

Muhammad Wolfgang G. A. Schmidt

Sun Zi: The Art of War



An Ancient Chinese Military Classic With the
Chinese Original Text, Text-Analytical Data,
an English translation by Lionel Giles (1910),
Latin Hanyu Pinyin Transcription and
Chinese-English Meaning Definitions

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Tzu#/media/File:Bamboo_book_-_binding_-_UCR.jpg

On the left, a bamboo binding with this classic's Chinese original text is shown; to the right, a memorial statue of Sun Zi, the author of this text. In the middle, the Chinese title of this classic in seal script.

The Chinese original text is in the public domain and freely available on the internet and was taken from this source:

<http://edba.ncl.edu.tw/ChijonTsai/sun/sun.htm>

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GILES, LIONEL: "Sun Tzu On The Art Of War. The Oldest Military Treatise In The World. Translated from the Chinese with Introduction and Critical Notes." Luzac & Co., London 1910. Free e-Book used available at:

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Text Editing of Chinese and English Text, Latin Hanyu Pinyin transcription, Chinese-English glossaries added by the compiler of this book.

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** "Str." stands for "stroke" or "strokes".

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Prefatory Notes

Sunzi's (孫子) ancient Chinese text on the *Art of War* (兵法) is indeed a remarkable text and perhaps the oldest one on military affairs in the world. It provides deeper food for thought on all the aspects involved, from technical aspects relating to coping with the enemy on the battlefield to winning over the enemy without a single shot fired. Sunzi (around 544 B. C. - 496 B.C.) was an army general, military strategist and philosopher; there are hardly any reliable details concerning his life that have come down to us.¹

It is anticipated that this book may be of interest to two basic kinds of readers: those with a focus on military history, strategy and tactics, and those with a more cultural, historical or even philological orientation. While the latter group may require a text edition with an extensive introduction, philological and text-critical notes while those who primarily are interested in the military aspects of this classic's content may require only some basic information on the contexts of the text's cultural and historical settings within which this text was written, and perhaps Latin transcription annotations in Hanyu Pinyin and Chinese-English glossaries to delve deeper into the original text instead of relying on mere English translations of the text, however accurate or not, alone. Due to limitations in size and scope of this edition, we have refrained from including thorough philological and text-critical notes on the main text and confined ourselves to preparing an edition with study aids added to cope with the classical Chinese original text. Readers with a stronger focus on the philological and text-critical aspects of such a text are referred to the LIONEL GILE's English translation of the text (1910) with an introductory study on the text and critical notes added to the main body of the text.²

Following these prefatory notes, there is a brief introduction to the historical person of Sunzi and his work and some practical hints on how to work with the material put together in this book. The major part of the book begins with a presentation of the Chinese original text that is traditionally divided into 13 chapters, all of which treat of a so-called *strategem* (pp. 1-14). This is followed by a section with the Chinese original text and its annotation in Latin transcription according to the Hanyu Pinyin transcription system (pp. 15-26). The transcribed text may aid readers in referencing certain words, phrases or portions of text in monolingual Chinese or bilingual Chinese-English reference works that today often order their lexical entries according to the Hanyu Pinyin transcription system. Text analytical data on this text follow next (pp. 27-76) and include character entries of all Chinese character used in the entire text, both in its simplified and traditional character form, its n-th frequency of occurrence in the text, and quotations from those parts of the text where the character entry in question actually occurs. Character entries are listed in the order of their respective number of strokes they consist of, with those character with a lower number of strokes given first to be followed by character entries with a higher number of strokes. The Chinese-English Character glossary that follows the section Text Analysis section (pp. 77 -113) provides

¹Some details on him and his place in Chinese history may be found in the *Historical Annals* (史記, *Shiji*) by Sima Qian (司馬遷). For further details, see LIONEL GILE's introductory study, pp. XI ff. For full reference, cf. following footnote below.

²GILES, LIONEL: "Sun Tzu On The Art Of War. The Oldest Military Treatise In The World. Translated from the Chinese with Introduction and Critical Notes." Luzac & Co., London 1910. Free e-Book used available at: <https://ia802304.us.archive.org/25/items/artofwaroldestmi00suntuoft/>

a thorough Chinese-English glossary list for all the Chinese characters used in the text. Chinese character entries are listed according to the order of their respective stroke number they consist of so as to enable readers with some basic knowledge of Chinese to look up and reference characters unknown in pronunciation and meaning. English meaning definitions given for each character entry may include shades of meaning common to usage in modern Chinese only and such that are also or only used in the works of classical Chinese used some thousands years ago. As a rule, the more basic meanings listed also pertain to their usage in classical Chinese. However, the real meaning can only be decided upon according to its usage in the context of this classical Chinese text. Hence, the English meaning definitions given can only provide helpful hints, and some entries may require further lexical research in other well-known monolingual or bilingual reference works.³ The major part of the book ends with a Chinese character index with character entries ordered according to their numbers of strokes and with their respective Latin Pinyin transcription given for each (pp. 115-125). This character index may be welcome by readers trying to locate a certain character in the text or in the glossaries.

The appendix part at the end of the book (pp. 127-256) includes a complete English translation of the Chinese original text by LIONEL GILES taken from the 1910 edition of his work (pp. 127-146)⁴ without the introductory study and critical notes on the text. Readers of this book may use this solid English translation to compare it against their own English translations of the Chinese text passages. Appendix 2 provides the entire Chinese text again, divided according to their original chapters with Chinese-English word definitions added for each paragraph within the thirteen chapters of this text (pp. 147-256). It will hopefully aid readers to study certain portions and its sub-sections of the Chinese original text they may be particularly interested in.

This book is now sent out to press in the hope that it will serve a useful purpose and that readers may gain some new insights from it and come to the conclusion that it is always better to make peace instead of war and that warfare cannot rely on technocrats alone.

October 2017

THE COMPILER

³Such are for example:

1. 辭源, *Ci Yuan*, Hongkong 2015, ISBN: 9789620704093

2. 辭海, *Ci Hai*, Hongkong 2005, ISBN: 9622310052

3. Mathews, R. H.: Chinese-English Dictionary (A Chinese-English Dictionary Compiled for the China Inland Mission), Revised Edition, Harvard University Asia Center;1943, ISBN: 978-0674123502 or ISBN: 0674123506

