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

VII. Maneuvering - jun zheng pian di qi

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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jun zheng pian di qi
军争 篇 第七

sūn zǐ yuē : fán yòng bīnɡ zhī fǎ , jiànɡ shòu mìnɡ yù jūn , hé jūn
孙子曰：凡用兵之法，将受命于君，合军聚众，交和而舍，莫难于军争。军争之难
zhē ，yī yǔ wéi zhí ，yī huàn wéi lì 。gù yǔ qí tú ，ér yòu zhī yí lǐ ，
者，以迂为直，以患为利。故迂其途，而诱之以利，
hòu rén fā ，xiān rén zhì 。cǐ zhī yǔ zhī zhī jí zhē yè 。
后人发，先人至。此知迂直之计者也。

ɡù jūn zhēnɡ wéi lì ，jūn zhēnɡ wéi wěi 。jǔ jūn ér zhēnɡ lì zé bù jí ，
故军争为利，军争为危。举军而争利则不及，
wěi jūn ér zhēnɡ lì zé zǐ zhòng juān 。shì ɡù juǎn jiā ér qū ，rì yè
委军而争利则辎重捐。是故卷甲而趋，日夜
bù chù ，bèi dào jiān xínɡ ，bǎi lǐ ér zhēnɡ lì ，zé qín sān jiànɡ
不处，倍道兼行，百里而争利，则擒三将
jūn ，jìn zhè xiān ，pí zhè hòu ，qī fā shí yì ér zhī ；wǔ shí lì
军，劲者先，疲者后，其法十一而至；五十里
ér zhēnɡ lì ，zé juǎn shǎnɡ jiānɡ jūn ，qī fā bàn zhǐ sān shí lì ér
而争利，则蹶上将军，其法半至；三十里而
zhēnɡ lì ，zé sān fēn zhī  ěr zhī 。shì ɡù jūn wǔ zǐ zhòng zé wánɡ ，
争利，则三分之二至。是故军无辎重则亡，无粮食则亡，无危积则亡。

故不图诸侯之谋者，不能成就；不知山林、险阻、泽地之形者，不能行军；不用乡导，则亡。无粮食则亡，无危积则亡。

《军政》曰："言不相闻，故为金鼓；视不相见，故为旌旗。"夫金鼓旌旗者，所以一万人之耳目也。人即专一，则勇者不得独进，怯者不得独退，此用众之法也。故夜战多火鼓，昼战多旌旗，所以变人之耳目也。

将三军可夺气，将军可夺心。是故朝气锐，昼气惰，暮气归。故善用兵者，避其锐气，击其惰归，以治气者也。以治待乱，以静待哗，以近待远，以逸待劳，以饱待饥，此治气者也。无邀正正之旗，勿击堂堂之
VII. MANEUVERING

1. Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign.

2. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonize the different elements thereof before pitching his camp.

3. After that, comes tactical maneuvering, than which there is nothing more difficult. The difficulty of tactical maneuvering consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain.

4. Thus, to take a long and circuitous route, after enticing the enemy out of the way, and though starting after him, to contrive to reach the goal before him, shows knowledge of the artifice of DEVIATION.

5. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, most dangerous.

6. If you set a fully equipped army in march in order to snatch an advantage, the chances are that you will be too late. On the other hand, to detach a flying column for the purpose involves the sacrifice of its baggage and stores.

7. Thus, if you order your men to roll up their buff-coats, and make forced marches without halting day or night, covering double the usual distance at a stretch, doing a hundred LI in order to wrest an advantage, the leaders of all your three divisions will fall into the hands of the enemy.
8. The stronger men will be in front, the jaded ones will fall behind, and on this plan only one-tenth of your army will reach its destination.

9. If you march fifty LI in order to outmaneuver the enemy, you will lose the leader of your first division, and only half your force will reach the goal.

10. If you march thirty LI with the same object, two-thirds of your army will arrive.

11. We may take it then that an army without its baggage-train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost.

12. We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors.

13. We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.

14. We shall be unable to turn natural advantage to account unless we make use of local guides.

15. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed.

16. Whether to concentrate or to divide your troops, must be decided by circumstances.

17. Let your rapidity be that of the wind, your compactness that of the forest.

18. In raiding and plundering be like fire, is immovability like a mountain.

19. Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

20. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men; when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery.

21. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.
22. He will conquer who has learnt the artifice of deviation. Such is the
art of maneuvering.

23. The Book of Army Management says: On the field of battle, the spoken
word does not carry far enough: hence the institution of gongs and drums.
Nor can ordinary objects be seen clearly enough: hence the institution
of banners and flags.

24. Gongs and drums, banners and flags, are means whereby the ears and
eyes of the host may be focused on one particular point.

25. The host thus forming a single united body, is it impossible either
for the brave to advance alone, or for the cowardly to retreat alone. This
is the art of handling large masses of men.

26. In night-fighting, then, make much use of signal-fires and drums, and
in fighting by day, of flags and banners, as a means of influencing the
ears and eyes of your army.

27. A whole army may be robbed of its spirit; a commander-in-chief may
be robbed of his presence of mind.

28. Now a soldier’s spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has
begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to
camp.

29. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen,
but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the
art of studying moods.

30. Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub
amongst the enemy:—this is the art of retaining self-possession.

31. To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at
ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the
enemy is famished:—this is the art of husbanding one’s strength.

32. To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect
order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident
array:—this is the art of studying circumstances.
33. It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill.

34. Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen.

35. Do not swallow bait offered by the enemy. Do not interfere with an army that is returning home.

36. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.

37. Such is the art of warfare.