

The Only
Award-
Winning
English
Translation of

孫
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Sun Tzu's

THE
ART
OF
WAR

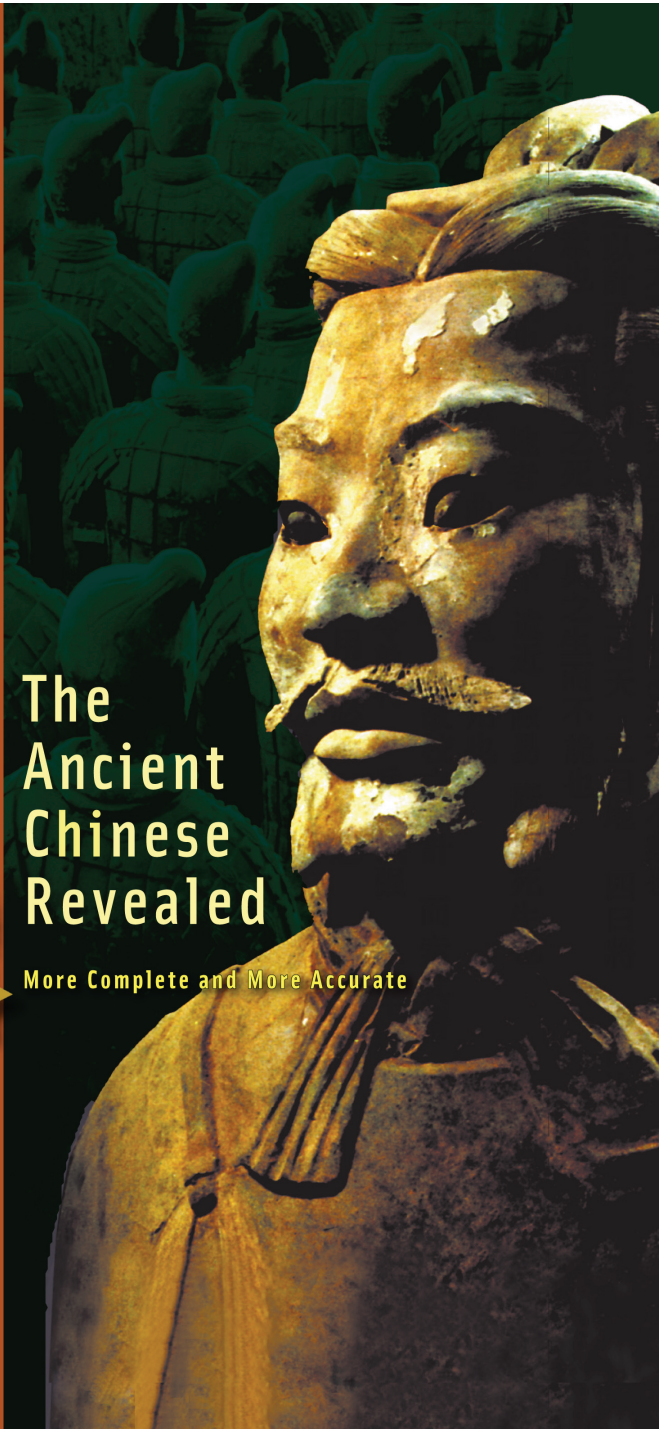
Plus

The
Ancient
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More Complete and More Accurate



Translated
by
Gary
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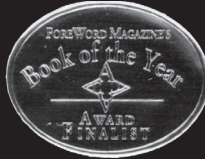
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June 2003, *Wisconsin Bookwatch*



The Only Award-Winning
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Plus The Ancient Chinese Revealed

孫
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Transliteration,
Translation and
Commentary

by Gary Gagliardi

Science of Strategy Institute
Clearbridge Publishing

Published by
Science of Strategy Institute/Clearbridge Publishing

FOURTH EDITION

ISBN 978-1-929194-90-2 (13-digit) 1-929194-90-0 (10-digit)

Previously published as ISBN 1-929194-00-5 and ISBN 1-929194-42-1

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Registration Number TX 5-782-967

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Printed in the United States of America.

Interior and cover graphic design by Dana and Jeff Wincapaw.

Original Chinese Calligraphy by Tsai Yung, Green Dragon Arts, www.greendragonarts.com.

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sun-tzu, 6th cent. B.C.

[Sun-tzu ping fa, English]

The art of war plus the ancient Chinese revealed / Sun Tzu; [translated by Gary Gagliardi].

p. 160 cm. 14

Includes glossary of key Chinese characters

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 99-64137

ISBN 1-929194-19-6 (hbk.) ISBN 978-1-929194-42-1 (1-929194-42-0) (pbk.)

1. Military art and science - Early works to 1800. 2. Competition. I. Gagliardi, Gary 1951— . II.

Title.

U101'.S9513 2003

355'.02 — dc19

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Preface:

Award-Winning Translation

This work is offered for those serious about studying Sun Tzu's text. There are a number of incomplete, inaccurate, public domain translations that for those who simply want to claim that they have read Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. This work was designed to give English readers real insight into the original Chinese.

In our view, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* is the most important book on strategy ever written. It offers a timeless set of principles that can be applied to a wide variety of life's problems. Though written in the context of warfare, its techniques for meeting challenges while minimizing conflict are invaluable in today's increasingly competitive world. Its methods apply to a wide range of competitive activities, including business, sports, politics, career, and challenges in our personal lives. However, successful use of these methods starts with understanding them. This requires the best possible translation.

A work that has been faithfully preserved for 2,500 years deserves serious attention. *The Art of War* was originally written largely in a language that is closer to mathematical equations than English sentences. Unfortunately, this formulaic nature of the original Chinese does not translate well into English. Most translators ignore it completely. The result is that the different translations disagree about Sun Tzu's meaning at key points. Worse, many of these translations contain many instances in which Sun Tzu seems

to contradict himself.

Even the book's English title, *The Art of War*, demonstrates the limitations of a plain English translation. In Chinese, the book's name is 兵(bīng) 法(fǎ). *Bing-fa* literally means "military skills" or "army procedures." However, using Sun Tzu's own definition of terms, it has an even more general meaning of "competitive methods." For most readers, however, a single word, "strategy," captures this idea best. Our word "strategy" comes from the ancient Greek term meaning literally "the thinking of a general." Sun Tzu's work describes this most successful type of this thinking.

Most English translations of *The Art of War* contain six categories of problems. First, they are usually incomplete, based on fragmentary sources in circulation before a complete compilation was created. Next, they often use vague, outdated, stilted, or academic language that hides the true nature of Sun Tzu's work. Third, they often mix in the translators' opinions or explanations with what Sun Tzu actually wrote. Next, they often choose the wrong meaning for a given Chinese character, almost always ignoring Sun Tzu's careful definition of terms. Finally, they ignore Sun Tzu's original structure, breaking the text into their own paragraphs and confusing the immediate context, which is critical to translating ancient Chinese.

After thirty years of studying Sun Tzu's work first in its various English translations and then in the ancient Chinese, I realized that the only way to resolve these problems was to return the reader to the Chinese text itself. The resulting work, both in concept and design, is something new and very different from other translations. It embodies seven important innovations.

First, this translation is more complete. It is based on the complete compilation of all historical sources and academic research rather than, as virtually all other English translations, on traditional fragmentary sources. This doesn't necessarily mean that it is

longer than other translations, for reasons cited below, but it does mean that it is more complete in term of original content.

This translation is based on the 1970 merger of the main Chinese textual traditions into a single source in Taipei in the compilation 孫子兵法大全 (*The Complete Version of Sun Tzu's Art of War*), for the 國防研究院 (National Defense Research Investigation Office), with a few minor additions based on the 1972 archeological finds in Shantung province. Most other recent English translations use either the 十家注 (*Complete Specialist Focus*) or the 武經 (*Military Bible*) versions, each of which contains a different subset of the complete text as currently studied in China.

Second, this translation is more accurate. To maintain the formulaic nature of the original work, our left-hand pages contain a character-by-character translation—called a transliteration—of the ancient Chinese. Though each Chinese character has an array of meanings—shown in our glossary of key concepts—for the sake of readability we offer the one English word that best encapsulates the sense of the character in context.

The facing right-hand pages give a line-by-line translation of each Chinese phrase into an English sentence. Read with the character translation, the English sentence explains one basic meaning of the original Chinese formula. We tried to use interpretations that are as consistent as possible with the best other English translation.

Third, this translation is more concise. Its side-by-side format makes it impossible to add or subtract from the Chinese source or secretly add the translator's editorial opinions disguised as Sun Tzu's work.

Many "translators" take a single line of Sun Tzu's work and create several paragraphs of "explanation." This appears to the English reader as a translation when most of the "translation" never actually existed in the original in any form. Other versions

offer collections of historical commentary, often out of historical context that get mixed into the text. None of this confusion is possible when you can see the original Chinese.

Since we offer literally dozens of other books on Sun Tzu's methods, this translation avoids mixing explanation of methods with the text. Instead, its commentary is meant only to provide context, explain the Chinese, and highlight a few key ideas along the way.

Fourth, this translation is more authoritative: Most English translations are offered by those who worked with the text for a few months. I have spent over three decades studying the text and am regarded as America's leading expert on Sun Tzu.

I spent a decade studying the text and writing several books on Sun Tzu's principles before I did my first English translation. Since then, I have written many more works explaining the text, its historical context, the meaning of each stanza, the application of its ideas, and so on. This work includes my nine-volume opus, *Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook*, which ties Sun Tzu's work with modern approaches on competition. Ten of my books on Sun Tzu's strategy have won award-recognition.

According to Chinese Sun Tzu experts who have helped me in my work, I am the only American whose work on Sun Tzu is taken serious in Asia. Several of my books have been translated into Chinese and other Asian languages from countries where Sun Tzu is studied religiously.

Fifth, this translation is more consistent. Our translation is built on the premise that Sun Tzu was rigorously consistent in his use of language. Other translations are full of contradictions arising from wide variety of meaning in each Chinese character. Our view is that terms must be chosen carefully and consistently, based on their meaning in the text as a whole.

In making this translation, we continually reexamined each use

of a given character. When available, we used Sun Tzu's definitions for what a concept means, rather than modern or even historical Chinese character meaning. .

We have created a standard vocabulary for referring to Sun Tzu's concepts rather than translate his characters in a wide variety of ways. To show the range of meaning in the Chinese characters, we use a different "standard" translation on the right-hand and left-hand pages.

Sixth, this translation is more balanced. Unlike most translations, this work offers one English sentence for each Chinese phrase. This preserves the balance of ideas in the original work. Other translations use several paragraphs to "translate" a single Chinese phrase while elsewhere using a single sentence to summarize a long Chinese passage. Only this work reflects the "density" of ideas in the original.

Seventh, this translation is more organized. It preserves the format Sun Tzu used to organize his work. The chapters provide the general themes. Each chapter is divided into five to eight blocks each with its own topic of focus. On the page, each text block is identified by a large number.

These blocks are further divided into stanzas that express individual ideas. In this translation, each stanza is separated from the previous one by a blank line. A stanza begins with a small number indicating its first line's position in the current block.

This is the only English translation that uses a standard numbering system referring to chapter, block, and line number to identify each line of the work

By offering the complete Chinese and English side by side, eliminating contradictions, and preserving weight and form, this translation comes as close as humanly possible to capturing the flavor of Sun Tzu's work in an English translation. We were gratified when it won the Independent Publishers Award for Best

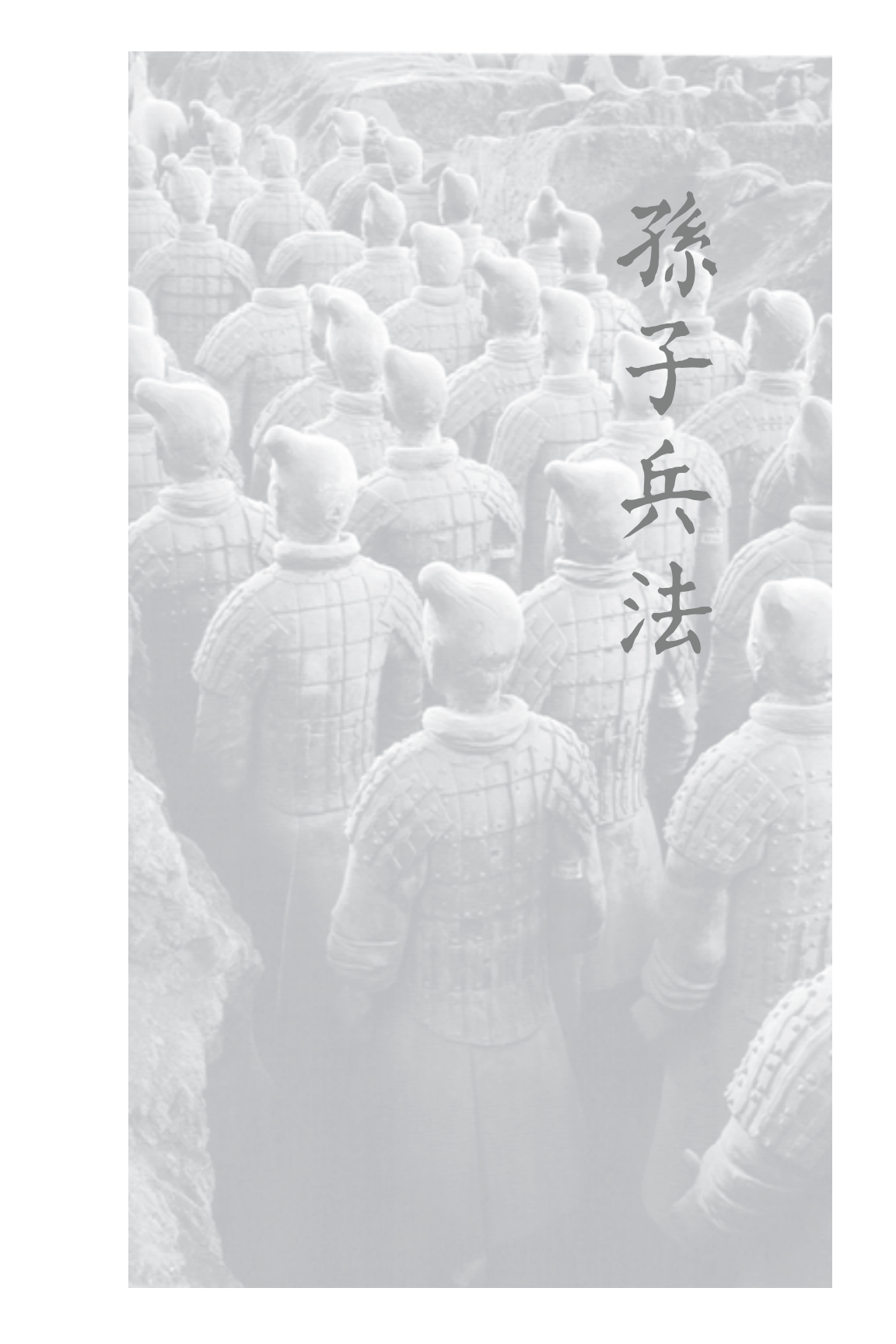
Multicultural Nonfiction and remains today, more than ten years after its original publication, the only award-winning English translation of Sun Tzu's work.

In addition to the translation, this new third edition also features more explanation of Sun Tzu's competitive system. We have added an Introduction that provides an overview of the entire system and one-page chapter overviews at the beginning of each chapter.