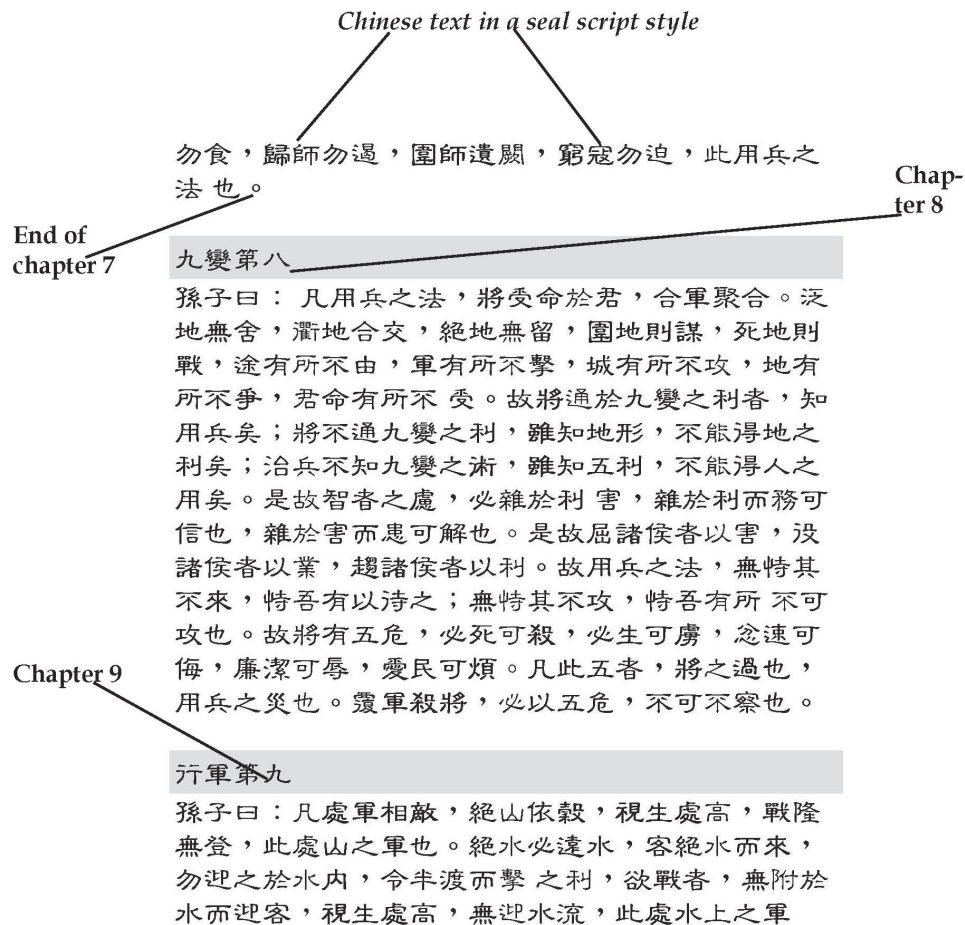
⁴For full reference of Lionel's work, cf. footnote on p. 127 of this book.

How To Use The Book

Notes on how to use this book and how its material is structured mainly come by way of sample extracts from the text with brief explanations. The sample extracts below are largely self-explanatory.

1. The Main Part of the Book (pp. 1 - 125)

1.1 Chinese Text (pp. 1 - 14)



1.2 Chinese Text with Latin Hanyu Pinyin Transcription (pp. 15 - 26)

The text arrangement here is by chapters as in the preceding section of the book (pp. 1-14). But within individual chapters, the text is broken down into paragraphs so as to enable Latin Hanyu Pinyin transcription to run parallel to the respective Chinese character text. Again, the details are largely self-explanatory as in the sample extract that follows below (cf. next page):

Chapter title in Chinese characters and Hanyu Pinyin transcription

Chinese text is broken down in paragraphs for parallel Hanyu Pinyin transcription annotation of Chinese character text

Zuòzhàn dì-èr
作戰第二

Sūnzi yuē: fán yòngbīng zhī fǎ, chā chē qiān sì, gé chē qiānshèng, dài jiǎ shíwàn, qiānlǐ kuīliáng. Zé nèiwài zhī fèi, bīngkè zhī yòng, jiāoqī zhī cái, chē jiǎ zhī fèng, rìfèi qiānjīn, ránhòu shíwàn zhī shǐjǔ yǐ.

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，馳車千駟，革車千乘，帶甲十萬，千里饋糧。則內外之費，賓客之用，膠漆之材，車甲之奉，日費千金，然後十萬之師舉矣。

Qí yòng zhàn yě, guì shèng, jiǔ zé dùnbīng cuò ruì, gōng chéng zélì qū, jiǔ bào shī zé guóyòng bùzú. Fū dùnbīng cuò ruì, qū lì dānhuò, zé zhūhóu chéng qí bì ér qǐ, suī yǒu zhìzhě, bù néng shànqíhòu yǐ. Gù bīng wén zhuō sù, wèi dǔ qiǎo zhī jiǔ yě. Fū bīngjiǔ ér guó lì zhě, wèi zhī yǒu yě. Gù bùjìn zhī yòngbīng zhī hàizhě, zé bù néng jìn zhī yòngbīng zhī lì yě.

其用戰也，貴勝，久則鈍兵挫銳，攻城則力屈，久暴師則國用不足。夫鈍兵挫銳，屈力殫貨，則諸侯乘其弊而起，雖有智者，不能善其後矣。故兵聞拙速，未睹巧之久也。夫兵久而國利者，未之有也。故不盡知用兵之害者，則不能盡知用兵之利也。

1.3 Text Analysis with Data (pp. 27 - 76)

修 修 xiū 3 修櫓轉輜，
具器械，三月而後成；距闔，
又三月而後已。
俱 俱 jù 3 視卒如嬰兒，
故可以與之赴深溪；視卒如
愛子，故可與之俱死。
倍 倍 bèi 2 故用兵之法，
十則圍之，五則攻之，倍則
分之，敵則能戰之，少則能逃
之，不若則能避之。
候 候 hòu 1 故策之而知
得失之計，候之而知動靜之理，
形之而知死生之地，角之而
知有餘不足之處。

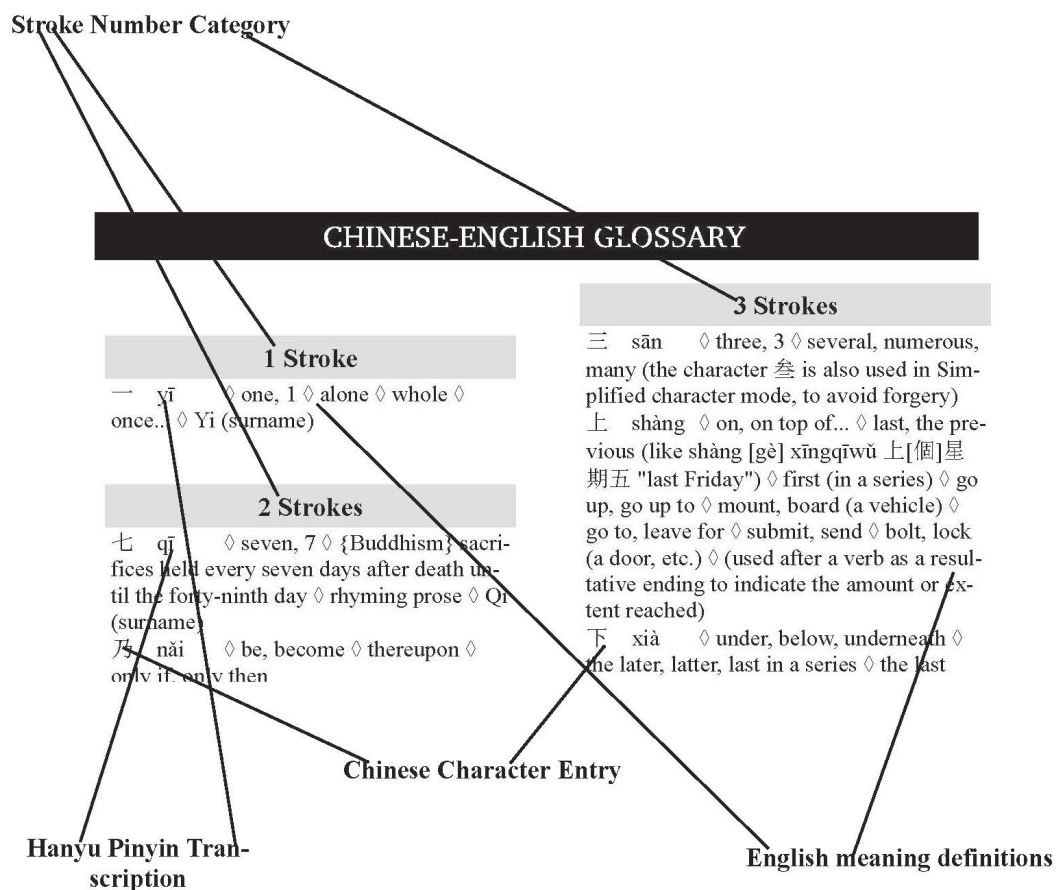
Legend:
1 = Simplified Chinese Character entry
2 = Traditional form of Chinese character entry
3 = Hanyu Pinyin transcription of Chinese character entry
4 = Frequency of occurrence of Chinese character entry in the entire main body of the text
5 = Textual portion where the character entry actually occurs (context)

