

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

I .Laying Plans - jì piān dì yī

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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jì piān dì yī
计篇第一

sūn zǐ yuē : bīng zhě , guó zhī dà shì 。
孙 子 曰 : 兵 者 , 国 之 大 事 。
sǐ shēng zhī dì , cún wáng zhī dào , bù kě bù chá yě 。
死 生 之 地 , 存 亡 之 道 , 不 可 不 察 也 。
gù jīng zhī yǐ wǔ shì , xiào zhī yǐ jì , ér suǒ qí qíng :
故 经 之 以 五 事 , 校 之 以 计 , 而 索 其 情 :
yìyuē dào , èr yuē tiān , sān yuē dì , sì yuē jiàng , wǔ yuē fǎ 。
一 曰 道 , 二 曰 天 , 三 曰 地 , 四 曰 将 , 五 曰 法 。
dào zhě , lìng mǐn yǔ shàng tóng yì yě , gù kě yǐ yǔ zhī sǐ ,
道 者 , 令 民 与 上 同 意 也 , 故 可 以 与 之 死 ,
kě yǐ yǔ zhī shēng , ér bú wèi wēi 。 tiān zhě , yīn yáng 、
可 以 与 之 生 , 而 不 畏 危 。 天 者 , 阴 阳 、
hán shǔ 、 shí zhì yě ; dì zhě , yuǎn jìn 、 xiǎn yì 、 guǎng xiá 、
寒 暑 、 时 制 也 ; 地 者 , 远 近 、 险 易 、 广 狭 、
sǐ shēng yě ; jiāng zhě , zhì 、 xìn 、 rén 、 yǒng 、 yán yě ;
死 生 也 ; 将 者 , 智 、 信 、 仁 、 勇 、 严 也 ;
fǎ zhě , qū zhì 、 guān dào 、 zhǔ yòng yě 。 fán cǐ wǔ zhě , jiàng
法 者 , 曲 制 、 官 道 、 主 用 也 。 凡 此 五 者 , 将
mò bù wén , zhī zhī zhě shèng , bù zhī zhě bù shèng 。
莫 不 闻 , 知 之 者 胜 , 不 知 者 不 胜 。

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gù xiào zhī yǐ jì , ér suǒ qí qíng 。 yuē : zhǔ shú yǒu dào ?
故 校 之 以 计 ， 而 索 其 情 。 曰 ： 主 孰 有 道 ？
jiàng shú yǒu néng ? tiān dì shú dé ? fǎ lìng shú xíng ?
将 孰 有 能 ？ 天 地 孰 得 ？ 法 令 孰 行 ？
bīng zhòng shú qiáng ? shì zú shú liàn ? shǎng fá shú míng ?
兵 众 孰 强 ？ 士 卒 孰 练 ？ 赏 罚 孰 明 ？
wú yǐ cǐ zhī shèng fù yǐ 。
吾 以 此 知 胜 负 矣 。

jiàng tīng wú jì , yòng zhī bì shèng , liú zhī ; jiàng bù tīng
将 听 吾 计 ， 用 之 必 胜 ， 留 之 ； 将 不 听
wú jì , yòng zhī bì bài , qù zhī 。
吾 计 ， 用 之 必 败 ， 去 之 。

jì lì yǐ tīng , nǎi wéi zhī shì , yǐ zuǒ qí wài 。
计 利 以 听 ， 乃 为 之 势 ， 以 佐 其 外 。

shì zhě , yīn lì ér zhì quán yě 。
势 者 ， 因 利 而 制 权 也 。

bīng zhě , guǐ dào yě 。 gù néng ér shì zhī bù néng , yòng ér
兵 者 ， 诡 道 也 。 故 能 而 示 之 不 能 ， 用 而
shì zhī bú yòng , jìn ér shì zhī yuǎn , yuǎn ér shì zhī jìn 。
示 之 不 用 ， 近 而 示 之 远 ， 远 而 示 之 近 。

lì ér yòu zhī , luàn ér qǔ zhī , shí ér bèi zhī , qiáng ér bì zhī ,
利 而 诱 之 ， 乱 而 取 之 ， 实 而 备 之 ， 强 而 避 之 ，
nù ér náo zhī , bēi ér jiāo zhī , yì ér láo zhī , qīn ér lí zhī 。
怒 而 挠 之 ， 卑 而 骄 之 ， 佚 而 劳 之 ， 亲 而 离 之 。

gōng qí wú bèi , chū qí bú yì 。
攻 其 无 备 ， 出 其 不 意 。

cǐ bīng jiā zhī shèng , bù kě xiān chuán yě 。
此 兵 家 之 胜 ， 不 可 先 传 也 。

fū wèi zhàn ér miào suàn shèng zhě , dé suàn duō yě ;
夫 未 战 而 庙 算 胜 者 ， 得 算 多 也 ；
wèi zhàn ér miào suàn bú shèng zhě , dé suàn shǎo yě 。
未 战 而 庙 算 不 胜 者 ， 得 算 少 也 。

duō suàn shèng , shǎo suàn bú shèng , ér kuàng yú wú suàn hū !
多 算 胜 ， 少 算 不 胜 ， 而 况 于 无 算 乎 ！
wú yǐ cǐ guān zhī , shèng fù xiàn yǐ 。
吾 以 此 观 之 ， 胜 负 见 矣 。

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

I. LAYING PLANS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. These are: (1) The Moral Law; (2) Heaven; (3) Earth; (4) The Commander; (5) Method and discipline. 5,6. The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.
7. Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.
8. Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.
9. The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerely, benevolence, courage and strictness. 10. By method and discipline are to be understood the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.
11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.
12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise
13. (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law? (2) Which of the two generals has most ability? (3) With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth? (4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced? (5) Which army is stronger? (6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained? (7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

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14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.
15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it, will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it, will suffer defeat:--let such a one be dismissed!
16. While heading the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.
17. According as circumstances are favorable, one should modify one's plans.
18. All warfare is based on deception.
19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.
20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.
21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.
22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.
23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.
24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.
25. These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.
26. Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.