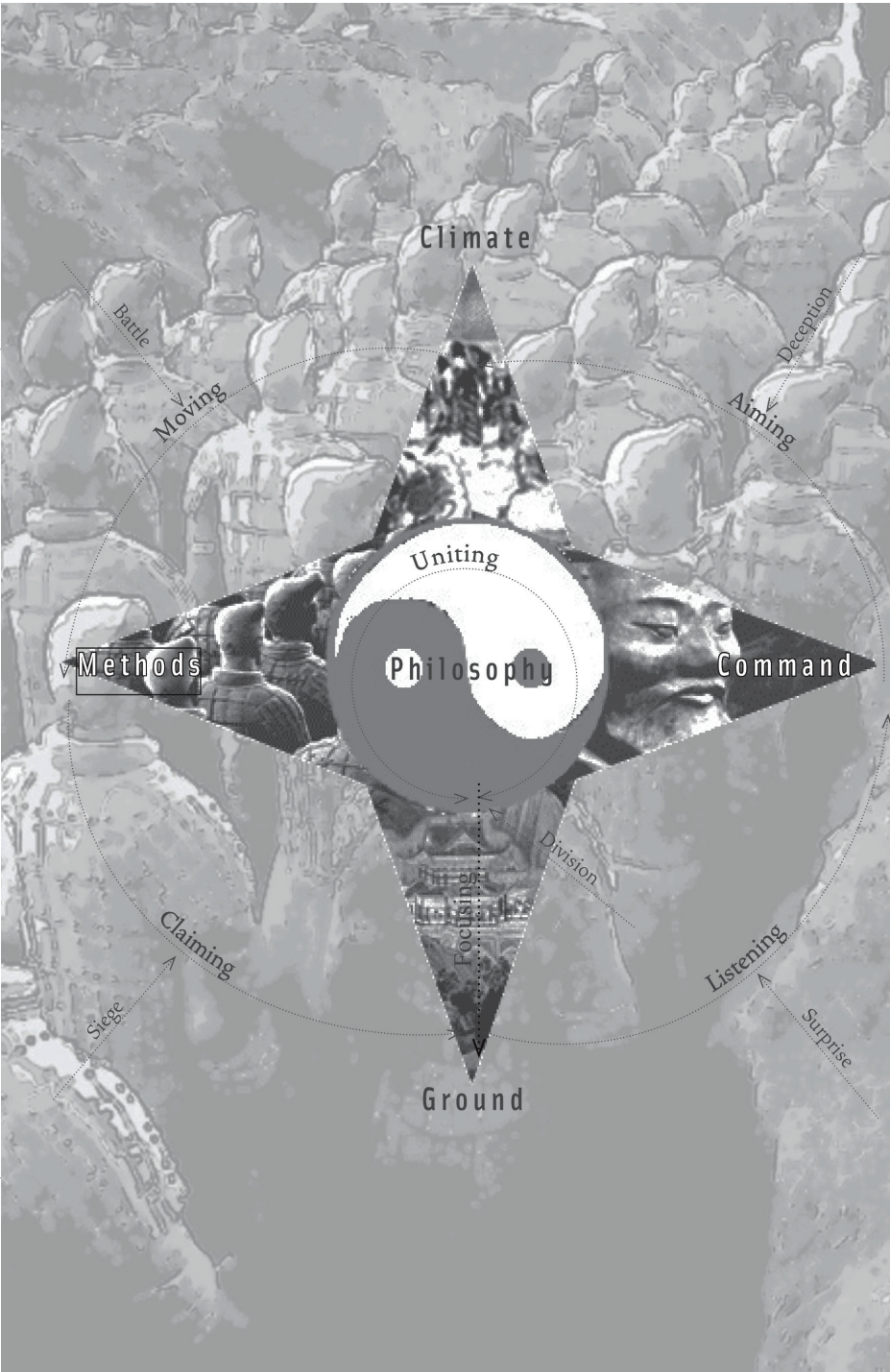
Reading this translation is just the first step in understanding Sun Tzu's strategic system. To make it easier to use that strategy, we have developed a number of important works. *The Art of War Plus Its Amazing Secrets: The Keys to Strategy* condenses years of study by explaining the hidden meaning in the text and illustrating Sun Tzu's concepts using traditional Chinese diagramming methods. *The Art of War Plus The Warrior Class: 306 Lessons in Strategy* is a study guide that turns each stanza of the book into a lesson on competitive strategy. The most detailed work we offer is the nine volumes of the *Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook*. Each volume explains a different strategic skill described in this work. At the end of each chapter of this translation we offer a list of articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*. These articles discuss that chapter's concepts in more detail using illustrations from modern competition.

We also offer a number of adaptations that make Sun Tzu's principles easy to use in various aspects of your life. In these adaptations, we translate the concepts of *The Art of War* from military terminology into the terminology of everyday competition. Our adaptations are the easiest way to start using Sun Tzu's system in practical ways. There is a growing list of our *Art of War* books for meeting the challenges of career, business, and personal life.

Gary Gagliardi, 2014

A grayscale background image of the Terracotta Army, showing a dense formation of soldiers in traditional Chinese armor and helmets. The figures are arranged in rows, receding into the distance. The overall tone is historical and somber.

孫子兵法



Introduction:



Sun Tzu's Basic Concepts

Without years of studying the original Chinese, most of the amazing sophistication of Sun Tzu's strategy is lost. Sun Tzu lived in a place and time with a wealth of cultural concepts that are alien to people today. Because of this, most readers today understand only a fraction of *The Art of War*, even those who read it in Chinese and especially those who read it in English translation. This work is based on many years of studying the original Chinese and teaching the its strategy worldwide. If you are new to Sun Tzu's strategic principles, you will find *The Art of War* much easier to understand if you first familiarize yourself with a few basic concepts, metaphors, and analogies.

Sun Tzu's system is based on five elements and nine skills. Its five elements are different than but adapted from the five elements of tradition Chinese science. Its nine skills are based on the concept of the *bagua*, literally "the eight directions," which, with the center, make up nine. These ideas go back five thousand years to the *I-Ching*, the "book of changes". This introduction gives you an overview of these traditional aspects of Sun Tzu's system.

As defined by Sun Tzu, strategy is not a system of planning. Planning, in the sense of prioritizing a list of known activities, works in controlled environments where you can know how others will respond to your decisions. Strategy works in competitive envi-

ronments where your decisions collide with the decisions of others, creating conditions that no one plans. In competitive environments, your success depends on predicting how others will respond and choosing reactions that have the highest probability of success.

Using Sun Tzu's strategy, success goes not to the strongest or most aggressive but to those who best understand their situation and what their alternatives are. When you master Sun Tzu's strategic methods, you can quickly see through the complexity of challenging situations to spot opportunities and make the right decisions. Strategy is less about winning battles than it is about winning without battle. Good strategists seek positions that are so powerful that no one challenges them. Fighting opponents openly is usually the failure of strategy.

Instead success depends on building and advancing strategic positions. The goal is to create positions that others cannot attack and that ideally they want to join. Sun Tzu teaches that a general who fights a hundred battles and wins a hundred battles is not a good general. A good general is one who finds a way to win without fighting a single battle. Strategy teaches that you win by building the right positions and advancing those positions while avoiding conflict.

The Five Elements

Since competitive situations can seem almost overwhelmingly complex, Sun Tzu's work often refers back to the five simple concepts that he introduces in the first section of his first chapter. These five elements—philosophy (*tao*), heaven (*tian*), earth (*di*), the leader (*jiang*), and methods (*fa*)—provide the backbone of his competitive approach. All the other components of his system—deception (*gui*), completeness (*quan*), knowledge (*zhi*), fullness (*sat*), and so on—have very specific and practical relationships to these five elements. The depth and sophistication of his system is best

understood if we spend a little time exploring the interrelationships of his key elements before discussing the text of his work.

Sun Tzu taught that every competitive situation depends upon the unique position of a given competitor within the larger competitive environment. Strategic analysis consists of comparing positions. Understanding positions is the first of the nine skills that his strategic system teaches. Comparing positions is central to the system as a whole.

Strategy is focused on building up or advancing strategic positions. In choosing between supporting or attacking a position, everyone decides based upon all the relative positions within the larger competitive environment. Everyone advances his or her position by choosing which other positions to support or oppose. All the other skills of Sun Tzu's toolkit for advancing positions—developing perspective, identifying opportunities, and so on (see the first diagram in this introduction)—develop better positions from these elements.

The focus on the complexities of the competitive environment was a unique feature of Sun Tzu's work. As with so many of Sun Tzu's basic concepts, he describes the environment as two opposite and yet complementary halves: *tian*, which literally means “heaven,” and *di*, the earth .

Before discussing “heaven” and “earth,” let us first look at his idea of “complementary opposites” because it plays a key part in his system. Sun Tzu's saw the competitive world as a series of dynamic, interconnected, balancing complementary opposites. In the West, we refer to this Asian concept of balancing opposites as *yin* and *yang*, but since Sun Tzu doesn't use these terms, we call them simply “complementary opposites.” Often these balancing pairs are contained inside each other, like a series of nesting dolls.

The environment consists of the complementary opposites. First is *tian* meaning “heaven” or, perhaps closer to the idea, “climate.”

Then there is *di* meaning “earth” or “ground.” Climate and ground are the arenas of time and place within which all competition as the comparisons of positions, takes place.

Tian or heaven represents the passage of time, but more generally it describes change. It is often translated as “climate” or “weather” in the text. It is best to think of heaven as trends that change over time. The cycle of the seasons is the most obvious trend in the natural environment. People’s attitudes and emotions are also an important part of Sun Tzu’s concept of changing climate.

Changes are controlled by forces beyond your direct control so *tian* means “heaven” in the sense of “divine” as well. This is not a spiritual view, but a view that some aspects of nature are beyond our comprehension. Heaven is the interaction of all the elements, many of them unseen, in a complex environment. We may plan to change the competitive environment, but when our plans conflict with the plans of others, what results is what no one plans. Though these changes cannot be controlled, they can be recognized and, to some degree, predicted. Each change creates an opportunity to advance positions.

Di or ground is the economic foundation upon which your strategic position is based. It is both where you fight and what you fight for. Using the analogy of a board game, ground is both the board itself and the pieces on it. Using the analogy of sports, it is both the playing field, the contestants, the referees, and even the fans in the stands. Rewards come from control of the resources, which comes from the ground. Every different competitive arena is a different competitive “ground.” Every type of industry, every profession, every given physical location represents a different type of ground.

The term, *di*, means earth but it also means situation or condition. Unlike heaven, which is largely beyond your control, the most important aspect of the ground is you decide which ground to target in competition. Your control of ground results only from your

choices and actions. You choose your ground position. You and only you are responsible for your situation and condition. Choosing positions, moving to them, and utilizing them are the basis of Sun Tzu's strategic methods.

The first two components of your strategic position define the external context, the time and place, in which that position exists. Every external position is unique since two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Time and space are connected. Every different ground has its own climate. Our choice of ground determines the changes to which our position is exposed. For example, each industry has its own business climate.

Within the larger competitive environment, the unique characteristics of both you and your organization are also part of your strategic position. Sun Tzu breaks the key elements of a competitor into two opposite and complementary components: the *leader* and *methods*.

Jiang is translated in the text as "commander" or "general". More generally, we refer to the concept as leadership or as the role of a leader. A *leader* is anyone who makes the decisions in a competitive environment. All competitors within a given arena are decision-makers and therefore leaders. So are the "neutral" parties in the environment who can support or oppose them. Using a sports analogy, the referees are decision-makers as much as the contestant, affecting the contest and therefore they must be considered "leaders."

Leadership, *jiang*, is the realm of individual character and personality. The key skill of a leader is good decision-making. Viewed from the perspective of leadership, Sun Tzu work teaches decision-making skills. A competitive leader masters Sun Tzu's strategy so that he or she can make the right decisions quickly. Since leadership requires decision-making it also creates change and therefore it is connected to the element of heaven. Though a leader cannot control

the environment as a whole, a leader's decisions have an impact of climate.

Fa means the "laws" or "methods" for working with others. Competitive success always depends upon working with other people. In Sun Tzu's view, competition is always a team sport. In Sun Tzu, *fa* is the rules, chain of command, and internal systems that define an organization and its operation. We use the term "methods" most commonly to translate this general idea. Your methods are the skills you use to interact with other people. Each different type of competitive arena requires different methods. Each industry, for example, requires different technical skills. So methods are connected to the ground.

Binding and underlying the other four components of a strategic position is *tao*, which translates to "philosophy" or "values". *Tao* is the unique idea around which a specific strategic position is organized. In an organization, we call this shared philosophy its "mission." In studying Sun Tzu, we primarily use the term "mission" to separate *tao* from the broader implications of the word "philosophy."

Entwined within *tao* are two other complementary opposites: *quan* and *zhuan*. *Quan* means literally "complete," or "oneness" but Sun Tzu uses it to mean "united." *Zhuan* means "to concentrate on," or what we would describe as "focus."

A core philosophy provides an individual competitor with oneness, unity, or completeness (*quan*), thereby joining its individual commander and methods with the larger group. The mutual self-interest of *tao* holds the competitive organization together. The joint shared goal is a "higher" purpose than each individual's goals. This philosophy also provides the competitor's focus (*zhuan*) on a specific time and place.

Though unity and focus are separate concepts in English, in Sun Tzu they are two sides of the same coin. Both arise directly from our philosophy and its relationship with the leader and his or

her methods. Unity holds the organization together. Focus concentrates efforts in a single place and time, that is, on its position.

Listen Aim Move Claim

Once you see strategic positions in terms of these five elements, you focus on advancing your or your group's position. In Sun Tzu's work, analysis and activities that advance a position are continually mixed because understanding positions is central to the process. Starting with basics, Sun Tzu boils down advancing a position into four conceptual steps. These skills are knowing (*zhi*), foreseeing (*jian*), moving (*hang*), and positioning (*xing*). The Chinese concepts work both as verbs and nouns, so in the text we also refer to *zhi* as knowledge, *jian* as vision, *hang* as movement or action, and *xing* as position. To make these concepts more tangible to modern readers, we describe them as *listening for knowledge*, *aiming at opportunities*, *moving to openings*, and *claiming a position*. Every advance minimally requires all four steps. If you miss a step, the process is more likely to create problems than to solve them.

Individual leaders need the skills of knowing (*zhi*) and foreseeing (*jian*).

Knowledge comes from *listening* to help you better understand your ground. Knowledge is the starting point for all other skills and the most critical component of strategy. It is covered extensively in the first chapter and the last. Knowing leads to foreseeing. Foreseeing or aim means seeing how changing trends create *opportunities* to advance.

Foreseeing is the vision of the leader seeing openings or opportunities in the future, which, in Sun Tzu's terms, means observing heaven—that is, the trends over time.

The method skills of organizations are moving (*hang*) and posi-

tioning (*xing*).

Moving means using the right methods to take advantage of *openings*. Moving refers to taking any form of action, but it specifically means “marching,” our ability to move or change positions to take advantage of a new opportunity. It comes from heaven or climate because movement requires proper timing and because emotion always precedes action. Movement arises from foresight, and it leads naturally to positioning (*xing*).

Xing literally means “form,” but Sun Tzu gives the term the very specific meaning of utilizing the ground’s advantages. You can be at a specific place, but you aren’t using positioning unless you know how to take advantage of that position. Positioning is the basis of all success, but since the term “positioning” can be used to refer to the entire approach, we describe this specific idea as “claiming a position” or, more simply as just “claiming”. *Claiming* establishes leadership in reaping the rewards from a new ground *position*.

Again, like nesting dolls, each of these skills can be further broken down into two more detailed skills. These four skills therefore become eight ways to work, that is, the eight directions of the *bagua*. With the central skill of understanding positions, this brings the total number of strategic skills taught in *The Art of War* to nine.