Notes:

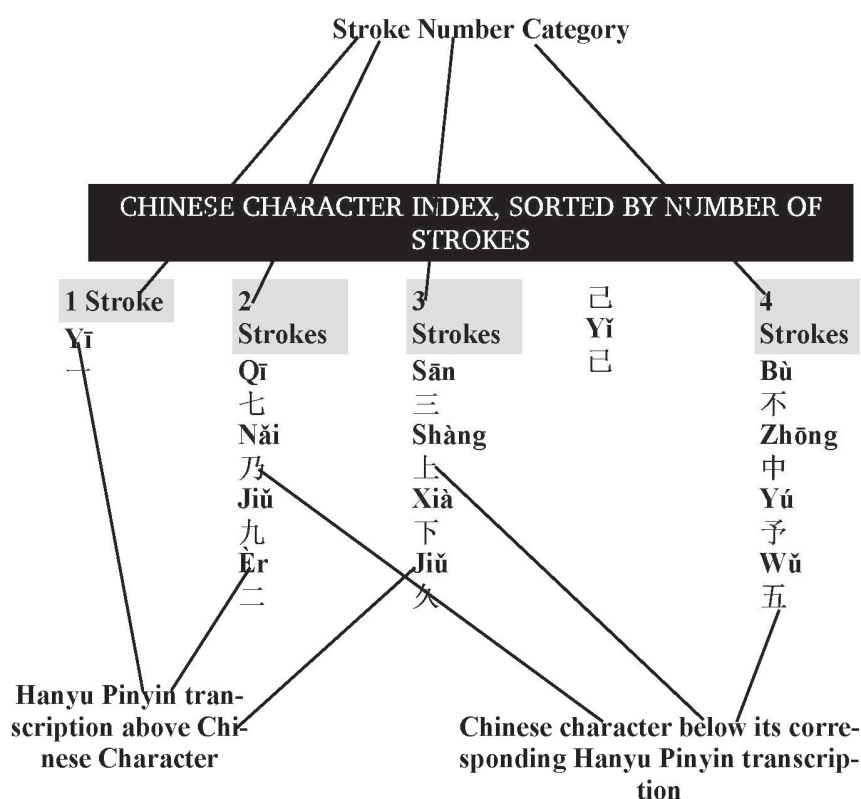
1. When both simplified and traditional character form do not differ in form, then there are no graphical differences between them. Usually, traditional character forms are more complex in form and have a higher number of strokes than their simplified counterparts.
2. Normally, the textual portion within which a character entry may occur is its first occurrence in the text.

1.4 Chinese-English Character Glossary (pp. 77 - 113)

In this glossary, Chinese character entries are sorted according to their number of strokes. For further details, see the sample extract on the following page:



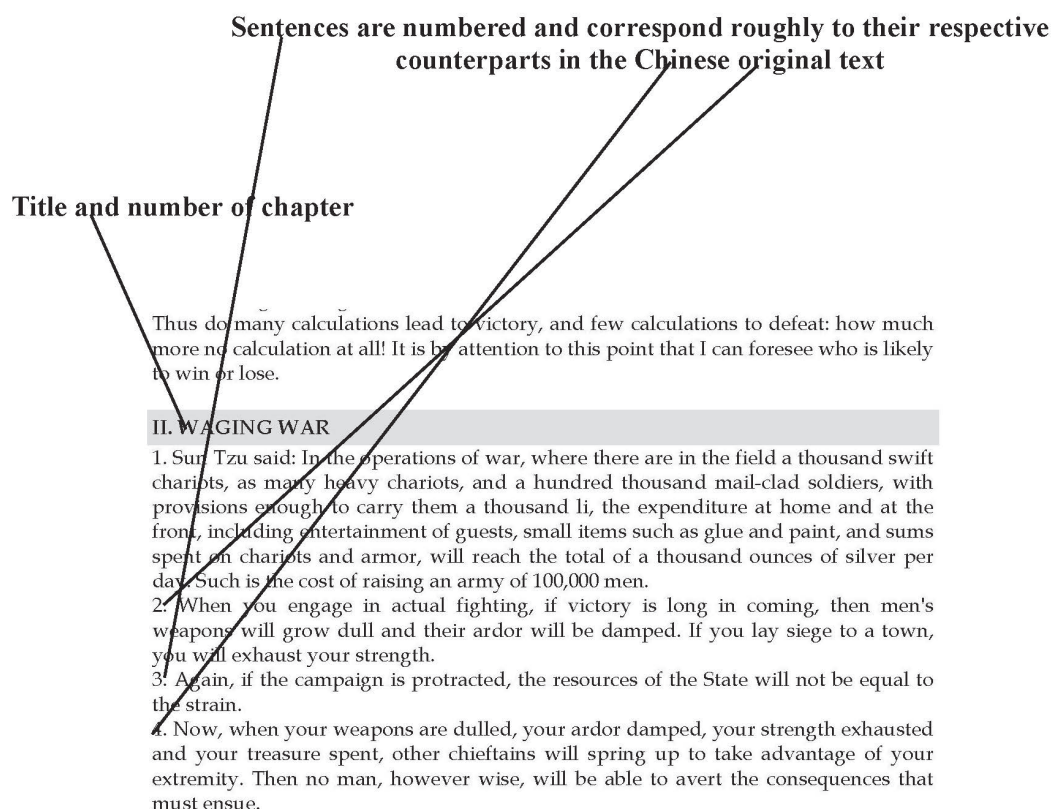
1.5 Chinese Character Index, sorted by Stroke Number (pp. 115 - 125)



2. Appendices (pp. 127 - 256)

There are two appendices at the end of this book.

2.1 English Translation of the Text by LIONEL GILES (pp. 127 - 146)



2.2 Chinese Text and Paragraph Chinese-English Word Glossary (pp. 147 - 256)

The sample extract for this section is shown on the following page.

The Chinese text is repeated here and broken down into its original chapter divisions and within the chapters into sub-sections (paragraphs) to enable the insertion of English meaning definitions on the corresponding paragraphs of the Chinese text.

