



THE ART OF WAR BY SUN TZU

(DAN LEAHY'S NOTES)

I. ESTIMATES

A. APPRAISE WAR IN TERMS OF FIVE FACTORS

1. Moral Influence

What causes people to be in harmony with their leaders.

2. Weather

The interaction of natural forces. Winter's cold and summer's heat.

3. Terrain

Distances, ease and difficulty of traversing.

4. Command

General's qualities:

wisdom - the changing of circumstances;  
sincerity - certainty of rewards/punishment  
humanity - Loves & sympathizes  
courage - seize opp without hesitation  
strictness- troops in awe.

5. Doctrine

Organization, control, assignment, regulation and provisions.

B. CREATE SITUATIONS that will contribute to accomplishment of plans.

1. All warfare is based on deception. When capable, feign incapacity; when active, inactivity.

## I. ESTIMATES

### B. CREATE SITUATIONS (cont.)

2. Anger the General. If the general is "choleric" his authority can easily be upset.

With many calculations, one can win; with few one cannot. How much less chance of victory has one who makes none at all.

## II. WAGING WAR

### A. CONSIDER FUNDS

### B. LENGTH:

Victory is the main object in war. If this is long delayed, weapons are blunted and morale depressed. When troops attack cities, their strength is exhausted.

There has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited.

### C. DISTANCE

Need to feed upon the enemy.

### D. RAGE

The reason troops slay the enemy is because they are enraged. (burial grounds example. (75)).

### E. TREATMENT

Reuse the chariots, replace the flags and treat the captives well.

This is called "winning a battle and becoming stronger". What is essential in war is victory, not prolonged operations.

### III. OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

#### A. ATTACK THEIR PLANS

For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy. Attack their plans at the inception. (Kill their envoy).

#### B. DISRUPT THEIR ALLIANCES

Look into the matter of his alliances and cause them to be severed and dissolved.

#### C. ATTACK HIS ARMY

Battles are dangerous affairs. If you cannot nip his plans in the bud, or disrupt his alliances when they are about to be consummated, sharpen your weapons to gain the victory.

#### D. WORST POLICY IS TO ATTACK CITIES.

(What is the equivalent of cities today?)

#### E. THE ART OF OFFENSIVE STRATEGY.

Conquer by strategy. When ten to the enemy's one, surround him; when five times his strength, attack him; If double his strength, divide him. If equally matched, you may engage him -- (generals decide this one)

#### F. FIVE CIRCUMSTANCES OF VICTORY.

1. He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot.
2. Understands how to use large/small forces.
3. Ranks are united in purpose.
4. Prudent and lies in wait for the enemy.
5. Generals able and no interference from sovereign.

G. KNOW THY ENEMY AND KNOW YOURSELF. If ignorant of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril.

IV. DISPOSITIONS (Shape)

A. INVINCIBILITY LIES IN DEFENSE, THE  
POSSIBILITY OF VICTORY IN THE ATTACK.

B. EXPERTISE DOESN'T MEAN TRIUMPH IN BATTLE.

The skillful general conquers an enemy  
already defeated.

C. VICTORIOUS ARMY WINS ITS VICTORIES BEFORE  
SEEKING BATTLE -

an army destined to defeat fights in the hope  
of winning.

D. THOSE WHO EXCEL IN WAR FIRST CULTIVATE THEIR  
OWN HUMANITY AND JUSTICE.

E. ELEMENTS OF THE ART OF WAR

1. Measurements of space derived from the  
ground. (distances and type of terrain)

2. Estimation of quantities

3. Calculations

4. Comparisons from figures

5. Victories from comparisons

V. ENERGY (Force or potential in some situations)

- A. FORCE: NORMAL (Direct) & EXTRAORDINARY (Indirect)
  - 1. Normal confronts; Extraordinary flanks.
  - 2. Normal engages; Extraordinary wins.
  - 3. Combinations of these two are endless.
  
- B. MOMENTUM OF ONE SKILLED AT WAR IS OVERWHELMING AND HIS ATTACK IS PRECISELY DRAWN (TIMED).
  
- C. VICTORY FROM THE SITUATION CREATED. The skilled commander does not demand it of his subordinates.

Therefore when using troops, one must take advantage of the situation exactly as if he were setting a ball in motion on a steep slope. The force applied is minute, but the results are enormous.

VI. WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS

- A. POSITION. Those skilled in war bring the enemy to the field of battle and are not brought there by him.
  