Listening requires two skills: Sun Tzu’s second key strategic skill of an outside developing perspective on your position and his third strategic skill of using change for identifying opportunities.

Aiming requires Sun Tzu’s fourth and fifth skills, leveraging probability and minimizing mistakes.

Moving requires his six and seventh skills of situation response and creating momentum.

Claiming requires his eighth and ninth skills of winning rewards and understanding vulnerabilities.

Different chapters of the book address many these skills in different ways. Unfortunately, Sun Tzu’s system of organization

is complicated. Rather than try to explain it in detail, we simply say that the book starts with the most basic concepts and builds on them in a systematic way. Most chapters tend to focus on one element and a particular set of skills but connections among skills and elements are also important. To make the connections between elements, skills, and the original text a little clearer, the end of each chapter in this translation lists related articles in *Sun Tzu's Playbook*, which organizes *Art of Wars* concepts around the nine skills in a more hierarchical fashion.

Each of these steps for advancing a position leads naturally to the next in an endless cycle of advances. The more you learn about your ground, the more you need to identify new opportunities. Aiming at a new opportunity necessitates moving to new methods. Moving must give you a new position that you can claim. Claiming new ground creates new opportunities to listen and learn. Even if your attempted advance fails to yield profitable new ground, it cannot fail to generate new knowledge, which is the basis of your next cycle and your inevitable success.

Consciously or unconsciously, you go through this cycle every time you advance your position. Basic systems in modern life, such as the scientific method or the sales process, are easily defined in this Sun Tzu's system of advance. When a decision is unsuccessful, it is simply because strategic analysis or one of these skills was not properly executed. However, Sun Tzu predicts that such failures are common and unavoidable. Success depends therefore, not on perfection, but simply on being better at this process than others.

The Art of War is a complete guide to executing advances in position in a consistent way. However, much of it is written in a kind of code. Many concepts are referenced in terms metaphors. For example, listening for knowledge is referenced as sound. Thunder, music, and drums are all metaphors for listening. Aim is described as vision. Colors, lightning, and so on are all metaphors

for foresight. Moving is marching. Claiming a position is variously described as forms of using a position: gathering food, building, eating, digging in, and so on. At various points, the commentary will point out these connections, but we offer several other books explaining them in detail if you are interested.

As a final note, much of Sun Tzu's decision-making system, especially in later chapters, is situation specific. Many detailed factors lead to decisions regarding these situations. The details for addressing a specific situation are not important until you find yourself in that situation. At that point, this insight becomes vital.

This fact makes it is easy to overlook or disregard much of the importance of various sections of this work. The first chapters are easy because they are the most general. In is easy to get overwhelmed by the details as you read deeper into the work.

For example, you may or may not relate to an "entangling field position" when you are reading this book. If you are not in an entangling position, as is usually the case, the idea will seem relatively unimportant. Since there are six such situation benchmarks, the chances are against you being in any one of them at any given time but eventually, you encounter them all, and, when you are eventually in an entangling position, Sun Tzu's advice will seem like genius.

As with mastering any other area of broad expertise, successfully using Sun Tzu's strategy requires serious study. For example, if you were studying to become an emergency medical technician (EMT), you would have to study and master the identification of a variety of medical conditions. You cannot study only your current or the next day's emergencies because you cannot know what they will be. The study if Sun Tzu is similar because you cannot know what competitive situations will arise tomorrow. The idea of the book is to be prepared your for most possibilities before they arise.

The detailed advice of the later chapters is easy to disregard as

unimportant, especially since it is difficult to connect its military context with everyday life. However, in real life competition, these chapters contain some of the most valuable material in the book. To see how they apply to your competitive situation, you may have to review some of our specific adaptations of Sun Tzu's system to various areas of competition such as sales, politics, management, career building, sports, and so on. In our *Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook*, we try to give examples from a wide spectrum of modern competitive situations so that readers can see the bigger picture.

"Seeing the bigger picture" is the purpose of Sun Tzu's work. Most of us will naturally address one or two of his five elements in trying to improve our competitive position. We will recognize one or two of his common situations. We will occasionally make the right judgments about one field position benchmark or another. The value of Sun Tzu is in helping us see what we are so often missing in the big picture.

We hope you enjoy this work and continue your study of Sun Tzu's methods.





Chapter 1

計

Plan – Analysis

Sun Tzu offers a very specific system for strategic analysis. All strategy starts with understanding existing competitive situations and your position within them. This system pares such analysis to its bare essentials. It teaches that only a handful of factors are ultimately important in understanding any strategic position but that analyzing those factors requires discipline.

Five key components define strategic positions in any competitive arena. Only these key elements determine where and how your position can be advanced. To use strategy effectively, you must compare your position directly with those of your real competitors. Strategy teaches that all positions are relative. There are no absolutes. Your position is defined by your relationships to the positions of others. These five factors are the different dimensions of those relationships.

This analysis must be based on fact, not emotion. People are consciously trying to control other people's perceptions. People are also constantly fooling themselves about their true position. So "deception," both intentional and unintentional, must be factored into our analysis. You must gather information from outsiders, those who do not necessarily share your perspective. As you evaluate information, you cannot take anything at face value.

Strategic analysis is a comparison, not a numeric measurement. You must continually balance the positive and negative aspects of whatever you can compare. No element is all good or bad in itself but you must focus on the dynamics on the balance.

計 Plan

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

兵War 者is, []
國Nation 之's 大big 事profession 也also,
死Death 生birth 之's 地ground,
存Life 亡death 之's 道philosophy,
不No 可can 不not 察examine 也also.



DEFINITIONS:

As in a work of mathematics, Sun Tzu starts by defining his terms precisely and using them consistently throughout.

故Make 經experience 之it 以by 五five 事skills,
校School 之it 以by 計planning,
而And yet 索demand 其this 情situation:
一1. 曰Say 道philosophy,
二2. 曰Say 天heaven,
三3. 曰Say 地ground,
四4. 曰Say 將general,
五5. 曰Say 法methods.

道Philosophy 者is,
令Command 民people 與give 上above
同similar 意meaning 也also,
可Can 與give 之of 死death,
可Can 與give 之of 生life,
而And yet 不no 畏fear 危danger 詭deceive 也also.

Chapter 1: Analysis

SUN TZU SAID:

IThis is war.
It is the most important skill in the nation.
It is the basis of life and death.
It is the philosophy of survival or destruction.
You must know it well.

⁶Your skill comes from five factors.
Study these factors through analysis.
You must insist on knowing your situation.

1. Discuss philosophy.
2. Discuss the climate.
3. Discuss the ground.
4. Discuss leadership.
5. Discuss military methods.

¹⁴It starts with your philosophy.
Command your people in a way that gives them a
higher shared purpose.
You can lead them to death.
You can lead them to life.
They must never fear danger or dishonesty.



POSITION:

These five factors define a "competitive position" and provide a framework for categorizing all relevant facts.

天Heaven 者is,
陰North, shady hillside 陽south, sunny hillside,
寒Cold 暑hot,
時Season 制system 也also.

地Ground 者is,
遠Distant, 近near,
險Dangerous 易easy,
廣Wide 狹narrow,
死Death 生birth 也also.

將General 者is,
智Intelligence, 信trust, 仁love, 勇bravery, 嚴strict 也also.

法Method 者is,
曲Bend 制system,
官Government official 道philosophy,
主Ruler 用use 也also.

CHARACTERS:

Chinese characters are concepts, not verbs, nouns, or other parts of speech. For example, the character 軍 means make war, army, and military.

凡All 此here 五five 者are,
將General 莫not 不no 聞hear,
知Knowledge 之of 者is 勝victory,
不No 知knowledge 之of 者is 不no 勝victory.

¹⁹Next, you have the climate.
It can be sunny or overcast.
It can be hot or cold.
It includes the timing of the seasons.

²³Next is the terrain.
It can be distant or near.
It can be difficult or easy.
It can be open or narrow.
It also determines your life or death.

²⁸Next is the commander.
He must be smart, trustworthy, caring, brave, and strict.

³⁰Finally, you have your military methods.
They shape your organization.
They come from your management philosophy.
You must master their use.

³⁴All five of these factors are critical.
As a commander, you must pay attention to them.
Understanding these factors brings victory.
Ignoring them means defeat.

KNOWLEDGE:

*Sun Tzu taught
that competitive
success is based
on your use
of knowledge
rather than on
size, strength, or
wealth.*

故Make 校School 之it 以by 計plans, 2
而And yet 索demand 其this 情situation.

曰Says:

主Ruler 孰that 有has 道philosophy,
將General 孰that 有has 能ability,
天Heaven 地ground 孰that 得obtain,
法Method 令command 孰that 行moves,
兵Army 衆crowd 孰that 强strong,
士Officer 卒soldier 孰that 練train,
賞Reward 罰penalize 孰that 明bright,
吾We 以by 此this 知know 勝victory 負defeat 矣will be;

將General 聽listen 吾our 計plan,
用Uses 之it 必must 勝win,
留Remain 之it;
將General 不no 聽listen 吾our 計plan,
用Uses 之it 必must 敗defeat,
去Remove 之it.

FORMULAS

Each Chinese phrase is more like a mathematical formula than an English sentence, a precise statement of relationships.

計Plan 利advantage 以by means of 聽listening, 3
乃Therefore 爲become 之of 勢situation
以By means of 佐assist 其this 外outside,
勢Influence 者one,
因Reason 利advantage 而and 制system
權authority 也also.

2 You must learn through planning.
You must question the situation.

³You must ask:

Which government has the right philosophy?

Which commander has the skill?

Which season and place have the advantage?

Which method of command works?

Which group of forces has the strength?

Which officers and men have the training?

Which rewards and punishments make sense?

This tells when you will win and when you will lose.

¹²Some commanders perform this analysis.

If you use these commanders, you will win.

Keep them.

Some commanders ignore this analysis.

If you use these commanders, you will lose.

Get rid of them.

3 Discover an opportunity by listening.
Adjust to your situation.

Get assistance from the outside.

Influence events.

Think about opportunities in terms of methods you can control.

RELATIVITY:

The strength or weakness of a position depends on how it compares to other positions around it, which you learn by listening.

情War 者is, 4
詭Deceive 道philosophy 也also.

故Make 能able 而and yet 示show 之of 不no 能ability,
用Use 而and yet 示show 之it 不no 用use,
近Near 而and yet 示show 之it 遠far,
遠Distant 而and yet 示show 之it 近near.

利Advantage 而and yet 誘entice 之it,
亂Disorder 而and yet 取choose 之it,
實Substantial 而and yet 備prepare 之it,
強Strong 而and yet 避evade 之it,
怒Rage 而and yet 撓obstruct 之it,
卑Low 而and yet 驕proud 之it,
佚Leisure 而and yet 勞exert 之it,
親Intimate 而and yet 離leave 之it,
攻Attack 其this 無without 備prepare,
出Exit 其this 不no 意intention.

RESPONSES

*Because no one
knows your
position as
well as you do,
your position is
partly defined
by your own re-
actions to your
situation.*

此Here 兵army 家home 之of 勝victory,
不No 可can 先first 傳transmit 也also.

4 Warfare is one thing.
It is a philosophy of deception.

³When you are ready, you try to appear incapacitated.
When active, you pretend inactivity.
When you are close to the enemy, you appear distant.
When far away, you pretend you are near.

⁷You can have an advantage and still entice an opponent.
You can be disorganized and still be decisive.
You can be ready and still be preparing.
You can be strong and still avoid battle.
You can be angry and still stop yourself.
You can humble yourself and still be confident.
You can be relaxed and still be working.
You can be close to an ally and still part ways.
You can attack a place without planning to do so.
You can leave a place without giving away your plan.

¹⁷You will find a place where you can win.
You cannot first signal your intentions.

DECEPTION:

If information is the basis of success, you must factor in deception to evaluate and control the flow of information in competition.

夫Husband 未not yet 戰battle 而and yet 廟temple 5
 算calculate 勝victory 者are,
 得Obtain 算calculate 多many 也also;
 未Not yet 戰battle 而and yet 廟temple 算count 不no
 勝victory 者one,
 得Obtain 算calculate 少little 也also;
 多Many 算calculate 勝victory,
 少Little 算calculate 不no 勝victory,
 而And yet 况situation 無without 算calculate 乎?
 吾We 以by means of 此here 觀observe 之it,
 勝Victory 負defeat 見see 矣will.



BATTLE:

*Sun Tzu's terms are precise. For example, the character 戰 is translated as **battle**, but it means engaging an enemy or meeting a challenge, not violent conflict.*

5 Manage to avoid battle until your organization can count on certain victory.

You must calculate many advantages.

Before you go to battle, your organization's analysis may indicate that you might not win.

You can count few advantages.

Many advantages add up to victory.

Few advantages add up to defeat.

How can you know your advantages without analyzing them?

We can see where we are by means of our observations.

We can foresee our victory or defeat by planning.



CHALLENGES:

You do not "battle" or challenge opponents until you are certain your position can dominate their position, not just in one category, but in many different ones.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In this first chapter, Sun Tzu introduces the basics of positioning. We explore these ideas in more detail in our Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook. To learn the step-by-step techniques for positioning, we recommend the Playbook articles listed below.

1.0.0 Strategic Positioning: developing relatively superior positions.

1.1.0 Position Paths: the continuity of strategic positions over time.

1.1.1 Position Dynamics: how all current positions evolve over time.

1.1.2 Defending Positions: defending current positions until new positions are established.

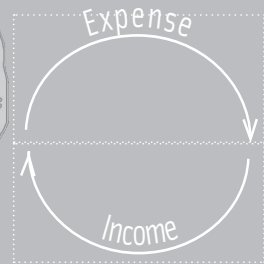
1.2 Subobjective Positions: the subjective and objective aspects of a position.

1.2.1 Competitive Landscapes: the arenas in which rivals jockey for position.

1.2.2 Exploiting Exploration: how competitive landscapes are searched and positions identified.

1.2.3 Position Complexity: how positions arise from interactions in complex environments.

- 1.3 Elemental Analysis: the relevant components of all competitive positions.
 - 1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.
 - 1.3.2 Element Scalability: how elements of a position scale up to larger positions.
- 1.4 The External Environment: external conditions shaping strategic positions.
 - 1.4.1 Climate Shift: forces of environmental change shaping temporary conditions.
 - 1.4.2 Ground Features: the persistent resources that we can control.
- 1.5 Competing Agents: the key characteristics of competitors.
 - 1.5.1 Command Leadership: individual decision-making.
 - 1.5.2. Group Methods: systems for executing decisions.
- 1.6 Mission Values: the goals and values needed for motivation.
 - 1.6.1 Shared Mission: finding goals that others can share.
 - 1.6.2 Types of Motivations: hierarchies of motivation that define missions.
 - 1.6.3 Shifting Priorities: how missions change according to temporary conditions.



Chapter 2

作戰

Make Battle – Going to War

Sun Tzu's is an aggressive strategy in one sense. It teaches that if you are not actively advancing your position, your position is actually weakening. Once you understand your position, you must identify opportunities to improve your position.

However, improving your position isn't simply a matter of winning battles. Sun Tzu specifically defines success as making victory pay. You must win the most rewarding ground at the lowest possible cost. This economic focus is one of the reasons that Sun Tzu's strategic system works so well in today's world.

Picking an opportunity starts with a fine appreciation of the debilitating cost of conflict and how easily money is wasted. Sun Tzu recognizes that both the total costs and the total rewards of winning new ground are unpredictable. This means when you choose where to advance you must minimize risks and costs.

Many physical factors, such as distance, increase your costs. You must choose close, easy targets for your efforts. Sun Tzu's system makes cost control easy. You must make every campaign for advancement pay for itself as directly and quickly as possible.