Please note that the English meaning definitions included here are based on the text parsing as units of “words” rather than single characters. The definition of *character*, *syllable* and *word* in Chinese is a tricky and somewhat complicated one and has been for long a matter of debate among Chinese linguists. Generally, a Chinese character carrying meaning corresponds to a single syllable in spoken Chinese. In classical Chinese texts, characters with meaning and corresponding to a single syllable in pronunciation, often, but not always, correspond to what we would consider as *words*. In the modern Chinese vernacular, especially at the level of spoken language, a “word” usually, but not always, corresponds to a sequence of two or more Chinese characters (on their part, again corresponding to two or more corresponding syllables).

Normally, it may suffice to annotate the meaning of (single) Chinese characters in a classical text of Chinese. We haven't followed this principle here as we wanted to pro-

vide a deeper insight into the (classical) Chinese text with the sequence of characters treated as words. You may compare the Chinese “word entries” here with their character counterparts in the Chinese-English Character glossary (pp. 77- 113) and see whether there are any differences.

Now take a closer look at the sample extract for this section:

Paragraph 1 of Chinese Text in Chapter 7 with English meaning definitions

7

軍爭第七

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，將受命於君，合軍聚眾，交和而舍，莫難於軍爭。軍爭之難者，以迂為直，以患為利。故迂其途，而誘之以利，後人發，先人至，此知迂直之計者也。軍爭為利，軍爭為危。舉軍而爭利則不及，委軍而爭利則輜重損。

軍 jūn ◇ armed forces, the military ◇ army, corps ◇ largest garrison post during the Tang 唐 Dynasty ◇ military area during the Song 宋 Dynasty ◇ army (as largest military unit, theoretically 12,500 men)
爭 zhēng ◇ vie, contend, strive, fight (for) ◇ argue, dispute, wrangle ◇ Zheng (surname)
第七 dì-qī ◇ the 7th
孫子 sūnzi ◇ grandson ◇ (in the pronunciation "Sūnzǐ": name for Sūn Wǔ 孫武/孫武, military strategist of the Chūnqiū 春秋 Period [770-476 BCE]) ◇ the Sunzi (name for the military treatise by Sun Wu; full title is Sūnzǐ Bīngfǎ 孫子兵法/孫子兵法)

受命 shòumìng ◇ get an assignment/mandate ◇ be ordered to, receive instructions
於 yú ◇ in, at on (time or place) ◇ towards, to, for ◇ than (comparative) ◇ by (passive voice)
君 jūn ◇ sovereign, monarch ◇ {formal} you (a form of address) ◇ you (a form of address by a wife to her husband) ◇ Jun (surname)
合 hé ◇ combine, unite, join ◇ shut, close ◇ the entire/whole... ◇ {written} be appropriate, proper ◇ suit, agree, fit, comply/conform with ◇ add up to, be equal to ◇

Paragraph 2 of Chinese Text in Chapter 7 with English meaning definitions

是故捲甲而趨，日夜不處，倍道兼行，百裡而爭利，則擒三將軍，勁者先，疲者後，其法十一而至；五十裏而爭利，則蹶上將軍，其法半至；三十裏而爭利，則三分之二至。是故軍無輜重則亡，無糧食則亡，無委積則亡。

是故 shìgù ◇ therefore, for this reason
捲 juǎn ◇ roll (up), furl, curl ◇ carry away, sweep along (like by a wave, the wind) ◇ a roll, sth shaped like a roll ◇ {measure word}... roll(s) of... (used for rolls, spools or similar cylindrical objects)
甲 jiǎ ◇ jia (first of the ten Tiāngān 天干 "Celestial Stems") ◇ first (place, etc.) ◇ shell (like tortoise shell) ◇ nail (like fingernail) ◇ armour ◇ soldier ◇ jia measure of land equal to 0.97 hectares ◇ Jia (surname)
而 ér ◇ (joining two adjectives)...and... ◇ (indicating a sequence or consequence)...

是 or nǎishì 乃是) ◇ rule, regulation, law ◇ {measure word} (used for items of writing, like news items, fables, questions on a test, etc.)
擒 qín ◇ catch, capture, seize
三 sān ◇ three, 3 ◇ several, numerous, many (the character 叁 is also used in Simplified character mode, to avoid forgery)
將軍 jiāngjūn ◇ (military rank) general ◇ {Japan, history} shogun ◇ {chess} check ◇ put (sb) on the spot, put sb in a tough spot, embarrass
勁 jìn ◇ strength, energy ◇ vigour, zeal, spirit ◇ manner, air ◇ interest, gusto

INTRODUCTION

In this section, we will present some basic information on the author of this ancient Chinese text, *Sunzi*. We will also provide some information on the text itself in this book. These will help us to understand some of the background, the cultural and historical settings current at the time when this interesting text was written.

1. On the Author

Sunzi (孫子) or “Master Sun” must have lived around 534-453 B.C. and was born as a son of an aristocratic family in the empire of Qi in Lè'ān (樂安) that corresponds to the present-day District of Huimin in Shandong province (North Eastern China). Other sources claim that he was born in the State of Wu. “Master” (子, zi) is a honorific title assigned to him much later. His real full name was Sūn Wǔ (孫武).¹ One of his descendants was Sun Bin (孫臏) who was a military strategist in the period of the Warring States (481-403 B.C., [戰國時代 Zhànguó shídài]) and who is known for his treatise *Sun Bin bingfa* (孫臏兵法) or “Sun Bing’s Art of War”.²

Sunzi’s life time was in a period of Chinese history known as the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 B.C., [春秋時代 Chūnqiū Shídài]) that was characterized by a decline of the central Zhou government’s power over various feudal states leading to war among themselves. It was a period of political and social instability that was regarded later by the Confucianists as a state of disorder to be avoided under all circumstances in the interest of a stable nation, government rule and the fate of its citizens. Confucius (孔子 Kǒngzi “Master Kong”, 551 B.C. – 479 B. C.) and his followers were vehemently opposed to the decline of the central government system in a feudal state and society as this was likely to lead to chaos and instability. Instead, a well-knit network of social relationships with rites and mutual obligations, based on social inequality, for all parties involved would guarantee political and social stability.

Later, when ancient China was ruled by Emperors under various dynasties, and when Confucianists assumed a leading role as (Mandarin officials) at the imperial courts, armies, soldiers and their generals were looked at in social disgrace because they were considered “uneducated” while the Confucianist officials would consider themselves as scholars and view themselves in their leading role as officials by merits of their scholarly (Confucianist) education and their studies in that subject area and their successful passing of the various state examinations for these position of officials. To primarily rely on maintaining order by armed forces was not a real option according to Confucian social philosophy; it was primarily following a set of moral values (“virtue” (德, Dé)) like obedience to superiors and filial piety, a set of mutual social obligations defined, the rites and social etiquette taught by Confucius that were only capable of maintaining social peace, political and social stability.³

Evidently, Sunzi and his work are of pre-Confucianist origin and date back to an era of several thousand years of Chinese history long before the followers of Confucius assumed power as a leading elite in rule of Imperial China.

Exact historical data on Sunzi’s life are scarce, even according to Chinese sources that have come down to us. One of the very few available are the *Historical Annals or Records of the*

¹In Chinese, the family name commonly precedes the first name. “Sun” (孫) is his family name here, “Wu” (武) then must be his first name. 武 besides being a name also means: “military” (in connection with boxing skills, sword play, etc.), “valiant”, “fierce”.