- B. MOVEMENT. Go into emptiness, strike voids, bypass what he defends, hit him where he does not expect you.
  
- C. PLACE. The enemy must not know where I intend to give battle. When he prepares in a great many places, those I have to fight in any one place will be few.
  
- D. WATER - LIKE.

Just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strengths and avoids weaknesses.

Just as water shapes its flow in accordance with the ground, so an army manages its victory in accordance with the situation of the enemy.

## VII. MANOEUVRE (Struggle to gain advantageous position)

- A. NOTHING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN THE ART OF MANOEUVRE.
- B. WAR IS BASED ON DECEPTION. Move when it is advantageous and create changes in the situation by dispersal and concentration of forces.
- C. MANOEUVRE IS THE USE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT APPROACHES.

The art of employing troops is that when the enemy occupies high ground, do not confront him; with his back resting on hills, do not oppose him; when he pretends to flee, do not pursue;

Do not attack his elite troops; do not gobble proffered baits; do not thwart an enemy returning homeward; to a surrounded enemy you must leave a way of escape; Do not press any enemy at bay.

## VIII. THE NINE VARIABLES

- 1. You should not encamp in low-lying ground.
- 2. In communicating ground, unite with your allies.
- 3. You should not linger in desolate ground.
- 4. In enclosed ground, resourcefulness is required.
- 5. In death ground, fight.
- 6. Some roads not to follow.
- 7. Some troops not to strike.
- 8. Some cities not to assault.
- 9. Some ground not contested.

IX. MARCHES

(Mainly about recognizing formations of enemy troops)

X. TERRAIN (Topography or Conformation of the ground)

Accessible, Entrapping, Indecisive, Constricted, Precipitous and Distant.

- A. ACCESSIBLE - Where we and the enemy can traverse with equal ease. (Roads meet and cross.)
- B. ENTRAPPING - Easy to get out of, but difficult to return. (Net-like).
- C. INDECISIVE - Equally disadvantageous. Entice by marching off; draw out half his force and strike. (In which you get locked with the enemy).
- D. CONSTRICTED - If first, block the passes and await the enemy. If enemy occupies first, don't follow. (A valley running between two mountains).
- E. PRECIPITOUS - Take position on sunny heights and await. If enemy there, march off. (there are mountains, rivers, foothills).
- F. DISTANT. - With an enemy of equal strength, it is difficult to provoke battle and unprofitable to engage him in his chosen position.

And therefore I say: 'Know the enemy, know yourself; your victory will never be endangered. Know the ground, know the weather; your victory will then be total.'

## XI. NINE VARIETIES OF GROUND

In respect to the employment of troops, ground may be classified as dispersive, frontier, key, communicating, focal, serious, difficult, encircled and death.

- A. DISPERSIVE - Fighting in your own territory. Do not fight here. Unify the determination of the army.
- B. FRONTIER - Shallow penetration into enemy's territory. Do not stop here. Keep forces closely linked here.
- C. KEY - Equally advantageous ground. Do not attack on enemy on this ground. Hasten up my rear elements.
- D. COMMUNICATING - Equally accessible. Do not allow your formations to become separated. Pay strict attention to defenses.
- E. FOCAL - Enclosed by other states. Here ally with neighboring states. Strengthen alliances.
- F. SERIOUS - Deep into enemy territory. Ensure a continuous flow of provisions.
- G. DIFFICULT - Any place where the going is tough. Press on over the roads.
- H. ENCIRCLED - Where access is constricted; way out tortuous and small force can strike my larger force. Devise stratagems. Block the points of access and egress.
- I. DEATH - Army will survive only if it fights with the courage of desperation. Fight. Make it evident there is no chance of survival. Soldiers will fight to the death when there is no alternative.



XII. ATTACK BY FIRE

XIII. EMPLOYMENT OF SECRET AGENTS.

- A. FOREKNOWLEDGE - The reason why the wise general conquer the enemy. AND, it must be achieved from people who know the enemy situation.
  
- B. TYPES: Native (country people), inside (enemy officials), doubled (enemy spies), expendable (our own spies who we give fabricated information) and living (those who return with information).
  
- C. CLOSE TO COMMANDER - None is more intimate. They talk of "mouth to ear matters."
  
- D. INFORMATION - "... must know the names of the garrison commander, the staff officers, the ushers, gate keepers, and the bodyguards... inquire into these matters in minute detail.
  
- E. ANY ARMY WITHOUT SECRET AGENTS IS EXACTLY LIKE A MAN WITHOUT EYES OR EARS.

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