One of the key characteristics of a successful warrior is discipline. This discipline starts with the ability to control costs. You can only improve your position and cost control at the same time by being very selective about the markets that you target.

作戰 Make Battle

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

凡All 用use 兵war 之's 道philosophy, **1**
 馳Speed 車carts 千thousand 駟horse teams,
 革Change 車carts 千thousand 乘multiply by,
 帶Carry 甲armor 十ten 萬ten thousand,
 千Thousand 里miles 饋give gift 糧grain,
 則Then 內internal 外external 之of 費waste,
 賓Guest 客visitor 之's 用use,
 膠Glue 漆lacquer 之it 林lumber,
 車Cart 甲armor 之it 奉receive,
 曰Say 費waste 千thousand 金metal,
 然So 後fall behind 十ten 萬myriad 之of
 師troops 舉raise 矣will.



PHILOSOPHY:

The concept called 道 philosophy means literally the way. It is the mental path that people commonly follow to get to their goals.

其This 用use 戰battle 也also 貴expensive
 勝victory,
 久Long time 則then 鈍blunt 兵war 挫defeat
 銳sharp,
 攻Attack 城city 則then 力power 屈humiliate,
 久Long time 暴violent 師troops 則then
 國nation 用use 不not 足sufficient.

Chapter 2: Going to War

SUN TZU SAID:

I Everything depends on your use of military philosophy. Moving the army requires thousands of vehicles. These vehicles must be loaded thousands of times. The army must carry a huge supply of arms. You need ten thousand acres of grain. This results in internal and external shortages. Any army consumes resources like an invader. It uses up glue and paint for wood. It requires armor for its vehicles. People complain about the waste of metal. It will set you back when you attempt to raise tens of thousands of troops.

¹²Using a huge army in battle success very expensive . Long delays create a dull army and sharp defeats. Attacking enemy cities drains your forces. Long violent campaigns that exhaust the nation's resources are wrong.



ECONOMICS:

*This chapter discusses the key element of **ground**, which is the economic basis for success in all forms of competition.*

夫Husband 鈍blunt 兵war,
 挫Defeat 銳sharp,
 侮Humiliate 力power,
 殫Use up 貨money,
 則Then 諸various 侯noblemen 乘multiply by 其this
 弊corruption 而and yet 起begin;
 雖Although 有have 智intelligence 者is,
 不No 能can 善good 其this 後fall behind 矣will be!

故Make 兵war 聞hear 拙careless 速speed,
 未Have not 覩seen 巧skillful 之of 久long time 也also.

夫Husband 兵war 久long time 而and yet 國nation
 利advantage 者is,
 未Have not 之it 有have 也also.

故Make 不no 盡exhaust 知knowledge 用use 2
 兵war 之s 害harm 者is,
 則Then 不no 能can 盡exhaust 知knowledge 用use
 兵war 之s 利advantage 也also.

KNOWLEDGE:

The character 知 means knowledge, and it illustrates a person 矣 next to a mouth 口. This forms a picture of listening.

善Good 用use 兵war 者is,
 役Military service 不no 再again 籍record,
 糧Provisions 不no 三three 載carry,
 取Choose 用use 於to 國nation,
 因Source 糧provisions 於from 敵enemy,
 故Make 軍army 食supplies 可can
 足sufficient 也also.

¹⁶Manage a dull army.
You will suffer sharp defeats.
Drain your forces.
Your money will be used up.
Your rivals will multiply as your army collapses and they will begin against you.
It doesn't matter how smart you are.
You cannot get ahead by taking losses!

²³You hear of people going to war too quickly.
Still, you won't see a skilled war that lasts a long time.

²⁵You can fight a war for a long time or you can make your nation strong.
You can't do both.

2 Make no assumptions about all the dangers in using military force.
Then you won't make assumptions about the benefits of using arms either.

³You want to make good use of war.
Do not raise troops repeatedly.
Do not carry too many supplies.
Choose to be useful to your nation.
Feed off the enemy.
Make your army carry only the provisions it needs.

MINIMIZE:

Each line here is a separate rule for minimizing the risks of competition. Like all of Sun Tzu's work, they are in a highly condensed form.

國Nation之s貧poverty於to師troops者is遠distant 3
 輸transport,
 遠Distant輸transport則then百hundred姓clans貧poor,
 近Near市by師troops者is貴expensive賣sell,
 貴Costly賣sell則then財wealth竭exhaust,
 財Wealth竭exhaust則then急quickly於to陵empty
 役military service,
 力Force屈consume財wealth殫entirely,
 中Among原former內internal處empty於from
 家households.

百Hundred姓clans之of費waste,
 十Ten去go其this七seven,
 公Public家households之of費waste,
 破Broken軍army罷dismisses馬horses,
 甲Armor胄helmet矢arrow弩thrown down,
 戟Sword楯shield蔽conceal櫓row,
 丘Empty牛ox大big車cart,
 十Ten去go其this六six.

故Make智intelligence將general務duties食food 4
 於from敵enemy.

食Food敵enemy一one鍾cup,
 當Equal吾our廿twenty鍾cup,
 蕙Hay秆grain一one石stone,
 當Equal吾our廿twenty石stone.

3 The nation impoverishes itself shipping to troops that are far away.

Distant transportation is costly for hundreds of families.

Buying goods with the army nearby is also expensive.

High prices also exhaust wealth.

If you exhaust your wealth, you then quickly hollow out your military.

Military forces consume a nation's wealth entirely.

War leaves households in the former heart of the nation with nothing.

⁸War destroys hundreds of families.

Out of every ten families, war leaves only seven.

War empties the government's storehouses.

Broken armies will get rid of their horses.

They will throw down their armor, helmets, and arrows.

They will lose their swords and shields.

They will leave their wagons without oxen.

War will consume sixty percent of everything you have.

4 Because of this, it is the intelligent commander's duty to feed off the enemy.

²Use a cup of the enemy's food.

It is worth twenty of your own.

Win a bushel of the enemy's feed.

It is worth twenty of your own.

故Make 殺kill 敵enemy 者is 怒rage 也also;
取Obtain 敵enemy 之s 利advantage 者is 貨money 也also.

故Make 車cart 戰battle,
得Obtain 車cart 十ten 乘multiply 以by 上above,
賞Reward 其this 先first 得obtain 者is,
而And yet 革change 其this 旌banner 旗flag,
車Cart 更mix 而and yet 乘multiply 之it,
卒Soldiers 善good 而and yet 養provide for 之it,
是Correct 謂understanding 勝victory 敵enemy 而and yet
益augment 强strength.

故Make 兵war 貴valuable 勝victory, **5**
不Not 貴expensive 久long time,
故Male 知know 兵war 之of 將general,
民People 之thing 司government office 命order,
國Nation 家household 安peace 危danger 之of 主ruler
也also.



PEACE:

*The character for
peace 安 shows
a woman under
a roof requiring
protection.*

⁶You can kill the enemy and frustrate him as well.
Take the enemy's strength from him by stealing away his money.

⁸Fight for the enemy's supply wagons.
Capture his supplies by using overwhelming force.
Reward the first who capture them.
Then change their banners and flags.
Mix them in with your own wagons to increase your supply line.
Keep your soldiers strong by providing for them.
This is what it means to beat the enemy while you grow more powerful.

5 Make victory in war pay for itself.
Avoid expensive, long campaigns.
The military commander's knowledge is the key.
It determines if the civilian officials can govern.
It determines if the nation's households are peaceful or a danger to the state.



VICTORY:

*Our book **The Warrior Class** expands each stanza of the text into a strategy lesson.*

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

*In his second chapter, Sun Tzu teaches basic competitive economics. We explore these ideas in more detail in our **Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook**. To learn the step-by-step techniques for economical political campaigning, we recommend the articles listed below.*

1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.

1.6.1 Shared Mission: finding goals that others can share.

1.8.3 Cycle Time: speed in feedback and reaction.

1.8.4 Probabilistic Process: the role of chance in strategic processes and systems.

2.2.1 Personal Relationships: how information depends on personal relationships.

2.2.2 Mental Models: how mental models simplify decision-making.

2.3.4 Using Questions: using questions in gathering information and predicting reactions.

3.1 Strategic Economics: balancing the cost and benefits of positioning.

3.1.1 Resource Limitations: the inherent limitation of strategic resources.

3.1.2 Strategic Profitability: understanding gains and losses.

3.1.3 Conflict Cost: the costly nature of resolving competitive comparisons by conflict.

- 3.1.4 Openings: seeking openings to avoid costly conflict.
- 3.1.5 Unpredictable Value: the limitations of predicting the value of positions.
- 3.1.6 Time Limitations: the time limits on opportunities.
- 4.0 Leveraging Probability: better decisions regarding our choice of opportunities.
- 4.1 Future Potential: the limitations and potential of current and future positions.
- 4.2 Choosing Non-Action: choosing between action and non-action.
- 5.3 Reaction Time: the use of speed in choosing actions.
- 5.3.1 Speed and Quickness: the use of pace within a dynamic environment.
- 5.3.2 Opportunity Windows: the effect of speed upon opposition.
- 5.3.3 Information Freshness: choosing actions based on freshness of information.
- 5.4 Minimizing Action: minimizing waste, i.e., less is more.
- 5.4.1 Testing Value : choosing actions to test for value.
- 5.4.2 Successful Mistakes: learning from our mistakes.
- 5.5 Focused Power: size consideration in safe experimentation.
- 5.5.1 Force Size: limiting the size of force in an advance.
- 5.5.2 Distance Limitations: the use of short steps to reach distant goals.



Chapter 3

謀攻

Plan Strike – Analyzing Attacks

The central topic of this chapter is unity, focus, and speed and their effect on the relative strength of an organization. The context is "attacks," which means moving into new territory or into territory controlled by others.

In the chapter's first section, Sun Tzu says that unity and focus are required at every level of an organization. The goal of unity and focus is not to win conflict but to succeed without conflict.

Sun Tzu then lists the basic forms of attack in descending order of importance. The text then warns against the worst of these: laying siege to another's strong position.

In the third section, Sun Tzu suggests an incremental approach to success: using small, focused engagement where we have the clear advantage. He lists our tactics based on relative size.

In section four, we are warned against political divisions within an organization. In *classical strategy*, a natural division occurs between an organization's productive half, the nation, and its competitive force, the army. These two halves must support one another, and the politicians controlling the nation must let commanders control the competitive forces.

Sun Tzu then details the five areas of knowledge that determine our ability to unite and concentrate our forces. These five areas diagram against the five key elements in competition.

He ends with a warning about the dangers of miscalculating the relative strength our organization is facing in competition.

謀攻 Plan Strike



OPPOSITES:

Most of Sun Tzu's concepts are defined as complementary opposites, such as complete (united) 全 and broken (divided) 破.

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

凡All 用use 兵war 之's 法methods, **1**
 全Complete 國nation 爲becomes 上above,
 破Broken 國nation 次second-rate 之it,
 全Complete 軍army 爲becomes 上above,
 破Broken 軍army 次second-rate 之it,
 全Complete 旅brigade 爲becomes 上above,
 破Broken 旅brigade 次second-rate 之it,
 全Complete 卒soldiers 爲becomes 上above,
 破Broken 卒soldiers 次second-rate 之it,
 全Complete 伍unit 爲becomes 上above,
 破Broken 伍unit 次second-rate 之it.

是Correct 故make 百hundred 戰battles
 百hundred 勝victories,
 非Weak 善good 之of 非weak 者is 也also;
 不No 戰battle 而and yet 屈humiliate 人men 之of 兵war,
 善Good 之of 善good 者is 也also.

故Make 上above 兵war 伐cut down 謀scheme, **2**
 其This 次next 伐cut down 交meet,
 其This 次next 伐cut down 兵war,
 其This 下below 攻attack 城city.

Chapter 3: Planning an Attack

SUN TZU SAID:

I Everyone relies on the arts of war.
A united nation is strong.
A divided nation is weak.
A united army is strong.
A divided army is weak.
A united force is strong.
A divided force is weak.
United men are strong.
Divided men are weak.
A united unit is strong.
A divided unit is weak.



STRENGTH:

*The key element discussed here is **philosophy**, which is the basis of **unity** and **focus**, which are the basis for **strength**.*

¹²Unity works because it enables you to win every battle you fight.

Still, this is the foolish goal of a weak leader.

Avoid battle and make the enemy's men surrender.

This is the right goal for a superior leader.

2 The best policy is to attack while the enemy is still planning.
The next best is to disrupt alliances.
The next best is to attack the opposing army.
The worst is to attack the enemy's cities.

攻Attack 城city 之of 法method,
 爲become 不no 得obtain 已finish;
 修Fix 櫓row 輶chariot 輻hearse,
 其This 器equipment 械machinery,
 三Three 月months 而and yet 後fall behind 成accomplish,
 距Distance 圍enclose,
 又Again 三three 用use 而and yet 後fall behind 已finish;
 將General 不no 勝victory 其this 忿angers,
 而And yet 蟻insect 附add to 之it,
 殺Kill 士officers 卒soldiers 三three 分separate 之of 一one,
 而And yet 城city 不no 拔pull out 者one,
 此Here 攻attack 之of 災disaster 也also.

故Make 善good 用use 兵war 者is, **3**
 屈Humiliate 人people 之's 兵war;
 而And yet 非weak 戰battle 也also;
 拔Pull out 人men 之of 城city,
 而And yet 非weak 攻attack 也also;
 毀Destroy 人men 之of 國nation,
 而And yet 非weak 久long time 也also.

ATTACK:

The character
attack 知 means
 moving into
 new territory.
 It is different
 from **conflict**
 爭, which is a
 violent
 confrontation.

必Must 以by 全complete 爭conflict 於to
 天heaven 下below,
 故Make 兵war 不no 頓pause,
 利Advantage 可can 全complete,
 此Here 謀plan 攻attack 之of 法method
 也also.

⁵This is what happens when you attack a city.
You can attempt it, but you can't finish it.
First you must make siege engines.
You need the right equipment and machinery.
It takes three months and still you cannot win.
Then you try to encircle the area.
You use three more months without making progress.
Your command still doesn't succeed and this angers you.
You then try to swarm the city.
This kills a third of your officers and men.
You are still unable to draw the enemy out of the city.
This attack is a disaster.

3 Make good use of war.
Make the enemy's troops surrender.
You can do this fighting only minor battles.
You can draw their men out of their cities.
You can do it with small attacks.
You can destroy the men of a nation.
You must keep your campaign short.

⁸You must be united in conflict from the top to the bottom.
Never stop when you are at war.
Your opportunity comes from being united.
In every situation, this is how your plan your attack as well.

MINIMIZE:

Since you cannot control the results of a plan, the first rule is to control what you can, which is how much you invest.

故Make用use兵war之's法method,
十Ten則then圍encircle之it,
五Five則then攻attack之it,
倍Times則then分divide之it,
敵Enemy則then能can戰battle之it,
少Little則then能can守defend之it,
不No若like則then能can避evade之it.

故Make少little敵enemy之of堅solid,
大Big敵enemy之of擒catch也also.

夫Husband將general者is, **4**
國Nation之's輔assist也also.

輔Assist周helps則then國nation必must強strong,
輔Assist隙split則then國nation必must弱weak.

故Make軍army之's所place以by患problem於from
君monarch者is三three:
不No知know三three軍army之's不no可can以by
進advance而and yet謂call進advance,
不No知know三three軍army之's不no可can以by
means of退withdraw而and yet謂call退withdraw,
是Correct謂call縻tie up軍army;
不No知know三three軍army之's事profession,
而And yet同same三three軍army之's政government,
則Then軍army士officers惑confused矣will be.

¹²The rules for making war are:

If you outnumber enemy forces ten to one, surround them.