²Also known as Qi Sun Zi (齊孫子).

³Neither was legalism or something like the rule of law a real option to later Confucianists, which they would historically reflect back to events and developments of a period between 480 - 221 B.C. where Legalist Philosophy (法家 Fajia) was en vogue and determining politics and the state rule in particular. Confucianists focused on moral instead to maintain public peace and social order.

Historian (史記 Shǐjì)⁴ by SIMA QIAN (司馬遷, 145 or 135-86 B.C.). He has the following to say on Sun Zi:⁵

Sun Tzu Wu was a native of the Ch'i State. His ART OF WAR brought him to the notice of Ho Lu, King of Wu. Ho Lu said to him: "I have carefully perused your 13 chapters. May I submit your theory of managing soldiers to a slight test?" Sun Tzu replied: "You may." Ho Lu asked: "May the test be applied to women?" The answer was again in the affirmative, so arrangements were made to bring 180 ladies out of the Palace. Sun Tzu divided them into two companies, and placed one of the King's favorite concubines at the head of each. He then bade them all take spears in their hands, and addressed them thus: "I presume you know the difference between front and back, right hand and left hand?" The girls replied: Yes. Sun Tzu went on: "When I say "Eyes front," you must look straight ahead. When I say "Left turn," you must face towards your left hand. When I say "Right turn," you must face towards your right hand. When I say "About turn," you must face right round towards your back." Again the girls assented. The words of command having been thus explained, he set up the halberds and battle-axes in order to begin the drill. Then, to the sound of drums, he gave the order "Right turn." But the girls only burst out laughing. Sun Tzu said: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame." So he started drilling them again, and this time gave the order "Left turn," whereupon the girls once more burst into fits of laughter. Sun Tzu: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the general is to blame. But if his orders ARE clear, and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers." So saying, he ordered the leaders of the two companies to be beheaded. Now the king of Wu was watching the scene from the top of a raised pavilion; and when he saw that his favorite concubines were about to be executed, he was greatly alarmed and hurriedly sent down the following message: "We are now quite satisfied as to our general's ability to handle troops. If we are bereft of these two concubines, our meat and drink will lose their savor. It is our wish that they shall not be beheaded." Sun Tzu replied: "Having once received His Majesty's commission to be the general of his forces, there are certain commands of His Majesty which, acting in that capacity, I am unable to accept." Accordingly, he had the two leaders beheaded, and straightway installed the pair next in order as leaders in their place. When this had been done, the drum was sounded for the drill once more; and the girls went through all the evolutions, turning to the right or to the left, marching ahead or wheeling back, kneeling or standing, with perfect accuracy and precision, not venturing to utter a sound. Then Sun Tzu sent a messenger to the King saying: "Your soldiers, Sire, are now properly drilled and disciplined, and ready for your majesty's inspection. They can be put to any use that their sovereign may desire; bid them go through fire and water, and they will not disobey." But the King replied: "Let our general cease drilling and return to camp. As for us, we have no wish to come down and inspect the troops." Thereupon Sun Tzu said: "The King is only fond of words, and cannot translate them into deeds." After that, Ho Lu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and finally appointed him general. In the west, he defeated the Ch'u State and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the States of Ch'i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad amongst the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the King."⁶

⁴Also known as 太史公書 *Tàishǐ Gōng Shu* or "The Records of the Grand Historian".

⁵Quoted from Lionel Giles's preface to the English translation of Sunzi's text, p. xi-xii; for full reference, see footnote on p. 127 of this book.

⁶Quoted from Shiji (史記), chapter 65.-Latin Transcription of Chinese terms quoted in the text are given here according to the WADE-GILES transcription system that is considered outdated today and is no longer in common use. For their proper transcription in today's Hanyu Pinyin system, see the hints in footnote 2 on p. 127 of this book.

2. The Author's Work on *The Art of War*(兵法)

The text is traditionally divided into 13 chapters, and here is a brief chapter content summary for each of the chapters:⁷

Chapter 1: Detail Assessment and Planning (Chinese: 始計) explores the five fundamental factors (the Way, seasons, terrain, leadership, and management) and seven elements that determine the outcomes of military engagements. By thinking, assessing and comparing these points, a commander can calculate his chances of victory. Habitual deviation from these calculations will ensure failure via improper action. The text stresses that war is a very grave matter for the state and must not be commenced without due consideration.

Chapter 2: Waging War (Chinese: 作戰) explains how to understand the economy of warfare and how success requires winning decisive engagements quickly. This section advises that successful military campaigns require limiting the cost of competition and conflict.

Chapter 3: Strategic Attack (Chinese: 謀攻) defines the source of strength as unity, not size, and discusses the five factors that are needed to succeed in any war. In order of importance, these critical factors are: Attack, Strategy, Alliances, Army and Cities.

Chapter 4: Disposition of the Army (Chinese: 軍形) explains the importance of defending existing positions until a commander is capable of advancing from those positions in safety. It teaches commanders the importance of recognizing strategic opportunities, and teaches not to create opportunities for the enemy.

Chapter 5: Forces (Chinese: 兵勢) explains the use of creativity and timing in building an army's momentum.

Chapter 6: Weaknesses and Strengths (Chinese: 虛實) explains how an army's opportunities come from the openings in the environment caused by the relative weakness of the enemy and how to respond to changes in the fluid battlefield over a given area.

Chapter 7: Military Maneuvers (Chinese: 軍爭) explains the dangers of direct conflict and how to win those confrontations when they are forced upon the commander.

Chapter 8: Variations and Adaptability (Chinese: 九變) focuses on the need for flexibility in an army's responses. It explains how to respond to shifting circumstances successfully.

Chapter 9: Movement and Development of Troops (Chinese: 行軍) describes the different situations in which an army finds itself as it moves through new enemy territories, and how to respond to these situations. Much of this section focuses on evaluating the intentions of others.

Chapter 10: Terrain (Chinese: 地形) looks at the three general areas of resistance (distance, dangers and barriers) and the six types of ground positions that arise from them. Each of these six field positions offers certain advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter 11: The Nine Battlegrounds (Chinese: 九地) describes the nine common situations (or stages) in a campaign, from scattering to deadly, and the specific focus that a commander will need in order to successfully navigate them.

Chapter 12: Attacking with Fire (Chinese: 火攻) explains the general use of weapons and the specific use of the environment as a weapon. This section examines the five targets for attack, the five types of environmental attack and the appropriate responses to such attacks.

Chapter 13: Intelligence and Espionage (Chinese: 用間) focuses on the importance of developing good information sources, and specifies the five types of intelligence sources and how to best manage each of them.

⁷The text of this summary was taken from the following sources and adjusted a bit by the compiler of this book: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War.

Sunzi's text begins with the following statement:⁸

“孫子曰：兵者，國之大事，死生之地，存亡之道，不可不察也”。

Sūnzi yuē: bīng zhě, guó zhī dà shì, sǐ shēng zhī dì, cúnwáng zhī dào, bùkěbù chá yě.

LIONEL GILES translates this passage as follows:⁹

“Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected”.

My own translation of this short passage would be this:

“Sunzi says: As far as warfare is concerned, it is a nation's primary concern. For (its) position, it could mean either death or life, a way to either existence or destruction. It is a topic that in no way can be ignored”.

