000 chariots and 10,000 horse, well equipped and with foot-men

added to them, be divided into five armies, and a road allotted to each

army.

"Then if there be five armies, and each army take a different road, the

enemy will be puzzled, and know not in what quarter to be prepared. If

the enemy's defence be strong and united, send envoys quickly to him

to discover his intention. If he listen to our advices, he will strike

camp and withdraw. But, if he listen not to our advice, but strikes

down the messenger, and burns his papers, then divide and attack

from five quarters. If victorious, do not pursue; if defeated, flee

to a distance. If feigning retreat, proceed slowly, and, if the enemy

approach, strike swiftly.

"One army will hold the enemy in front, with another cut his rear,

two more with gags in their mouths[21] will attack his weak point,

whether on the right or on the left. If five armies thus make alternate

onslaughts, success is certain.

"This is the way to strike strength."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If the enemy draw near and encompass us, and we would retreat, but

there is no way, and in our multitude there is fear, what should be

done?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"In such a case, if we be many and they be few, divide and fall upon

them; if the enemy be many and we be few, use stratagem and act

according to opportunity; and if opportunities be untiringly seized,

even if the enemy be many, he will be reduced to subjection."

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If, in a narrow valley with steep places on either side, the enemy be

met, and they are many and we are few, what should be done?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"If they be met among hills, woods, in deep mountains, or wide fens,

advance quickly, retire swiftly, and hesitate not. If the enemy be

suddenly met among high mountains or deep valleys, be the first to

strike the drum and fall upon them. Let bow and cross bow advance;

shoot and capture; observe the state of their ranks; and, if there be

confusion, do not hesitate to strike."

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If the enemy be suddenly met in a narrow place with high mountains on

either side, and advance and retreat are alike impossible, what should

be done in such a case?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"This is called War in valleys where numbers are of no avail. The

ablest officers should be collected, and set against the enemy. Men

light of foot and well armed should be placed in front; the chariots

divided; the horsemen drawn up, and placed in ambush on four sides,

with many leagues between, and without showing their weapons. Then,

the enemy will certainly make his defence firm, and neither advance

or retreat. Whereupon, the standards will be raised, and the ranks of

banners shown, the mountains left, and camp pitched in the plain.

"The enemy will then be fearful, and should be challenged by chariot

and horse, and allowed no rest.

"This is the method of fighting in valleys."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If the enemy be met in a marsh where the water is out, so that the

wheels of the chariots sink in, and the shafts be covered, and the

chariots and horsemen overcome by the waters, when there are no boats

or oars, and it is impossible either to advance or retreat, what should

be done in such a case?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"This is called water fighting. Chariots and horsemen cannot be used,

and they must be put for a time on one side. Go up to the top of a high

place, and look out to the four quarters. Then the state of the waters

will certainly be seen; their extent, and the deep places and shallows

fully ascertained. Then, by stratagem, the enemy may be defeated.

"If the enemy should cross the waters he should be engaged when half

over."

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If there has been long continued rain so that the horses sink, and the

chariots cannot move; if the enemy appear from four quarters, and the

forces are frightened, what is the course in such a case?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"When wet and overcast, the chariots should halt; when fine and dry,

they should arise. Seek height, and avoid low places; drive the strong

chariots, and choose well the road on which to advance or halt. If the

enemy suddenly arise, immediately pursue them."

Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If our fields and pastures be suddenly pillaged, and our oxen and

sheep taken, what should be done?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"Lawless enemies that arise are to be feared; defend well and do not

reply. When, at sunset, they seek to withdraw, they will certainly

be overladen and fearful. Striving to return quickly to their homes,

connection will be lost. Then if they be pursued and attacked, they can

be overthrown."

Wu the Master said:--

"The way of attacking the enemy and investing his castle is as

follows:--

"When the outlying buildings have been taken, and the assaulting

parties enter the innermost sanctuary, make use of the enemy's

officials, and take charge of their weapons. Let the army on no account

fell trees or enter dwellings, cut the crops, slay the six domestic

animals, or burn the barns; and show the people that there is no cruel

desire. Those who wish to surrender, should be received and freed from

anxiety."

VI

ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE TROOPS

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

"If punishment be just and reward impartial, is victory thereby gained?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"I cannot speak of all the things that concern justice and impartiality,

but on these alone dependence cannot be placed.

"If the people hear the word of command, or listen to the order with

rejoicing; if, when the army be raised, and a multitude assembled, they

go forth gladly to the fight; if, in the tumult of the fight, when

blade crosses blade, the soldiers gladly die; upon these three things

can the lord of the people place his trust."

And Lord Wen said:--

"How can this be brought about?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"Seek out merit, advance and reward it, and encourage those without

fame."