If you outnumber them five to one, attack them.

If you outnumber them two to one, divide them.

If you are equal, then find an advantageous battle.

If you are fewer, defend against them.

If you are much weaker, evade them.

¹⁹Small forces are not powerful.

However, large forces cannot catch them.

4 You must master command.
The nation must support you.

³Supporting the military makes the nation powerful.

Not supporting the military makes the nation weak.

⁵The army's position is made more difficult by politicians in three different ways.

Ignorant of the whole army's inability to advance, they order an advance.

Ignorant of the whole army's inability to withdraw, they order a withdrawal.

We call this tying up the army.

Politicians don't understand the army's business.

Still, they think they can run an army.

This confuses the army's officers.

不No 知knowledge 三three 軍armies 之' 權authority,
 而And yet 同same 三three 軍armies 之' 任allow,
 則Then 軍army 士officers 疑doubtful 矣will be.

三Three 軍army 既both 惑confused 且and 疑doubtful,
 則Then 諸various 侯noblemen 之's 難disaster 至arrive 矣will,
 是Correct 謂call 亂disorder 軍army 引pull 勝victory.

故Make 知know 勝victory 有have 五five: **5**
 知Knowledge 可can 以by means of 戰battle 與give 不no
 可can 以by means of 戰battle 者is 勝victory,
 識Knowledge 衆crowd 寡scarce 之of 用use 者is 勝victory,
 上Above 下below 同same 欲desire 者is 勝victory,
 以By 虞worry 得obtain 不no 虞worry 者is 勝victory,
 將General 能able 而and yet 君monarch 不no 御drive
 者is 勝victory,
 此Here 五five 者are,
 知Know 勝victory 之's 道philosophy 也also.



IGNORANCE:

Many opposites consist of a character, for example, know 知, and the negated character, not 不 know 知, for ignorance.

故Make 曰said: **6**
 知Know 彼each other 知know 己self,
 百Hundred 戰battles 不no 殆dangerous,
 不No 知know 彼each other 而and yet
 知know 己self,
 一One 勝victory 一one 負defeat,
 不No 知know 彼each other 不no 知know
 己self,
 每Every 戰battle 必must 敗 be defeated.



¹²Politicians don't know the army's chain of command.
They give the army too much freedom.
This will create distrust among the army's officers.

¹⁵The entire army becomes confused and distrusting.
This invites invasion by many different rivals.
We say correctly that disorder in an army kills victory.

5 You must know five things to win:
Victory comes from knowing when to attack and when to avoid battle.
Victory comes from correctly using both large and small forces.
Victory comes from everyone sharing the same goals.
Victory comes from finding opportunities in problems.
Victory comes from having a capable commander and the government leaving him alone.
You must know these five things.
You then know the theory of victory.

6 We say:
"Know yourself and know your enemy.
You will be safe in every battle.
You may know yourself but not know your enemy.
You will then lose a battle for every one you win.
You may know neither yourself nor your enemy.
You will then lose every battle."



MAPPING:

Most concepts such as the "five victories" above map to other aspects of the Sun Tzu's system, in this case the five key elements.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In this third chapter, Sun Tzu introduces the basics of advancing into new areas. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

- 1.1.1 Position Dynamics: how all current positions are always getting better or worse.
- 1.1.2 Defending Positions: how we defend our current positions until new positions are established.
- 1.2 Subobjective Positions: the subjective and objective aspects of a position.
 - 1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.
 - 1.7 Competitive Power: the sources of superiority in challenges.
 - 1.7.1 Team Unity: strength by joining with others.
 - 1.7.2 Goal Focus: strength as arising from concentrating efforts.
 - 1.8 Progress Cycle: the adaptive loop by which positions are advanced.
 - 1.8.1 Creation and Destruction: the creation and destruction of competitive positions.
 - 1.8.2 The Adaptive Loop: the continual reiteration of position analysis.
 - 2.3.6 Promises and Threats: the use of promises and threats as strategic moves.
 - 2.4 Contact Networks: the range of contacts needed to create perspective.

2.4.1 Ground Perspective: getting information on a new competitive arena.

2.4.2 Climate Perspective: getting perspective on temporary external conditions.

3.0.0 Identifying Opportunities: the use of opportunities to advance a position.

3.1.3 Conflict Cost: the costly nature of resolving competitive comparisons by conflict.

3.2 Opportunity Creation: how change creates opportunities.

3.2.2 Opportunity Invisibility: why opportunities are always hidden.

3.2.4 Emptiness and Fullness: the transformations between strength and weakness.

3.4 Dis-Economies of Scale: how opportunities are created by the size of others.

3.4.2 Opportunity Fit: finding new opportunities that fit your size.

3.4.3 Reaction Lag: how size creates temporary openings.

3.5 Strength and Weakness: openings created by the strength of others.

3.6 Leveraging Subjectivity: openings between subjective and objective positions.

3.7 Defining the Ground: redefining a competitive arena to create relative mismatches.

5.6 Defensive Advances: balancing defending and advancing positions.



Chapter 4

形

Form – Positioning

The Chinese term *xing* literally means “form.” However, Sun Tzu uses it to mean the formation or concentration of resources at a given position. The concentration can be defensive or offensive, and, according to the science of *bing-fa*, an offensive move to a new position should only be made when a clear, certain-to-be-successful opportunity presents itself.

Sun Tzu starts by explaining the defense and attack cycle. We can do no more than protect our existing position until the competitive environment can create new opportunities for us. The text then explains that our success initially depends on our ability to defend our current position and generate surplus resources until an opportunity presents itself.

When we see an opportunity to attack, we must maintain a defensive mindset, asking ourselves how defensible our new position will be. After we see a defensible opportunity (foresight), we must be able to both move to that new position and defend it when we get there.

Sun Tzu provides a simple formula for calculating whether or not we can succeed in winning a new position. This formula calculates the number of forces we can move to a specific place in a specific amount of time versus the amount of resources that our opponents can move to that position in a specific amount of time. This calculation is the foundation of positioning, *xing*, which brings together a winning amount of force at a given place and time.

形 Form

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

昔Ancient 之of 善good 戰battle 者is, **1**
先First 爲become 不not 可able 勝win,
以By means of 侍serve 敵enemy 之it 可able 勝win,
不No 可able 勝win 在exist with 己self,
可Able 勝win 在exist with 敵enemy.



ENEMY

In Sun Tzu's system, the enemy 敵 is defined as the other actors in the environment that create opportunities for success.

故Make 善good 戰battle 者is,
能Can 爲become 不no 可able 勝victory,
不No 能can 使use 敵enemy 必must 可able
勝victory.

故Make 曰say:

勝Victory 可can 知know 而and yet 不no
可can 爲become.

Chapter 4: Positioning

SUN TZU SAID:

I Learn from the history of successful battles.
Your first actions should deny victory to the enemy.
You pay attention to your enemy to find the way to win.
You alone can deny victory to the enemy.
Only your enemy can allow you to win.

⁶You must fight well.
You can prevent the enemy's victory.
You cannot win unless the enemy enables your
victory.

⁹We say:
You can recognize the opportunity for victory; you
don't create it.



POSITION:

*The theme of this chapter is using your position, specifically your position on the **ground**, which must be defensible.*

不No 可can 勝victory 者is, **2**
守Defend 也also;
可Can 勝victory 者is,
攻Attack 也also,
守Defend 則then 不no 足sufficient,
攻Attack 則then 有has 餘surplus.

善Good 守defend 者is,
藏Hoard 於from 九nine 地ground 之of 下below,
善Good 攻attack 者is,
動Move 於to 九nine 天heaven 之of 上above.

故Make 能can 自self 保preserve 而and yet 全complete
勝victory 也also.

見View 勝victory, **3**
不No 過pass 衆crowd 人men 之's 所place 知know,
非Weak 善good 之of 善good 者is 也also.

戰Battle 勝victory 而and yet 天heaven 下below 曰say
善good,
非Weak 善good 之of 善good 者is 也also.

故Make 舉raise 秋autumn 毫thousandth,
不No 爲become 多many 力force;
見View 日day 用use,
不No 爲become 明bright 目eye,
聞Hear 雷thunder 霆clap,
不No 爲become 聰clever 耳ear.

2 You are sometimes unable to win.
You must then defend.
You will eventually be able to win.
You must then attack.
Defend when you have insufficient strength.
Attack when you have a surplus of strength.

7 You must defend yourself well.
Save your forces and dig in.
You must attack well.
Move your forces when you have a clear advantage.

11 You must always protect yourself until you can completely triumph.

3 Some may see how to win.
However, they cannot position their forces where they must.
This demonstrates limited ability.

4 Some can struggle to a victory and the whole world may praise their winning.
This also demonstrates a limited ability.

6 Win as easily as picking up a fallen hair.
Don't use all of your forces.
See the time to move.
Don't try to find something clever.
Hear the clap of thunder.
Don't try to hear something subtle.

古Ancient 之of 善good 戰battle 者is,
勝Victory 於to 易easy 勝victory 者is 也also;
故Make 善good 戰battle 者is 之of 勝victory 也also,
無Without 智intelligence 名name,
無Without 勇bravery 功achievement.

故Make 其this 戰battle 勝victory 不no 忒excess,
不No 忒excess 者is,
其This 措position 必must 勝win,
勝Victory 已finish 敗defeat 者is 也also.

故Make 善good 戰battle 者is,
立Stand 於to 不no 敗defeat 之of 地ground,
而And yet 不no 失lose 敵enemy 之s 敗defeat 也also.

是Correct 故make 勝victory 兵war 先first 勝victory,
而And yet 後afterward 求strive for 戰battle,
敗Defeat 兵war 先first 戰battle 而and yet 後afterward
求strive for 勝victory.

LEVERAGE:

What we call
leverage is
described by the
characters 不
excess 忒 and
comes from cor-
rectly as utiliz-
ing your position
措.

¹²Learn from the history of successful battles.
Victory goes to those who make winning easy.
A good battle is one that you will obviously win.
It doesn't take intelligence to win a reputation.
It doesn't take courage to achieve success.

¹⁷You must win your battles without effort.
Avoid difficult struggles.
Fight when your position must win.
You always win by preventing your defeat.

²¹You must engage only in winning battles.
Position yourself where you cannot lose.
Never waste an opportunity to defeat your enemy.

²⁴You win a war by first assuring yourself of victory.
Only afterward do you look for a fight.
Outmaneuver the enemy before the first battle and then fight to win.

EASE:

*At this point,
you have read
over a hundred
competitive
rules. The
easiest way to
remember them
is to learn their
connections.*

善_{Good} 用_{use} 兵_{war} 者_{is}, 4
 修_{Fix} 道_{philosophy} 而_{and} 保_{preserve} 法_{method},
 故_{Make} 能_{can} 爲_{become} 勝_{victory} 敗_{defeat} 之_{'s} 政_{govern}.

兵_{War} 法_{methods}:
 “一₁. 曰_{Say} 度_{measure},
 二₂. 曰_{Say} 量_{quantity},
 三₃. 曰_{Say} 數_{count},
 四₄. 曰_{Say} 稱_{weigh},
 五₅. 曰_{Say} 勝_{victory},

地_{Ground} 生_{birth} 度_{measure},
 度_{Measure} 生_{birth} 量_{quantity},
 量_{Quantity} 生_{birth} 數_{count},
 數_{Count} 生_{birth} 稱_{weigh},
 稱_{Weigh} 生_{birth} 勝_{victory}.”



ADVANTAGE:

The concept advantage 利 means also an opening, an opportunity, and having an edge in a given situation.

故_{Make} 勝_{victory} 兵_{war} 若_{seem} 以_{by} means of
 鎰_{amount of gold} 稱_{weigh} 銖_{amount of silver},
 敗_{Defeat} 兵_{war} 若_{seem} 以_{by} means of
 銖_{amount of silver} 稱_{weigh} 鎰_{amount of gold}.

勝_{Victory} 者_{is} 之_{of} 戰_{battle} 民_{people} 也, 5
 若_{Seem} 決_{wash} 積_{accumulate} 水_{water}
 於_{through} 千_{thousand} 仞_{fathom} 之_{of} 谿_{gorge} 者_{is},
 形_{Form} 也_{also}.



4 You must make good use of war.
Study military philosophy and the art of defense.
You can control your victory or defeat.

⁴This is the art of war:

1. Discuss the distances.
2. Discuss your numbers.
3. Discuss your calculations.
4. Discuss your decisions.
5. Discuss victory.

¹⁰The ground determines the distance.
The distance determines your numbers.
Your numbers determine your calculations.
Your calculations determine your decisions.
Your decisions determine your victory.”

¹⁵Creating a winning war is like balancing a coin of gold against a coin of silver.
Creating a losing war is like balancing a coin of silver against a coin of gold.

5 Winning a battle is always a matter of people.
You pour them into battle like a flood of water
pouring into a deep gorge.
This is a matter of positioning.



ELEMENTS:

*This five-step process takes knowledge of the **ground** and converts it into what we call an **aim** for the future.*

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In this fourth chapter, Sun Tzu explains the process for advancing positions. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.1.2 Defending Positions: how we defend our current positions until new positions are established.

1.2 Subobjective Positions: the subjective and objective aspects of a position.

1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.

1.7 Competitive Power: the sources of superiority in challenges.

1.8 Progress Cycle: the adaptive loop by which positions are advanced.

1.8.1 Creation and Destruction: the creation and destruction of competitive positions.

1.8.2 The Adaptive Loop: the continual reiteration of position analysis.

3.0.0 Identifying Opportunities: the use of opportunities to advance a position.

3.2 Opportunity Creation: how change creates opportunities.

- 3.2.4 Emptiness and Fullness: the transformations between strength and weakness.
- 3.4.2 Opportunity Fit: finding new opportunities that fit your size.
- 3.5 Strength and Weakness: openings created by the strength of others.
- 3.7 Defining the Ground: redefining a competitive arena to create relative mismatches.
- 5.6 Defensive Advances: balancing defending and advancing positions.
 - 5.6.1 Defense Priority: why defense has first claim on our resources.
- 9.4 Crisis Defense: how vulnerabilities are exploited and defended during a crisis.
 - 9.4.1 Division Defense: preventing organizational division during a crisis.
 - 9.4.2 Panic Defense: the mistakes arising from panic during a crisis.
 - 9.4.3 Defending Openings: how to defend openings created by a crisis.
 - 9.4.4 Defending Alliances: dealing with guilt by association.
 - 9.4.5 Defensive Balance: using short-term conditions to tip the balance in a crisis.



Chapter 5



Influence – Momentum

Sun Tzu entitled this chapter *shi*, “force,” but in *bing-fa*, the character used, *shi*, is more complicated than simple power. It means putting people and events in motion in such a way that they become unstoppable. This idea is captured better by the English term “momentum.” However, what interests Sun Tzu is not just momentum but the process by which it is created. This process is a systematic approach of combining standard practices with new methods to create “surprise,” but what we more generally call “innovation”. Battling with innovation simultaneously undermines an opponent’s movement and their knowledge.

Sun Tzu explains that standards and surprise—that is, innovation—depend on one another and that there are an infinite number of paths to innovation. He uses the metaphors of music, color, and flavor as metaphors for the three skills of knowledge (listening), foresight (aiming), and testing (moving). These are the three areas where innovation is the most important. They map to the first three steps of the scientific method where knowledge is observation, foresight is creating a hypothesis, and movement is conducting an experiment. The pressure of innovation in this cycle must be released by timing when it is most needed.

The text then addresses the chaotic nature of all competitive movements. Though we cannot eliminate this chaos, we can control it, just as we use the chaos of innovation to disrupt the control of our opponents’ plans.