The next passage outlines the perspective from which, according to the author, one is to look at this question of life or death for a nation:¹⁰

故經之以五事，校之以計，而索其情：一曰道，二曰天，三曰地，四曰將，五曰法。

Gù jīng zhī yǐ wǔ shì, xiào zhī yǐ jì, ér suǒ qí qíng: yī yuē dào, èr yuē tiān, sān yuē dì, sì yuē jiāng, wǔ yuē fǎ.

GILES translates this second passage as follows:¹¹

“The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline.”

Again, my own translation of this passage would be this:

“Therefore, there are five principles that determine the guiding lines for an army officer to take into account (or to consider) when analysing the situation (on the battlefield): First, there is the principle of moral; second, there is Heaven; third, there is Earth; fourth, there is the leadership of troops¹²; fifth, there is method¹³”.

Hence, the overall “spirit” of the work, if one wants to assign such to it, is more holistic in ap-

⁸Sunzi, Chapter 1.

⁹Cf. Giles's English translation, p. 1. Giles's work contains the Chinese text with sentences numbered followed by his English translation also with the translated sentences numbered.

¹⁰Sunzi, Chapter 1.

¹¹Giles, pp. 1-2.

¹²將 *jiang* here clearly refers to leadership of troops; hence, this word may be translated either as an act of leading or commanding troops or as a person in the position of leading troops, thus military leader/commander.

¹³法 *Fǎ* translated as method here would be most likely be the most appropriate term to be used here. However, this term also translates as way, style or model after..., pattern after...法 *Fǎ* also translates as law in a judicial sense mainly in modern Chinese. Here, according to context, it cannot be law in a judicial sense that is being referred to in the text. Rather, it is here the implied sense of method or style of leadership in which the troops are led by the commander.

proach and does not rely on “technocratic” aspects of warfare alone. It is what may be considered to be the “philosophical” part contained in this remarkable text. Its exact date and location of authorship is unknown; the only thing certain is that it must date back to some point of time in the Spring and Autumn period during Sunzi’s lifetime. Many centuries later, it was seen as the text with potentials of practical application in life inside and outside military.

The reception of this work outside China was one to last for many centuries, both in Far East of Asia and in the West. In the Far East, it was a classic text to be studied at military academies for military examinations in several nations; in the 16th century A.D. , for example, Japanese rulers like Takeda Shingen (1521-1573) was known for winning battles by studying and relying on Sunzi’s Art of War. Mao Zedong was inspired by the same text in his treatises on Guerilla warfare, and also the Vietcong army leaders in their resistance struggle to French rule in Vietnam and later in the Vietnam War with the USA involved relied heavily on the strategies discussed in Sunzi’s Art of War. In the Western part of the World, generals like Mannerheim during the Finnish war (January 27 - May 15, 1918) were inspired by this text. Military libraries in the USA keep this text available for their special reading audience, and even the KGB in the Soviet era is said to have closely studied “the strategy of deception” introduced in Sunzi’s text.¹⁴

Outside the military realm, the Art of War has also received some attention as much of the warfare “psychology” introduced in Sunzi’s text is also applicable in civil life with its manifold conflicts and potentials for the same even without any official state of warfare at national or international level. Strategies and tactics of how to deal with opponents, for example in political or business life, marketing strategies and in dealing with competitors, business management and even in sports all present a strategical challenge and therefore are only some of the examples of such application outside the military realm.¹⁵

Some of the ideas and expressions of this ancient text have also found their way into modern languages like today’s Chinese or even to some extent also into English. Here is an example:¹⁶

At the end of chapter 3 in Sunzi’s work, the text originally reads:

故曰：知彼知己，百戰不殆；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼，不知己，每戰必殆。¹⁷
Gù yuē: zhībǐzhījǐ, bǎizhànbùdài; bù zhī bǐ ér zhījǐ, yī shèng yī fù; bù zhī bǐ, bù zhī jǐ, měi zhàn bì dài.

English translation of this passage:¹⁸

So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be put at risk even in a hundred battles.
If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose.
If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself.

My own translation of this passage is as follows:

¹⁴Summary of details taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_War.

¹⁵Ibd.

¹⁶Ibd. - The linguistic analysis of these quotations cited is my own.

¹⁷From the end of Chapter 3 of Sunzi’s text.

¹⁸Used in the Wikipedia text without reference to the source.

Therefore it is said: Knowing the other side and yourself, hundred(s of) battles can be fought without the risk of being defeated.
Not knowing the other side and only yourself, you may either win or fail (lose the battle, be defeated).
Not knowing the other side nor yourself, every battle will essentially be a of a high risk.

A proverb in contemporary Chinese based on the previous passage cited from Sunzi's original text is:

知己知彼，百戰不殆。
Zhī jǐ zhī bǐ, bǎi zhàn bù dài

English translation of this passage:¹⁹

If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can win numerous (literally, "a hundred") battles without jeopardy.

My own translation of this passage is:

Knowing yourself and (knowing)²⁰ the other side (means)²¹ hundred(s of) battles (can be fought)²² without any risk whatsoever.

It easily follows from the content of this strategem that any practical application of this principle is not only confined to military activities and actual situations of warfare but may well be applied in certain situations of contemporary business, political or other situations of life where you have to cope with opponents or competitors.

These are only a few examples with quotations from Sunzi's original text to indicate that its content, regardless of its antiquity, is still meaningful to a multi-faceted reading audience of our time, not only for the purposes of actual warfare but also in the smaller and more trivial battles of daily life. This text, in its essence, would not be what it is and would not mean what it actually means if it had not that "philosophical" or "psychological" spirit reaching far beyond the mechanisms of technocratic warfare alone. It helps people survive and stand the test of challenge in almost all critical situations of their lives.

¹⁹Found in the Wikipedia text; for full reference, see the link given in footnote 14.

²⁰This is repeated in the original text but has been given in brackets as in good English you may as well omit it instead of repeating it.

²¹Only implied, therefore this expression appears in brackets.

²²Also only implied, therefore this part appears in brackets as well.

孫子兵法

始計第一

孫子曰：兵者，國之大事，死生之地，存亡之道，不可不察也。

故經之以五事，校之以計，而索其情：一曰道，二曰天，三曰地，四曰將，五曰法。

道者，令民與上同意，可與之死，可與之生，而不畏危也；天者，陰陽、寒暑、時制也；地者，遠近、險易、廣狹、死生也；將者，智、信、仁、勇、嚴也；法者，曲制、官道、主用也。凡此五者，將莫不聞，知之者勝，不知者不勝。

故校之以計，而索其情，曰：主孰有道？將孰有能？天地孰得？法令孰行？兵衆孰強？士卒孰練？賞罰孰明？吾以此知勝負矣。

將聽吾計，用之必勝，留之；將不聽吾計，用之必敗，去之。

計利以聽，乃爲之勢，以佐其外。勢者，因利而制權也。

兵者，詭道也。故能而示之不能，用而示之不用，近而示之遠，遠而示之近。利而誘之，亂而取之，實而備之，強而避之，怒而撓之，卑而驕之，佚而勞之，親而離之，攻其無備，出其不意。此兵家之勝，不可先傳也。

夫未戰而廟算勝者，得算多也；未戰而廟算不勝者，得算少也。多算勝，少算不勝，而況無算乎！吾以此觀之，勝負見矣。

作戰第二

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，馳車千駟，革車千乘，帶甲十萬，千里饋糧。則內外之費，賓客之用，膠漆之材，車甲之奉，日費千金，然後十萬之師舉矣。