Accordingly Lord Wen set seats in the garden of the palace in three

rows, and made a feast unto his chief retainers. In the first row were

set those of chief merit, and on the table were placed the best meats

and precious utensils. Those of medium merit were set in the middle

row, and the utensils on the table were fewer in number. Those without

merit were set in the last row, and utensils of no value were put

before them. And when the feast was over, and they had all departed,

the parents, wives, and children of those with merit were given

presents outside the gates of the palace according to their degree.

Further, messengers were sent yearly with gifts to condole with the

parents of those who had lost a son in the service of the state, and to

show that they were had in remembrance.

And after this was carried out for three years, the people of Chin

gathered an army, and came as far as the Western River. And when the

soldiers of Wei heard this, without waiting for orders, they armed

themselves and fell upon them; and they that went forth were 10,000 in

number.

And Lord Wen called Wu and said:--

"The words that you spoke unto me, have they not indeed been carried

out?"

And Wu answered and said:--

"I have heard that there are men, great and small; souls, grand and

feeble.

"As a trial, let 50,000 men, without merit, be collected, and placed

under my command against the country of Chin. If we fail, the state

will be the laughing-stock among the princes, and its power under

heaven will be lost. If a desperate robber be hidden in a wide plain,

and 1,000 men be pursuing him, their glances will be furtive like the

owl, looking backward like the wolf, for they are in fear of harm from

a sudden onslaught.

"One desperate man can put fear in the hearts of a thousand. Now,

if this host of 50,000 men become as a desperate thief, and are led

against Chin, there is nought to fear."

On hearing these words Lord Wen agreed, and adding further 500 chariots

and 3,000 horse, the hosts of Chin were overthrown, all being due to

the encouragement of the troops.

On the day before the battle Wu gave orders to the forces, saying:--

"The army will attack the enemy's chariots, horse and foot, in

accordance with our commands. If the chariots do not capture the

enemy's chariots, or the horse those of the enemy's, or the foot the

enemy's footmen, even if their army be overthrown, no merit will be

gained."

Therefore on the day of the battle, the orders were simple, and fear of

Wei shook the heavens.

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] The five virtues of humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and

faith are known as The Way.

[2] The Yin and Yang are the two principles into which natural

phenomena are divided in Chinese philosophy. Yin is the masculine,

active, or light principle, and Yang is the feminine, passive, or dark

principle. In this connection, day and night, rain, mist and wind are

designated.

[3] The Chinese army consisted of 12,500, the "lu" of 500, "tsu" of 50,

and the "wu" of 5 men.

[4] The "Chuyin" was a large tower or work constructed to give command

over the interior of the enemy's fortress.

High poles were also erected, from the top of which archers, each

encased in an arrow-proof box and raised by a rope and pulley, shot at

the besieged.

[5] Literally 9th heaven, and 9th earth. The Chinese divided the earth

and sky each into 9 strata.

[6] An animal's coat is thinnest in autumn.

[7] The drum was used to beat the assembly and in the advance, the bell

as a signal to halt. Flags were of two kinds, signalling flags and

distinguishing banners.

[8] The normal and the abnormal refer to what in modern phrase are

termed the frontal or holding force and the flanking or surprise force.

[9] The five cardinal tastes are, acridity, bitterness, sourness,

sweetness and saline taste.

[10] Sun, as has been said, was a man of Wu. Wu and Yueh were

continually at war.

[11] Wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

[12] This passage was written on the standard of Takeda Shingen, one of

Japan's most famous generals.

[13] This and the following are so called because the men are

continually thinking of, and slipping back to their homes.

[14] The population was divided, for military purposes, into groups of

eight families. In time of war, each group sent one man into the field,

furnished his wants, and provided for his family. Therefore if 100,000

men are taken, 700,000 homes are affected.

[15] So called because they are put to death when the enemy finds out

that he has been tricked.

[16] Messengers and others, who do not disguise their identity, are

included under this heading.

[17] Literally, right and left men, \_i.e.\_ they who sat on either side.

[18] All numbers connected with weapons were Yin, that is to say--even,

or belonging to the negative principle of Chinese philosophy from their

connection with death.

[19] The back of a turtle was burnt, and the answer was ascertained by

the manner in which the shell split.

[20] Halberd, shield, javelin, pike, and short pike.

[21] Silently.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Transcriber's note:

Every effort has been made to replicate this text as faithfully as

possible.

OE ligatures have been expanded.

The following is a list of changes made to the original.

The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

Page 40:

reap advantage; the wrangles of a multitude are frought with peril.

reap advantage; the wrangles of a multitude are fraught with peril.

Page 92:

Chi answered and said:--

Wu answered and said:--

Page 95:

"By what means can the army gain the victory?

"By what means can the army gain the victory?"

Page 109:

And Lord Wu asked and said:--

And Lord Wen asked and said:--

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