勢 Influence

孫SUN子TZU曰SAID:

凡All治govern衆crowd如like治govern寡few, 1

分Separate數number是correct也also;

鬥Fight衆crowd如like鬥fight寡few,

形Forms名names是correctly也also;

三Three軍army之of衆crowd,

可Can使cause必must受receive敵enemy而and yet

無without敗defeat者is,

奇Unusual正straight是correct也also;

兵War之's所place加increase,

如As if以by means of礮order投throw卵eggs者is,

處Empty壹full是correct也also.



STRAIGHT

The character straight 正 also means correct, normal, and even. Its opposite is unusual, 奇, strange, and odd.

凡All戰battle者is, 2

以By means of正straight合join,

以By means of奇unusual勝victory.

故Make善good出exit奇unusual者is,

無Without窮limit如as if天heaven所place,

不No竭exhaust如as if江river河stream.

Chapter 5: Momentum

SUN TZU SAID:

I You control a large group the same as you control a few.
You just divide their ranks correctly.

You fight a large army the same as you fight a small one.

You only need the right position and communication.

You may meet a large enemy army.

You must be able to sustain an enemy attack without being defeated.

You must correctly use both surprise and direct action

Your army's position must increase your strength.

Troops flanking an enemy can smash them like eggs.

You must correctly use both strength and weakness.

2 It is the same in all battles.

You use a direct approach to engage the enemy.

You use surprise to win.

⁴You must use surprise for a successful escape.

Surprise is as infinite as the weather and land.

Surprise is as inexhaustible as the flow of a river.



SURPRISE:

Because no confrontation goes as planned, and can always go badly, you must prepare surprises beforehand.

終End 而and yet 復return to 始start,
日Day 月month 是correct 也also.

死Dead 而and yet 復return to 生birth,
四Four 時season 是correct 也also.

FIVE:

Five 五key
elements of two
pairs balanced
around a
center describe
every area in
Chinese science,
including
strategy.

聲Tone 不no 過pass 五five,
五Five 聲tone之's 變transform,
不No 可can 勝victory 聽listen 也also.

色Color 不no 過pass 五five,
五Five 色color之's 變transform,
不No 可can 勝victory 觀observe 也also.

味Scents 不no 過pass 五five,
五Five 味scents之's 變transform,
不No 可can 勝victory 嘗taste 也also.

戰Battle 勢influence,
不No 過pass 奇unusual 正straight,
奇Unusual 正straight之's 變transform,
不No 可can 勝victory 窮limit 也also.

奇Unusual 正straight 彼mutually 生born,
如Like 環circle之's 無without 端end,
孰Which 能can 窮limit 之it 哉alas!

激Flow 水water 之of 疾rapid, 3
至Stop 於to 漂float 石rock 者is,
勢Influence 也also.

⁷You can be stopped and yet recover the initiative.
You must use your days and months correctly.

⁹If you are defeated, you can recover.
You must use the four seasons correctly.

¹¹There are only a few notes in the scale.
Yet you can always rearrange them.
You can never hear every song of victory.

¹⁴There are only a few basic colors.
Yet you can always mix them.
You can never see all the shades of victory.

¹⁷There are only a few flavors.
Yet you can always blend them.
You can never taste all the flavors of victory.

²⁰You fight with momentum.
There are only a few types of surprises and direct actions.
Yet you can always vary the ones you use.
There is no limit to the ways you can win.

²⁴Surprise and direct action give birth to each other.
They are like a circle without end.
You cannot exhaust all their possible combinations!

3 Surging water flows together rapidly.
Its pressure washes away boulders.
This is momentum.

VARIETY:

Even though everything consists of only five key elements, those elements can be arranged in an endless number of chains.

驚Hawk 鳥bird 之of 擊strike,
至Stop 於to 毀destroy 折suffer loss 者is,
節Restrain 也also.

是Correct 故make 善good 戰battle 者is,
其This 勢influence 險dangerous,
其This 節restrain 短brief.

勢Influence 如comparable to 彊stretched 弩crossbow,
節Restrain 如comparable to 發machine 發shoot.

紛Confused 紛confused 紜tangled 紜tangled, 4
鬥Fight 亂disorder,
而And yet 不no 可may 亂disorder 也also.

REVERSAL:

*In the natural
process, each
element cre-
ates or gives
birth 生to its
complementary
opposite if given
enough time.*

渾Muddy 渾muddy 沌murky 沌murky,
形Form 圓round,
而And yet 不no 可may 敗defeat 也also.

亂Disorder 生birth 於to 治rule,
怯Fear 生birth 於to 勇bravery,
弱Weak 生birth 於to 强strong.

治Rule 亂disorder,
數Count 也also;
勇Brave 怯fear,
勢Influence 也also.

强Strength 弱weakness,
形Form 也also.

⁴A hawk suddenly strikes a bird.
Its contact alone kills the prey.
This is timing.

⁷You must create only winning battles.
Your momentum must be overwhelming.
Your timing must be exact.

¹⁰Your momentum is like the tension of a bent crossbow.
Your timing is like the pulling of a trigger.

4 War is very complicated and confusing.
Battle is chaotic.
Nevertheless, you must not allow chaos.

⁴War is very sloppy and messy.
Positions turn around.
Nevertheless, you must never be defeated.

⁷Chaos gives birth to control.
Fear gives birth to courage.
Weakness gives birth to strength.

¹⁰You must control chaos.
This depends on your planning.
Your men must brave their fears.
This depends on their momentum.

¹⁴You have strengths and weaknesses.
These come from your position.

CHAOS:

*War defines
a competitive
environment in
which combat-
ants' plans col-
lide resulting in
something that
no one plans.*

故Make 善good 動move 敵enemy 者is,
 形Form 之it,
 敵Enemy 必must 從follow 之it;
 予Give 之it,
 敵Enemy 必must 取take 之it,
 以By means of 利advantage 動move 之it,
 以By means of 卒soldiers 動move 之it,
 以By means of 壹substantial 待stay 之it.

故Make 善good 戰battle 者is, 5
 求Seek 之it 於from 勢influence,
 不No 責demand 於from 人men,
 故Make 能able 擇choose 人men 而and 任allow 勢influence.



INFLUENCE:

The concept of influence 勢 or momentum combines characters meaning force or power 力, with the character for ground 地.

任Allow 勢influence 者is,
 其This 戰battle 人men 也also,
 如Comparable to 轉roll 木trees 石stones,
 木Trees 石stones 之of 性nature,
 安Console 則then 靜tranquil,
 危Danger 則then 動move,
 方Direction 則then 止stop,
 圓Round 則then 行move.

故Make 善good 戰battle 人men 之's
 勢influence,
 如As if 轉roll 圓round 石rocks 於to
 千thousand 仞fathoms 之of 上above 者is,
 勢Influence 也also.



¹⁶You must force the enemy to move to your advantage.

Use your position.

The enemy must follow you.

Surrender a position.

The enemy must take it.

You can offer an advantage to move him.

You can use your men to move him.

You can use your strength to hold him.

5 You want a successful battle.

To do this, you must seek momentum.

Do not just demand a good fight from your people.

You must pick good people and then give them momentum.

⁵You must create momentum.

You create it with your men during battle.

This is comparable to rolling trees and stones.

Trees and stones roll by their nature.

Offer men safety and they will stay calm.

Endanger them and they will act.

Give them a place and they will hold.

Round them up and they will march.

¹³You make your men powerful in battle with momentum.

This should be like rolling round stones down over a high, steep cliff.

Momentum is critical.



MOMENTUM:

By definition, momentum does not come from doing what is predicted, but from doing something that no one expects.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In his fifth chapter, Sun Tzu explains the process for creating momentum. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.2 Subobjective Positions: the subjective and objective aspects of a position.

7.0 Creating Momentum: how momentum requires creativity.

7.1 Order from Chaos: the value of chaos in creating competitive momentum.

7.1.1 Creating Surprise: creating surprise using our chaotic environment.

7.1.2 Momentum Psychology: the psychology of surprise.

7.1.3 Standards and Innovation: the methodology of creativity.

7.2 Standards First: the role of standards in creating connections with others.

7.2.1 Proven Methods: identifying and recognizing the limits of best practices.

7.2.2 Preparing Expectations: how we shape other people's expectations.

7.3 Strategic Innovation: a simple system for innovation.

7.3.1 Expected Elements: dividing processes and systems into components.

7.3.2 Elemental Rearrangement: seeing invention as rearranging proven elements.

7.3.3 Creative Innovation: the more advanced methods for innovation.

7.4 Competitive Timing: the role of timing in creating momentum.

7.4.1 Timing Methods: the three simplest methods of controlling timing.

7.4.2 Momentum Timing: the relative value of momentum at various times in a campaign.

7.4.3 Interrupting Patterns: how repetition creates patterns for surprise.

7.5 Momentum Limitations: the implications of momentum's temporary nature.

7.5.1 Momentum Conversion: converting momentum into positions with more value.

7.5.2 The Spread of Innovation: the spread of innovation to advance our position.

7.6 Productive Competition: using momentum to produce more resources.

7.6.1 Resource Discovery: using innovation to create value from seemingly worthless resources.

7.6.2 Ground Creation: the creation of new competitive ground to be successful.



Chapter 6

虛實

Empty Full – Weakness and Strength

The two opposing and complementary concepts that are the topic of this chapter, *xu* and *sat*, are difficult to translate. *Xu* is generally translated as weakness, but it literally means false, worthless, empty, and hollow. *Sat* is translated as strength, but it literally means real, wealthy, honest, and solid. Together these concepts describe the mechanism by which we avoid conflict and turn problems into opportunities. The contrasting ideas of *xu* (weakness, emptiness) and *sat* (strength, fullness) are united. Strength equals abundance and is associated with heaven as a temporary state. Weakness equals need and is associated with the ground as a stable state.

Sun Tzu begins addressing this complex idea by explaining that an army that arrives at an empty battlefield is naturally stronger than one that moves into an area occupied by other forces. He then continues to explain that movement through empty terrain is speedier and that both attack and defense are easier when you are working against emptiness or weakness.

Sun Tzu then explains the relationship between knowledge and ignorance and strength and weakness. He tells how to focus our strengths against the weaknesses in the opposition by keeping our plans a secret. Then he extends the discussion to consider how secrecy creates opportunities to exploit weakness. Sun Tzu then summarizes weakness and strength by applying these concepts to planning, action, position, and battle.

虛實 Empty Full

孫SUN子TZU曰SAID:

凡All先first處empty戰battle地ground而and yet待wait 1
敵enemy者is佚leisure,
後After處empty戰battle地ground而and yet趨hurry
戰battle者is勞exert.

故Make善good戰battle者is,
致Send人men而and yet不not致send於to人men.



能Can使cause敵enemy人men自self至arrive者is,
利Benefit之it也also;
能Can使cause敵enemy人men不not得gain
至arrive者is,
害Misfortune之it也also.

EMPTY & FULL

The concepts empty 處 (poor, scarce) and full 壹 (rich, abundant) are conditions affecting every element of a position.

故Make敵enemy佚relaxed能can勞weary之it,
飽Satisfied能can飢starve之it,
安Peaceful能can動move之it.

Weakness and Strength

SUN TZU SAID:

I Always arrive first to the empty battlefield to await the enemy at your leisure.

After the battleground is occupied and you hurry to it, fighting is more difficult.

³You want a successful battle.

Move your men, but not into opposing forces.

⁵You can make the enemy come to you.

Offer him an advantage.

You can give the enemy no advantage in coming to you.

Threaten him with danger.

⁹When the enemy is fresh, you can tire him.

When he is well fed, you can starve him.

When he is relaxed, you can move him.



CHANGE:

The key element of climate (heaven) dictates that positions naturally progress from strength to weakness.

出Exit 其this 所place 不no 趨hurry, 2
 趨Hurry 其this 所place 不no 意intention;
 行March 千thousand 里miles 而but 不no 勞weary 者is,
 行March 於to 無without 人man 之go 地place 也also;
 攻Attack 而and yet 必must 取take 者is,
 攻Attack 其this 地place 不no 守defend 也also;
 守Defend 而but 必must 固walls 者is,
 守Defend 其this 所place 不no 攻attack 也also.

故Make 善good 攻attack 者is,
 敵Enemy 不no 知knowledge 其this 所place 守defend.

善Good 守defense 者is,
 敵Enemy 不no 知knowledge 其this 所place 攻attack.

微Tiny 乎! 微Tiny 乎! 3
 至Arrive 於to 無without 形form;
 神Spirit 乎! 神Spirit 乎!
 至Arrive 於to 無without 聲sound,
 故Make 能can 為become 敵enemy 之s 司
 manage 命destiny.

MOVEMENT:

*In moving, emptiness is advance
 攻, moving into
 another's territory, and full-
 ness is defense
 守, holding your
 existing territory.*

進Advance 而but 不no 可can 圍defend 者is,
 衝Charge 其this 處empty 也also;
 退Withdraw 而but 不no 可can 追chase 者is,
 速Rapid 而but 不no 可can 及reach 也also.

2 Leave any place without haste.
Hurry to where you are unexpected.
You can easily march hundreds of miles without tiring.
To do so, travel through areas that are deserted.
You must take whatever you attack.
Attack when there is no defense.
You must have walls to defend.
Defend where it is impossible to attack.

⁹Be skilled in attacking.
Give the enemy no idea where to defend.

¹¹Be skillful in your defense.
Give the enemy no idea where to attack.

3 Be subtle! Be subtle!
Arrive without any clear formation.
Ghostly! Ghostly!
Arrive without a sound.
You must use all your skill to control the enemy's
decisions.

⁶Advance quietly and he can't defend.
You can charge through his openings.
Withdraw quietly and he cannot chase you.
He may be quick, but he cannot catch you.

STEALTH:

*All methods
connect to the
key pieces of
knowledge: that
is, the time and
place of battle.
Information
controls the
battle.*

故Make 我I 欲desire 戰battle,
 敵Enemy 雖although 高high 壘rampart 深deep 溝moat,
 不No 得obtain 不no 與give 我I 戰battle 者is,
 攻Attack 其this 所place 必must 救rescue 也also;
 我I 不no 欲desire 戰battle,
 畫Divide 地ground 而and yet 守defend 者is,
 敵Enemy 不no 得need 與give 我I 戰battle 者is,
 乖Oppose 其this 所place 之go 也also.

故Make 形form 人men 而but 我I 無without 形form, 4
 則Then 我I 專concentrate 而but 敵enemy 分separate;
 我I 專concentrate 爲become 一one,
 敵Enemy 分separate 爲become 十ten,
 是Correct 以by means of 十ten 攻attack 其this 一one 也also;
 則Then 我I 衆crowd 而but 敵enemy 寡few,
 能Can 以by means of 衆crowd 擊strike 寡few,
 則Then 我I 之go 所place 與give 敵enemy 者is,
 約Schedule 矣will.

吾Our 所place 與give 戰battle 之's 5
 地ground 不no 可can 知know,
 不No 可can 知know,

則Then 敵enemy 所place 備prepared 者is
 多many,
 敵Enemy 所place 備prepared 者is 多many,
 則Then 我my 所place 與give 戰battle 者is,
 寡Scarce 矣will be.

METHODS:

*In methods,
 emptiness is the
 division 分 of
 few 寡 forces,
 and fullness is
 the concentra-
 tion 專 of a
 crowd 衆 of
 forces.*

¹⁰Always pick your own battles.
The enemy can hide behind high walls and deep trenches.
Do not try to win by fighting him directly.
Instead, attack a place that he must recapture.
Avoid the battles that you don't want.
You can divide the ground and yet defend it.
Don't give the enemy anything to win.
Divert him by coming to where you defend.