其用戰也，貴勝，久則鈍兵挫銳，攻城則力屈，久暴師則國用不足。夫鈍兵挫銳，屈力殫貨，則諸侯乘其弊而起，雖有智者，不能善其後矣。故兵聞拙速，未睹巧之久也。夫兵久而國利者，未之有也。故不盡知用兵之害者，則不能盡知用兵之利也。

善用兵者，沒不再籍，糧不三載，取用於國，因糧於敵，故軍食可足也。國之貧於師者遠輸，遠輸則百姓貧；近於師者貴賣，貴賣則百姓竭，財竭則急於丘沒。力屈財殫，中原內虛於家，百姓之費，十去其七；公家之費，破軍罷馬，甲冑矢弩，戟楯矛櫓，丘牛大車，十去其六。

故智將務食於敵，食敵一鍾，當吾二十鍾；其得一石，當吾二十石。故殺敵者，怒也；取敵之利者，貨也。故車戰，得車十乘以上，賞其先得者，而更其旌旗。車雜而乘之，卒善而養之，是謂勝敵而益強。

故兵貴勝，不貴久。故知兵之將，民之司命。國家安危之主也。

謀攻第三

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，全國為上，破國次之；全軍為上，破軍次之；全旅為上，破旅次之；全卒為上，破卒次之；全伍為上，破伍次之。是故百戰百勝，非善之善者也；不戰而屈人之兵，善之善者也。

故上兵伐謀，其次伐交，其次伐兵，其下攻城。攻城之法，為不得已。修櫓 輜，具器械，三月而後

成；距闔，又三月而後已。將不勝其忿，而蟻附之，殺士三分之一，而城不拔者，此攻之災也。故善用兵者，屈人之兵，而非戰也，拔人之城而非攻也，毀人之國而非久也，必以全爭於天下，故兵不頓而利可全，此謀攻之法也。

故用兵之法，十則圍之，五則攻之，倍則分之，敵則能戰之，少則能逃之，不若則能避之。故小敵之堅，大敵之擒也。

夫將者，國之輔也。輔周則國必強，輔隙則國必弱。故君之所以患於軍者三：不知軍之不可以進而謂之進，不知軍之不可以退而謂之退，是謂縻軍；不知三軍之事，而同三軍之政，則軍士惑矣；不知三軍之權，而同三軍之任，則軍士疑矣。三軍既惑且疑，則諸侯之難至矣。是謂亂軍引勝。

故知勝有五：知可以戰與不可以戰者，勝。識衆寡之用者，勝。上下同欲者，勝。以虞待不虞者，勝。將能而君不御者，勝。此五者，知勝之道也。故曰：知己知彼，百戰不貽；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼不知己，每戰必敗。

軍形第四

孫子曰：昔之善戰者，先為不可勝，以待敵之可勝。不可勝在己，可勝在敵。故善戰者，能為不可勝，不能使敵必可勝。故曰：勝可知，而不可為。不可勝者，守也；可勝者，攻也。守則不足，攻則有餘。善守者，藏於九地之下，善攻者，動於九天之上，故能自保而全勝也。

見勝不過衆人之所知，非善之善者也；戰勝而天下曰善，非善之善者也。故舉秋毫不為多力，見日月不為明目，聞雷霆不為聰耳。古之善戰者，勝於易勝者也。故善戰者之勝也，無智名，無勇功，故其

戰勝不忒。不忒者，其所措必勝，勝已敗者也。故善戰者，先立於不敗之地，而不失敵之敗也。是故勝兵先勝，而後求戰，敗兵先戰而後求勝。善用兵者，修道而保法，故能為勝敗之政。

兵法：一曰度，二曰量，三曰數，四曰稱，五曰勝。地生度，度生量，量生數，數生稱，稱生勝。故勝兵若以鎰稱銖，敗兵若以銖稱鎰。勝者之戰，若決積水於千仞之谿者，形也。

兵勢第五

孫子曰：凡治眾如治寡，分數是也；鬥眾如鬥寡，形名是也；三軍之眾，可使必受敵而無敗者，奇正是也；兵之所加，如以投卵者，虛實是也。

凡戰者，以正合，以奇勝。故善出奇者，無窮如天地，不竭如江海。終而復始，日月是也。死而復生，四時是也。聲不過五，五聲之變，不可勝聽也；色不過五，五色之變，不可勝觀也；味不過五，五味之變，不可勝嘗也；戰勢，不過奇正，奇正之變，不可勝窮也。奇正相生，如循環之無端，孰能窮之哉？

激水之疾，至於漂石者，勢也；驚鳥之疾，至於毀折者，節也。是故善戰者，其勢險，其節短。勢如張弩，節如發機。

紛紛紜紜，鬥亂而不可亂也；渾渾沌沌，形圓而不可敗也。亂生於治，怯生於勇，弱生於強。治亂，數也；勇怯，勢也；強弱，形也。故善動敵者，形之，敵必從之；予之，敵必取之。以利動之，以卒待之。

故善戰者，求之於勢，不責於人；故能擇人而任勢。任勢者，其戰人也，如轉木石。木石之性，安則靜，危則動，方則止，圓則行。故善戰人之勢，如轉圓石於千仞之山者，勢也。

虛實第六

孫子曰：凡先處戰地而待敵者佚，後處戰地而趨戰者勞。

故善戰者，致人而不致於人。能使敵人自至者，利之也；能使敵人不得至者，害之也。故敵佚能勞之，飽能饑之，安能動之。出其所必趨，趨其所不意。行千里而不勞者，行於無人之地也；攻而必取者，攻其所不守也。守而必固者，守其所不攻也。故善攻者，敵不知其所守；善守者，敵不知其所攻。微乎微乎，至於無形；神乎神乎，至於無聲，故能為敵之司命。進而不可禦者，沖其虛也；退而不可追者，速而不可及也。故我欲戰，敵雖高壘深溝，不得不與我戰者，攻其所必救也；我不欲戰，雖畫地而守之，敵不得與我戰者，乖其所之也。故形人而我無形，則我專而敵分。我專為一，敵分為十，是以十攻其一也。則我眾敵寡，能以眾擊寡者，則吾之所與戰者約矣。吾所與戰之地不可知，不可知則敵所備者多，敵所備者多，則吾所與戰者寡矣。故備前則後寡，備後則前寡，備左則右寡，備右則左寡，無所不備，則無所不寡。寡者，備人者也；眾者，使人備己者也。故知戰之地，知戰之日，則可千里而會戰；不知戰之地，不知戰日，則左不能救右，右不能救左，前不能救後，後不能救前，而況遠者數十裏，近者數裏乎！以吾度之，越人之兵雖多，亦奚益於勝哉！故曰：勝可為也。敵雖眾，可使無鬥。故策之而知得失之計，候之而知

動靜之理，形之而知死生之地，角之而知有餘不足之處。故形兵之極，至於無形。無形則深間不能窺，智者不能謀。因形而措勝於衆，衆不能知。人皆知我所以勝之形，而莫知吾所以制勝之形。故其戰勝不復，而應形於無窮。夫兵形象水，水之行避高而趨下，兵之形避實而擊虛；水因地而制流，兵因敵而制勝。故兵無常勢，水無常形。能因敵變化而取勝者，謂之神。故五行無常勝，四時無常位，日有短長，月有死生。

