

Advanced lesson - Sun Zi Bing Fa - Sun Tzu on the Art of War

V.Energy - shi pian di wu

Sun Zi's Art of War was written by Sun Wu in the final year of the Spring and Autumn Period (770BC - 476BC).

It is not only the oldest Chinese military work in existence but also the oldest book of military theory in the world, well-known for a long time in the history of the military academy in China and abroad.

Sun Zi's Art of War has altogether 13 chapters. Both concise and comprehensive, this book sum up the experience of ancient wars, bring to light the many laws of war which are of universal significance.

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shì piān dì wǔ
势 篇 第 五

sūn zǐ yuē : fán zhì zhòng rú zhì guǎ , fēn shù shì yě ; dòu zhòng rú dòu guǎ , xíng míng shì yě ; sān jūn zhī zhòng , kě shǐ bì shòu dí ér wú bài zhě , qí zhèng shì yě ; bīng zhī suǒ jiā , rú yǐ duàn tóu luǎn zhě , xū shí shì yě 。
投 卵 者 ， 虚 实 是 也 。

fán zhàn zhě , yǐ zhèng hé , yǐ qí shèng 。 gù shàn chū qí zhě , wú qióng rú tiān dì , bù jié rú jiāng hé 。 zhōng ér fù shǐ , rì yuè shì yě 。 sǐ ér fù shēng , sì shí shì yě 。 shēng bú guò wǔ , wǔ shēng zhī biàn , bù kě shèng tīng yě ; sè bú guò wǔ wǔ sè zhī biàn , bù kě shèng guān yě ; wèi bú guò wǔ , wǔ wèi zhī biàn , bù kě shèng cháng yě ; zhàn shì bú guò qí zhèng , qí zhèng zhī biàn , bù kě shèng qióng yě 。 qí zhèng xiāng shēng , rú xún huán zhī wú duān , shú néng qióng

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也。奇正相生，如循环之无端，孰能穷
zhī ?
之 ?

jī shuǐ zhī jí , zhì yú piāo shí zhě , shì yě ; zhì niǎo zhī jí ,
激水之疾，至于漂石者，势也；鸷鸟之疾，
zhì yú huǐ zhé zhě , jié yě 。 shì gù shàn zhàn zhě , qí shì xiǎn ,
至于毁折者，节也。是故善战者，其势险，
qí jié duǎn 。 shì rú kuàng nǚ , jié rú fā jī 。
其节短。势如旷弩，节如发机。

fēn fēn yún yún , dòu luàn ér bù kě luàn yě ; hún hún dùn dùn , xíng
纷纷纭纭，斗乱而不可乱也；浑浑沌沌，形
yuán ér bù kě bài yě 。 luàn shēng yú zhì , qiè shēng yú yǒng , ruò
圆而不可败也。乱生于治，怯生于勇，弱
shēng yú qiáng 。 zhì luàn , shù yě ; yǒng qiè , shì yě ; qiáng ruò ,
生于强。治乱，数也；勇怯，势也；强弱，
xíng yě 。
形也。

gù shàn dòng dí zhě , xíng zhī , dí bì cóng zhī ; yǔ zhī , dí bì qǔ
故善动敌者，形之，敌必从之；予之，敌必取
zhī 。 yǐ lì dòng zhī , yǐ zú dài zhī 。
之。以利动之，以卒待之。

gù shàn zhàn zhě , qiú zhī yú shì , bù zé yú rén , gù néng zé rén ér
故善战者，求之于势，不责于人，故能择人而
rèn shì 。 rèn shì zhě , qí zhàn rén yě , rú zhuǎn mù shí 。 mù shí
任势。任势者，其战人也，如转木石。木石
zhī xìng , ān zé jìng , wēi zé dòng , fāng zé zhǐ , yuán zé xíng 。
之性，安则静，危则动，方则止，圆则行。
gù shàn zhàn rén zhī shì , rú zhuǎn yuán shí yú qiān rèn zhī shān zhě ,
故善战人之势，如转圆石于千仞之山者，
shì yě 。
势也。

Translation: (Translated from the Chinese version By LIONEL GILES, M. A. (1910))

V. ENERGY

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.
2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.
3. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken-- this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.
4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg--this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.
5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.
6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.
7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.
8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.
9. There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.
10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack--the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

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11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle--you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

15. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.

17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy; masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.

20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if

four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.

23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.