4 Make other men take a position while you take none.
Then focus your forces where the enemy divides his forces.
Where you focus, you unite your forces.
When the enemy divides, he creates many small groups.
You want your large group to attack one of his small ones.
Then you have many men where the enemy has but a few.
Your larger force can overwhelm his smaller one.
Then go on to the next small enemy group.
You can take them one at a time.

5 You must keep the place that you have chosen
as a battleground a secret.
The enemy must not know.
Force the enemy to prepare his defense in many
places.
You want the enemy to defend many places.
Then you can choose where to meet the enemy.
His forces will be weak there.

PLACES:

Place and ground
are defined
elsewhere in Sun
Tzu as infinite.
By this logic,
there are always
places that
are empty and
unguarded.

故Make 備prepared 前front 則then 後behind 寡scarce,
 備Prepare 後behind 則then 前front 寡scarce,
 備Prepare 左left 則then 右right 寡scarce,
 備Prepare 右right 則then 左left 寡scarce,
 無Without 所place 不no 備prepare,
 則Then 無without 所place 不no 寡scarce.

寡Scarce 者is,
 備Prepare 人men 者is 也also;
 衆Crowd 者is,
 使Make 人men 備prepare 己self 者is 也also.

故Make 知knowledge 戰battle之's 地ground, 6
 知Know 戰battle之's 日day,
 則Then 可can 千thousand 里miles 而but 會meet 戰battle.

不No 知know 戰battle之's 所place,
 不No 知know 戰battle之's 日day,
 則Then 左left 不no 能can 救rescue 右right,
 右Right 不no 能can 救rescue 左left,
 前Front 不no 能can 救rescue 後back,
 後Back 不no 能can 救rescue 前front,
 而But 況situation 遠distant 者is 數count 十
 ten 里miles,
 近Near 者is 數count 里miles 乎!

GROUND:

*In the measure-
 ment of the
 ground, empti-
 ness or weak-
 ness is what
 is distant 遠,
 while fullness or
 strength is what
 is near 近.*

以By means of 吾our 度measure 之it,
 越Excess 人men 之of 兵war 雖although
 多many,
 亦Also 奚why 益augment 於to 勝victory 哉alas?

7If he reinforces his front lines, he depletes his rear.
If he reinforces his rear, he depletes his front.
If he reinforces his right flank, he depletes his left.
If he reinforces his left flank, he depletes his right.
Without knowing the place of attack, he cannot prepare.
Without knowing the right place, he will be weak everywhere.

¹³The enemy has weak points.
Prepare your men against them.
He has strong points.
Make his men prepare themselves against you.

6You must know the battleground.
You must know the time of battle.
You can then travel a thousand miles and still win the battle.

⁴The enemy should not know the battleground.
He shouldn't know the time of battle.
His left flank will be unable to support his right.
His right will be unable to support his left.
His front lines will be unable to support his rear.
His rear will be unable to support his front.
His support is distant even if it is only ten miles
away.
What unknown place can be close?

¹²You control the balance of forces.
The enemy may have many men but they are
superfluous.
How can they help him to victory?

DIRECTIONS:

*In another
analogy, the
four directions
here, left, right,
front, and back,
are connected to
the four key ex-
ternals elements
of a position.*

故Make 曰said:
勝Victory 可can 爲become 也also.

敵Enemy 雖although 衆crowd,
可Can 使make 無without 鬪fight.

故Make 策strategy 之it 而and yet 知know 得gain 7
失loss 之of 計plan,
作Utilize 之it 而and yet 知know 動action 靜non-action之's
理administration,
形Form 之it 而and yet 知know 死death 生birth 之of
地ground,
角Contend 之it 而and yet 知know 有have 餘surplus 不not
足sufficient 之of 處management.

故Make 形form 兵war之's 極ridgepole,
至Arrive 於to 無without 形form,
無Without 形form,
則Then 深deep 間spies 不no 能can 窺spy on,
智Wise 者is 不no 能can 謀plan;
因Follow 形form 而and yet 錯arrange 勝victory 於to 衆crowd,
衆Crowd 不no 能can 知know,
人Men 皆together 知know 我my 所place 以by means of
勝victory之's 形form,
而And yet 莫not 知know 吾our 所place 以by means of
制control 勝victory之's 形form;
故Make 其this 戰battle 勝victory 不no 復recover,
而And yet 應comply with 形form 無without 窮limit.

¹⁵We say:

You must let victory happen.

¹⁷The enemy may have many men.

You can still control him without a fight.

7 When you form your strategy, know the strengths and weaknesses of your plan.

When you execute a plan, know how to manage both action and inaction.

When you take a position, know the deadly and the winning grounds.

When you enter into battle, know when you have too many or too few men.

⁵Use your position as your war's centerpiece.

Arrive at the battle without a formation.

Don't take a position in advance.

Then even the best spies can't report it.

Even the wisest general cannot plan to counter you.

Take a position where you can triumph using superior numbers.

Keep opposing forces ignorant.

Everyone should learn your location after your position has given you success.

No one should know how your location gives you a winning position.

Make a successful battle one from which the enemy cannot recover.

You must continually adjust your position to his position.

夫Husband 兵war 形form 象image 水water, 8
 水Water 之goes 形form,
 避Avoid 高high 而and yet 趨tend toward 下low;
 兵War 之goes 形form,
 避Avoid 壹full 而and yet 擊strike 處empty;
 水Water 因follows 地earth 而and yet 制control 流flow,
 兵War 因follows 敵enemy 而and yet 制controls 勝victory.

故Make 兵war 無without 常rule 勢influence,
 水Water 無without 常rule 形form;
 能Can 因follow 敵enemy 變transform 化change 而and yet
 取take 勝victory,
 謂Call 之it 神spirit.



LEADERSHIP:

In making a decision, you use empty/full the same that water does: it flows naturally from fullness to emptiness, or from what is high 高, down to the low 下.

故Make 五five 行march 無without 常rule
 勝victory,
 四Four 時seasons 無without 常rule
 位position,
 日Day 有has 短brief 長length,
 月Month 有has 死death 生birth.



8 Manage your military position like water.

Water takes every shape.

It avoids the high and moves to the low.

Your war can take any shape.

It must avoid the strong and strike the weak.

Water follows the shape of the land that directs its flow.

Your forces follow the enemy who determines how you win.

⁸Make war without a standard approach.

Water has no consistent shape.

If you follow the enemy's shifts and changes, you can always find a way to win.

We call this shadowing.

¹²Fight five different campaigns without a firm rule for victory.

Use all four seasons without a consistent position.

Each day passes quickly.

A month can decide your failure or success.



AWARDS:

Our many books adapting Sun Tzu's lessons have won awards in business, careers, self-help, sports, philosophy, and youth nonfiction.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter six, Sun Tzu explains how to find opportunities by leveraging opposites. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.2.1 Competitive Landscapes: the arenas in which rivals jockey for position.

1.2.2 Exploiting Exploration: how competitive landscapes are searched and positions utilized.

1.2.3 Position Complexity: how strategic positions arise from interactions in complex environments.

1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.

2.4 Contact Networks: the range of contacts needed to create perspective.

2.4.1 Ground Perspective: getting information on a new competitive arena.

2.4.2 Climate Perspective: getting perspective on temporary external conditions.

2.4.3 Command Perspective: developing sources for understanding decision-makers.

2.4.4 Methods Perspective: developing contacts who understand best practices.

2.4.5 Mission Perspective: how we develop and use a perspective on motivation.

2.5 The Big Picture: building big-picture strategic awareness.

2.6 Knowledge Leverage: getting competitive value out of knowledge.

2.7 Information Secrecy: the role of limiting information in controlling relationships.

3.2.3 Complementary Opposites: the dynamics of balance from opposing forces.

- 3.2.4 Emptiness and Fullness: rules on the transformations between emptiness and fullness.
- 3.2.5 Dynamic Reversal: how situations reverse themselves naturally.
- 3.5 Strength and Weakness: six rules regarding openings created by the strength of others.
- 3.6 Leveraging Subjectivity: openings between subjective and objective positions.
- 3.7 Defining the Ground: redefining a competitive arena to create relative mismatches.
- 3.8 Strategic Matrix Analysis: two-dimensional representations of strategic space.
- 4.7 Competitive Weakness: how certain opportunities can bring out our weaknesses.
 - 4.7.1 Command Weaknesses: the character flaws of leaders and how to exploit them.
 - 4.7.2 Group Weaknesses: organizational weakness and where groups fail.
- 6.7 Tailoring to Conditions: overcoming opposition using conditions in the environment.
 - 6.7.1 Form Adjustments: adapting responses based on the form of the ground.
 - 6.7.2 Size Adjustments: adapting responses based on comparing size of forces.
 - 6.7.3 Strength Adjustments: adapting responses based on unity of opposing forces.
- 6.8 Competitive Psychology: improving competitive psychology even in adversity and failure.
 - 6.8.1 Adversity and Creativity: how we use adversity to spark our creativity.
 - 6.8.2 Strength in Adversity: using adversity to increase a group's unity and focus.



Battle

Moving

Chapter 7

軍爭

Military Conflict – Armed Conflict

In this chapter, Sun Tzu makes it clear that conflict (*zheng*) is not the most desirable path to success in competition. We can be successful in competition while avoiding confrontation and conflict. We prepare for confrontation, but our goal is always to avoid it. Classical strategy warns against ever engaging in direct confrontation without a decisive advantage. The latter part of the chapter covers techniques for succeeding in these conflicts when they are unavoidable.

Sun Tzu begins by explaining the dangers of conflict and that it cannot be undertaken carelessly. He then explains the disasters that occur when we rush into confrontations with the enemy without proper preparation, because the cohesion of large forces breaks down when they are hurried (Figure 25).

When confrontations are unavoidable, he emphasizes the need for deception and the need for improved methods of communication. Good communication of knowledge and vision is the primary key to winning all battles.

Sun Tzu then addresses the proper timing for making contact with the enemy in order to control the situation. In the final section, he provides a short but critical list of rules for avoiding mistakes during contact with the enemy. All together, Sun Tzu's rules for success during conflict map well into the four-step skill cycle).

軍 Military Conflict

爭

孫SUN子TZU曰SAID:

凡All用use兵war之's法methods,]
 將General受endure命order於from君monarch,
 合Join軍army聚masses衆crowd,
 交Meet和harmoniously而and yet舍shelter,
 莫Not難disaster於through軍armed爭conflict.

軍Armed爭conflict之of難disaster者is,
 以By means of迂detour爲become直direct,
 以By means of患problem爲become利advantage.



CONFLICT

Conflict 爭 is defined as the intentional use of violence, which isn't necessarily required to be successful battle 戰 or war 軍.

故Make迂detour其this途roadway,
 而And yet誘guide之it以by means of利advantage,
 後Behind人men發shoot,
 先First人men至arrive,
 此Here知know迂detour直direct之of
 計plan者is也also.

故Make軍armed爭conflict爲become
 利advantage,
 軍Armed爭conflict爲become危danger.

Chapter 7: Armed Conflict

SUN TZU SAID:

I Everyone uses the arts of war.
You accept orders from the government.
Then you assemble your army.
You organize your men and build camps.
You must avoid disasters from armed conflict.

⁶Seeking armed conflict can be disastrous.
Because of this, a detour can be the shortest path.
Because of this, problems can become opportunities.

⁹Use an indirect route as your highway.
Use the search for advantage to guide you.
When you fall behind, you must catch up.
When you get ahead, you must wait.
You must know the detour that most directly
accomplishes your plan.

¹⁴Undertake armed conflict when it creates an
advantage.
Seeking armed conflict for its own sake is dangerous.



AVOIDANCE:

In Sun Tzu's system, all conflict is costly, so you seek to avoid conflict and develop positions that win without it.

舉Raise 軍army 而and yet 争conflict 利advantage, 2
 則Then 不not 及reach;
 委Entrust 軍army 而and yet 争conflict 利advantage,
 則Then 輜wagon 重heavy 捐discard.

是Straight 故make 卷roll 甲armor 而and yet 趨hurry,
 日Day 夜night 不not 處manage,
 倍Multiple 道way 兼unite 行march,
 百Hundred 里miles 而and yet 争conflict 利advantage,
 則Then 擒catch 三three 將general 軍army,
 勁Powerful 者is 先first,
 罷Weak 者is 後behind,
 其This 法method 十ten 一is 而and yet 至arrive;
 五Five 十ten 里miles 而and yet 争conflict 利advantage,
 則Then 蹶trip 上up 將general 軍army,
 其This 法method 半half 至arrive,
 三Three 十ten 里miles 而and yet 争conflict 利advantage,
 則Then 三three 分divide 之of 二two 至arrive.

ADVANTAGE:

The two-character sequence conflict 争 advantage 利 means using violence in the attempt to create superiority over an enemy.

是Correct 故cause 軍army 無without
 輜wagon 重heavy 則then 亡die,
 無Without 糧provisions 食food 則then 亡die,
 無Without 委produce 積save 則then 亡die.

2 You can build up an army to fight for an advantage.
Then you won't catch the enemy.
You can force your army to go fight for an advantage.
Then you abandon your heavy supply wagons.

⁵You keep only your armor and hurry after the enemy.
You avoid stopping day or night.
You use many roads at the same time.
You go hundreds of miles to fight for an advantage.
Then the enemy catches your commanders and your army.
Your strong soldiers get there first.
Your weaker soldiers follow behind.
Using this approach, only one in ten will arrive.
You can try to go fifty miles to fight for an advantage.
Then your commanders and army will stumble.
Using this method, only half of your soldiers will make it.
You can try to go thirty miles to fight for an advantage.
Then only two out of three get there.

¹⁸If you make your army travel without good supply lines, your army will die.
Without supplies and food, your army will die.
If you don't save the harvest, your army will die.

SUPPLIES:

War is less about fighting than understanding how conditions change over time. Without supplies, your ability to fight disappears.

故Make 不not 知know 諸various 侯noblemen 之of 謀plan
 者is,
 不No 能can 豫hesitate 交meet;
 不No 知know 山mountain 林forest,
 險Obstruction 阻block,
 沮Prevention 澤pond 之of 形form 者is,
 不No 能can 行march 軍army;
 不No 用use 向toward 導guide 者is,
 不No 能can 得obtain 地ground 利advantage.

故Make 兵war 以by means of 詐deceive 立stand, 3
 以By this means 則then 動act,
 以By means of 分divide 交meet 焉become 變transform
 者is 也also,
 故Make 其this 疾swift 如like 風wind,
 其This 徐great 如like 林forest,
 侵Invade 掠plunder 如like 火fire,
 不No 動act 如like 山mountain,
 難Disaster 知knowledge 如like 陰clouds,
 動Act 如like 雷thunder 震clap.

NOBLEMEN:

*Sun Tzu uses
 the term various
 諸 noblemen
 侯 to indicate
 other people in
 a situation who
 are potentially
 either allies or
 enemies.*

掠Plunder 鄉hometown 分divide 衆crowd,
 廓Boundless 地ground 分divide 利advantage,
 懸Suspend 權authority 而and yet 動act,
 先First 知know 迂detour 直direct 之of 計plan
 者is 勝victory,
 此Here 軍army 争conflict 之of 法method 也also.

²¹Do not let any of your potential enemies know what you are planning.

Still, you must not hesitate to form alliances.

You must know the mountains and forests.

You must know where the obstructions are.

You must know where the marshes are.

If you don't, you cannot move the army.

If you don't, you must use local guides.

If you don't, you can't take advantage of the terrain.

3You make war using a deceptive position.

If you use deception, then you can move.

Using deception, you can upset the enemy and change the situation.

You can move as quickly as the wind.

You can rise like the forest.

You can invade and plunder like fire.