軍爭第七

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，將受命於君，合軍聚衆，交和而舍，莫難於軍爭。軍爭之難者，以迂爲直，以患爲利。故迂其途，而誘之以利，後人發，先人至，此知迂直之計者也。軍爭爲利，軍爭爲危。舉軍而爭利則不及，委軍而爭利則輜重損。是故捲甲而趨，日夜不處，倍道兼行，百裡而爭利，則擒三將軍，勁者先，疲者後，其法十一而至；五十裡而爭利，則蹶上將軍，其法半至；三十裡而爭利，則三分之二至。是故軍無輜重則亡，無糧食則亡，無委積則亡。故不知諸侯之謀者，不能豫交；不知山林、險阻、沮澤之形者，不能行軍；不用鄉導者，不能得地利。故兵以詐立，以利動，以分和爲變者也。故其疾如風，其徐如林，侵掠如火，不動如山，難知如陰，

動如雷震。掠鄉分衆，廓地分利，懸權而動。先知迂直之計者勝，此軍爭之法也。《軍政》曰：“言不相聞，故爲之金鼓；視不相見，故爲之旌旗。”夫金鼓旌旗者，所以一民之耳目也。民既專一，則勇者不得獨進，怯者不得獨退，此用衆之法也。故夜戰多金鼓，晝戰多旌旗，所以變人之耳目也。三

軍可奪氣，將軍可奪心。是故朝氣銳，晝氣惰，暮氣歸。善用兵者，避其銳氣，擊其惰歸，此治氣者也。以治待亂，以靜待嘩，此治心者也。以近待遠，以佚待勞，以飽待饑，此治力者也。無邀正正之旗，無擊堂堂之陳，此治變者也。故用兵之法，高陵勿向，背丘勿逆，佯北勿從，銳卒勿攻，餌兵勿食，歸師勿遏，圍師遺闕，窮寇勿迫，此用兵之法也。

九變第八

孫子曰：凡用兵之法，將受命於君，合軍聚合。泛地無舍，衢地合交，絕地無留，圍地則謀，死地則戰，途有所不由，軍有所不擊，城有所不攻，地有所不爭，君命有所不受。故將通於九變之利者，知用兵矣；將不通九變之利，雖知地形，不能得地之利矣；治兵不知九變之術，雖知五利，不能得人之用矣。是故智者之慮，必雜於利害，雜於利而務可信也，雜於害而患可解也。是故屈諸侯者以害，沒諸侯者以業，趨諸侯者以利。故用兵之法，無恃其不來，恃吾有以待之；無恃其不攻，恃吾有所不可攻也。故將有五危，必死可殺，必生可虜，忿速可侮，廉潔可辱，愛民可煩。凡此五者，將之過也，用兵之災也。覆軍殺將，必以五危，不可不察也。

行軍第九

孫子曰：凡處軍相敵，絕山依穀，視生處高，戰隆無登，此處山之軍也。絕水必遠水，客絕水而來，勿迎之於水內，令半渡而擊之利，欲戰者，無附於水而迎客，視生處高，無迎水流，此處水上之軍也。絕斥澤，唯亟去無留，若交軍於斥澤之中，必依水草而背衆樹，此處斥澤之軍也。平陸處易，右

背高，前死後生，此處平陸之軍也。凡此四軍之利，黃帝之所以勝四帝也。凡軍好高而惡下，貴陽而賤陰，養生而處實，軍無百疾，是謂必勝。丘陵隄防，必處其陽而右背之，此兵之利，地之助也。上雨水流至，欲涉者，待其定也。凡地有絕澗、天井、天牢、天羅、天陷、天隙，必亟去之，勿近也。吾遠之，敵近之；吾迎之，敵背之。軍旁有險阻、潢井、蒹葭、小林、薈者，必謹覆索之，此伏姦之所處也。敵近而靜者，恃其險也；遠而挑戰者，欲人之進也；其所居易者，利也；衆樹動者，來也；衆草多障者，疑也；鳥起者，伏也；獸駭者，覆也；塵高而銳者，車來也；卑而廣者，徒來也；散而條達者，樵採也；少而往來者，營軍也；辭卑而備者，進也；辭強而進驅者，退也；輕車先出居其側者，陳也；無約而請和者，謀也；奔走而陳兵者，期也；半進半退者，誘也；杖而立者，饑也；汲而先飲者，渴也；見利而不進者，勞也；鳥集者，虛也；夜呼者，恐也；軍擾者，將不重也；旌旗動者，亂也；吏怒者，倦也；殺馬肉食者，軍無糧也；懸而不返其舍者，窮寇也；諄諄翕翕，涂與人言者，失衆也；數賞者，窘也；數罰者，困也；先暴而後畏其衆者，不精之至也；來委謝者，欲休息也。兵怒而相迎，久而不合，又不相去，必謹察之。兵非貴益多也，惟無武進，足以並力料敵取人而已。夫惟無慮而易敵者，必擒於人。卒未親而罰之，則不服，不服則難用。卒已親附而罰不行，則不可用。故合之以文，齊之以武，是謂必取。令素行以教其民，則民服；令素不行以教其民，則民不服。令素行者，與衆相得也。

地形第十

孫子曰：地形有通者、有掛者、有支者、有隘者、有險者、有遠者。我可以注，波可以來，曰通。通形者，先居高陽，利糧道，以戰則利。可以注，難以返，曰掛。掛形者，敵無備，出而勝之，敵若有備，出而不勝，難以返，不利。我出而不利，波出而不利，曰支。支形者，敵雖利我，我無出也，引而去之，令敵半出而擊之利。隘形者，我先居之，必盈之以待敵。若敵先居之，盈而勿從，不盈而從之。險形者，我先居之，必居高陽以待敵；若敵先居之，引而去之，勿從也。遠形者，勢均難以挑戰，戰而不利。凡此六者，地之道也，將之至任，不可不察也。凡兵有走者、有馳者、有陷者、有崩者、有亂者、有北者。凡此六者，非天地之災，將之過也。夫勢均，以一擊十，曰走；卒強吏弱，曰馳；吏強卒弱，曰陷；大吏怒而不服，遇敵鬪而自戰，將不知其能，曰崩；將弱不嚴，教道不明，吏卒無常，陳兵縱橫，曰亂；將不能料敵，以少合衆，以弱擊強，兵無選鋒，曰北。凡此六者，敗之道也，將之至任，不可不察也。夫地形者，兵之助也。料敵制勝，計險隘遠近，上將之道也。知此而用戰者必勝，不知此而用戰者必敗。故戰道必勝，主曰無戰，必戰可也；戰道不勝，主曰必戰，無戰可也。故進不求名，退不避罪，唯民是保，而利於主，國之寶也。視卒如嬰兒，故可以與之赴深溪；視卒如愛子，故可與之俱死。厚而不能使，愛而不能令，亂而不能治，譬若驕子，不可用也。知吾卒之可以擊，而不知敵之不可擊，勝之半也；知敵之可擊，而不知吾卒之不可以擊，勝之半也；知敵之可擊，知吾卒之可以擊，而不知地形之不可以戰，勝之半也。故知兵者，動而不迷，舉而