You can stay as motionless as a mountain.

You can be as mysterious as the fog.

You can strike like sounding thunder.

¹⁰Divide your troops to plunder the villages.

When on open ground, dividing is an advantage.

Don't worry about organization; just move.

Be the first to find a new route that leads directly to a winning plan.

This is how you are successful at armed conflict.

REPETITION:

While the English translation makes sections of the text seem repetitive, there are important changes in meaning from the context.

軍Army 政correctness 曰says: 4
“言Speak 不not 相examine 聞hear,
故Make 爲become 金metal 鼓drum;
視See 不not 相examine 見view,
故Make 爲become 旌banner 旗flags.”

夫Husband 金metal 鼓drum 旌banner 旗flags 者is,
所Place 以by means of 一one 人man之s 耳ear 目eye 也also;
人Man 既both 專concentrate 一one,
則Then 勇brave 者is 不not 得get 獨alone 進advance,
怯Cowardly 者is 不not 得get 獨alone 退retreat,
此Here 用use 衆crowd之s 法method 也also.

故Make 夜night 戰battle 多many 火fires 鼓drum,
晝Daytime 戰battle 多many 旌banner 旗flags,
所Place 以by means of 變change 人man之s 耳ear 目eye 也also.

故Make 三three 軍armies 可can 奪seize 氣spirit, 5
將General 軍army 可can 奪seize 心feeling.

是Correct 故cause 朝morning 氣spirit 銳sharp,
晝Daytime 氣spirit 惰lazy,
暮Dusk 氣spirit 歸return home;
故Make 善good 用use 兵war 者is,
避Avoid 其this 銳sharp 氣spirit,
擊Strike 其this 惰lazy 歸return home,
此Here 治govern 氣spirit 者is 也also.

4 Military experience says:
“You can speak, but you will not be heard.
You must use gongs and drums.
You cannot really see your forces just by looking.
You must use banners and flags.”

⁶You must master gongs, drums, banners, and flags.
Place people as a single unit where they can all see and hear.
You must unite them as one.
Then the brave cannot advance alone.
The fearful cannot withdraw alone.
You must force them to act as a group.

¹²In night battles, you must use numerous fires and drums.
In day battles, you must use many banners and flags.
You must position your people to control what they see and hear.

5 You control your army by controlling its morale.
As a general, you must be able to control emotions.

³In the morning, a person’s energy is high.
During the day, it fades.
By evening, a person’s thoughts turn to home.
You must use your troops wisely.
Avoid the enemy’s high spirits.
Strike when his men are lazy and want to go home.
This is how you master energy.

以By means of 治govern 待await 亂disorder,
 以By means of 靜tranquil 待await 譁uproar,
 此Here 治govern 心feelings 者is 也also.

以By means of 近near 待await 遠distant,
 以By means of 佚leisure 待await 勞weary,
 以By means of 飽satisfaction 待await 飢starving,
 此Here 治govern 力force 者is 也also.

無Without 邀invitation 正right 正correct之's 旌banner, 6
 勿Do not 擊strike 堂hall 堂hall 之of 陣formation,
 此Here 治govern 變transform 者is 也also;



BY MEANS OF:

The character translated as **by means of 以** indicates the prescription for a given situation. For most situations, the rule uses empty/full opposites.

故Make 用use 兵war之's 法method,
 高High 陵mound 勿do not 向face,
 背Back 邱grave mound 勿do not 逆oppose,
 佯Pretend 北flee 勿do not 從follow,
 銳Sharp 卒soldiers 勿do not 攻attack,
 餌Bait 兵war 勿do not 食food,
 歸Returning home 師troops 勿do not
 遏hold back,
 圍Encircling 師troops 必must 闕open
 door,
 窮Poor 寇pillage 勿do not 迫compel,
 此Here 用use 兵war之's 法method
 也also.



¹⁰Use discipline to await the chaos of battle.
Keep relaxed to await a crisis.
This is how you master emotion.

¹³Stay close to home to await the distant enemy.
Stay comfortable to await the weary enemy.
Stay well fed to await the hungry enemy.
This is how you master power.

6 Don't entice the enemy when his ranks are orderly.
You must not attack when his formations are solid.
This is how you master adaptation.

⁴You must follow these military rules.
Do not take a position facing the high ground.
Do not oppose those with their backs to the wall.
Do not follow those who pretend to flee.
Do not attack the enemy's strongest men.
Do not swallow the enemy's bait.
Do not attempt to block an army that is heading home.
Always leave an escape route for a surrounded army.
Do not press a desperate foe.
These situations are also how you use the art of war.



INACTION:

The best possible response to a situation can be inaction, because it costs nothing. Sun Tzu warns against what might be called the prejudice toward action.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter seven, Sun Tzu teaches us to focus on building positions instead of on tearing down opponents. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.2.1 Competitive Landscapes: the arenas in which rivals jockey for position.

1.3.1 Competitive Comparison: competition as the comparison of positions.

1.5 Competing Agents: characteristics of competitors.

1.7 Competitive Power: the sources of superiority in challenges.

1.8.1 Creation and Destruction: the creation and destruction of competitive positions.

1.9 Competition and Production: the two opposing skill sets of competition and production.

2.1.3 Strategic Deception: misinformation and disinformation in competition.

2.6 Knowledge Leverage: getting competitive value out of knowledge.

2.7 Information Secrecy: the role of secrecy in relationships.

3.1 Strategic Economics: balancing the cost and benefits of positioning.

3.1.1 Resource Limitations: the inherent limitation of strategic resources.

3.1.3 Conflict Cost : the costly nature of resolving competitive comparisons by conflict.

3.1.6 Time Limitations: understanding the time limits on opportunities.

3.7 Defining the Ground: redefining a competitive arena to create relative mismatches.

4.7 Competitive Weakness: how certain opportunities can bring out our weaknesses.

6.1.2 Prioritizing Conditions: parsing complex competitive conditions into simple responses.

6.8 Competitive Psychology: improving competitive psychology even in adversity and failure.

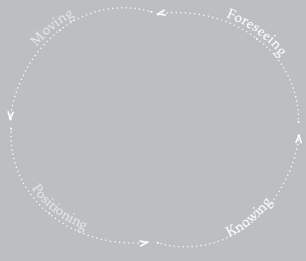
7.4 Competitive Timing: the role of timing in creating momentum.

7.6 Productive Competition: using momentum to produce more resources.

7.6.2 Ground Creation: the creation of new competitive ground to be successful.

8.5 Leveraging Emotions: how we use emotion to obtain rewards.

9.5.2 Avoiding Emotion: the danger of exploiting environmental vulnerabilities for purely emotion reasons.



Chapter 8

九變

Nine Changes – Adaptability

The Chinese name for this chapter means literally “nine changes” or “many changes.” This chapter is best understood in its context as an introduction to the next three chapters, which give a great deal of information about specific situations and how to respond to them.

The concept of change or *bian* includes both our efforts to change a situation and our reaction or responses to changing conditions. The specific topic of this chapter is the latter meaning: adjusting to changing conditions. In Sun Tzu’s view, successful strategies must be dynamic.

In the chapter’s first section, Sun Tzu lists situations (covered in greater detail in several other chapters) that show the need to constantly change our plans. The next short section makes the point that we can be creative and constantly adapt our methods without being inconsistent in our results.

We can also use the dynamics of competitive situations to control our opponents’ behavior. We want to encourage our opponents to make incorrect assessments and movements in response to our challenges. Sun Tzu then covers the need to address the unpredictability of opponents in planning the defense of our position.

Finally, Sun Tzu lists the five weaknesses of leaders and explains how easily these weaknesses can be exploited in the dynamics of competition. The five weaknesses map to the five key elements of *bing-fa* introduced in the first chapter.

九 Nine Changes

變

孫SUN子TZU曰SAID:

凡All用use兵war之's法methods,]
 將General受endure命order於from君monarch,
 合Join軍army聚masses衆crowd;
 圯Ruined地ground無without舍sheltering,
 衢Highway地ground交join和harmony,
 絕Break off地ground無without留delay,
 圍Encircling地ground則then謀scheme,
 死Death地ground則then戰battle,
 途Road有has所place不not由from,
 軍Army有has所place不not鬪fight,
 城City有has所place不not攻attack,
 地Ground有has所place不not争conflict,
 君Monarch令command有has所place不not
 受accept.



NINE:

The number nine 九 is sometimes used to mean many, but it also combines the key five elements with the four steps in Sun Tzu's system.

故Make將general通expert於to九nine變
 changes之of利advantage者is,
 知Know用use兵war矣will.

將Generals不not通expert於to九nine
 變changes之of利advantage者is,
 雖Although知know地ground形shape,
 不No能can得obtain地ground之's
 利advantage矣will.

Chapter 8: Adaptability

SUN TZU SAID:

I Everyone uses the arts of war.
As a general, you get your orders from the government.
You gather your troops.
On dangerous ground, you must not camp.
Where the roads intersect, you must join your allies.
When an area is cut off, you must not delay in it.
When you are surrounded, you must scheme.
In a life-or-death situation, you must fight.
There are roads that you must not take.
There are armies that you must not fight.
There are strongholds that you must not attack.
There are positions that you must not defend.
There are government commands that must not be obeyed.

¹⁴Military leaders must be experts in knowing how to adapt to find an advantage.
This will teach you the use of war.

¹⁶Some commanders are not skilled in making adjustments to find an advantage.
They can know the shape of the terrain.
Still, they cannot exploit the opportunities of their ground.



ADAPTING:

This chapter and its list of ten situations refer to the following three chapters, which give many conditions and their responses.

治Govern 兵war 不not 知know 九nine 變changes 之of
 術technique,
 雖Although 知know 地ground 利advantage,
 不not 得obtain 人men 之's 用use 矣will.

是Correct 故make 智wisdom 者is 之's 慮strategize, **2**
 必Must 雜variety 於to 利advantage 害disadvantage,
 雜Variety 於to 利advantage 而and yet 務duties 可can
 信trust 也also,
 雜Variety 於to 害disadvantage 而and yet 患problems 可can
 解solve 也also.

是Correct 故make 屈bend 諸various 侯noblemen 者one **3**
 以by means of 害disadvantages,
 害Military service 諸various 侯noblemen 者is
 以by means of 業industry,
 趨Hurry 諸various 侯noblemen 者is 以by means of
 利advantage.

故Make 用use 兵war 者is, **4**
 無Without 恃rely on 其this 不no 來come,
 恃Rely on 吾our 有having 以by means of
 待waiting 之it;
 無Without 恃rely on 其this 不no 攻attack,
 恃Rely on 吾our 有having 所place 不no 能can
 攻attack 也also.

VARIETY:

In competitive situations, variety 雜 keeps opponents guessing. In controlled environments, reliability 恃 maintains consistency.

¹⁹Some military commanders do not know how to adjust their methods.

They can find an advantageous position.

Still, they cannot use their men effectively.

2 You must be creative in your planning.

You must adapt to your opportunities and weaknesses.

You can use a variety of approaches and still have a consistent result.

You must adjust to a variety of problems and consistently solve them.

3 You can deter your potential enemy by using his weaknesses against him.

You can keep your potential enemy's army busy by giving it work to do.

You can rush your potential enemy by offering him an advantageous position.

4 You must make use of war.

Do not trust that the enemy isn't coming.

Trust your readiness to meet him by remaining patient.

Do not trust that the enemy won't attack.

Rely only on your ability to pick a place that the enemy can't attack.

ADAPTABILITY:

Nine changes
means the ability to move in any direction, to adapt, but your actions must always address your exact situation.

故Make 將general 有have 五five 危dangers: 5
 必Must 死die 可can 殺kill,
 必Must 生born 可can 虜capture,
 忿Angry 速speed,
 可Can 侮humiliate 也also;
 潔Honest 廉clean 可can 辱disgrace,
 愛Love 民people 可can 煩trouble;
 凡All 其this 五five 危dangers,
 將General之s 過mistake 也also,
 用Use 兵war 災disaster 也also.



覆Overturn 軍army 殺kill 將general,
 必Must 以by means of 五five 危dangers,
 不No 能can 不no 察examine 也also.



BORN:

The character born 生 as a verb means to begin, to start, to give birth to, and to create. Sun Tzu uses it to describe how one condition gives rise to a following condition.

5 You can exploit five different faults in a leader.
If he is willing to die, you can kill him.
If he wants to survive, you can capture him.
He may have a quick temper.
You can then provoke him with insults.
If he has a delicate sense of honor, you can disgrace him.
If he loves his people, you can create problems for him.
In every situation, look for these five weaknesses.
They are common faults in commanders.
They always lead to military disaster.

¹¹To overturn an army, you must kill its general.
To do this, you must use these five weaknesses.
You must always look for them.



EXCESS:

The five flaws of a leader relate to the five characteristics of a leader (see chapter 1); they are not the absence of those strengths but the results of their excess.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter eight, Sun Tzu teaches us the need to constantly adapt to the situation. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.8 Progress Cycle: the adaptive loop by which positions are advanced.

1.8.1 Creation and Destruction : the creation and destruction of competitive positions.

1.8.2 The Adaptive Loop: the continual reiteration of position analysis.

1.8.3 Cycle Time: the importance of speed in feedback and reaction.

1.8.4 Probabilistic Process: the role of chance in strategic processes and systems.

4.7.1 Command Weaknesses: the character flaws of leaders and how to exploit them.

5.2.1 Choosing Adaptability: choosing actions that allow us a maximum of future flexibility.

5.2.2 Campaign Methods: the use of campaigns and their methods.

5.2.3 Unplanned Steps: distinguishing campaign adjustments from steps in a plan.

5.3 Reaction Time: the use of speed in choosing actions.

5.3.1 Speed and Quickness: the use of pace within a dynamic environment.

6.0 Situation Response: selecting the actions most appropriate to a situation.

6.1 Situation Recognition: situation recognition in making advances.

6.1.1 Conditioned Reflexes: how we develop automatic, instantaneous responses.

6.1.2 Prioritizing Conditions: parsing complex competitive conditions into simple responses.

6.2 Campaign Evaluation: how we justify continued investment in an ongoing campaign.

6.2.1 Campaign Flow: seeing campaigns as a series of situations that flow logically from one to another.

6.2.2 Campaign Goals: assessing the value of a campaign by a larger mission.

6.3 Campaign Patterns: how knowing campaign stages gives us insight into our situation.

6.5 Nine Responses: the best responses to the nine common competitive situations.

6.7 Tailoring to Conditions: overcoming opposition using conditions in the environment.

6.7.1 Form Adjustments: adapting our responses based on the form of the ground.

6.7.2 Size Adjustments: adapting responses based on the relative size of opposing forces.

6.7.3 Strength Adjustments: how to adapt responses based on the relative strength of opposing missions.



Chapter 9

行軍

March Army – Armed March

This long chapter discusses four different types of competitive environments and how we utilize them in a competitive campaign. These four environments are metaphors for the general types of competitive conditions we meet in a competitive advance. Three of these environments—mountains, waters, and marshes—are defective in a way that can undermine basic positioning. The fourth environment, plateaus, is the metaphorical opposite of the other three, an ideal environment for positioning.

We can envision these possibilities as a three-sided pyramid. Each face of the pyramid represents one of the three defective grounds. The stable base of the pyramid represents the ideal competitive ground, plateaus.

Metaphorically, mountains represent uneven environments. Waters represent changing environments. Marshes represent uncertain environments. Plateaus represent level, solid, and certain environments. Each of these defective environments has a special condition that we can use to our advantage—height for mountains, current for waters, and the few stable areas for marshes. While on plateaus, correct positioning alone is paramount.

The first section of the chapter describes the four environments. Each of the four following sections focuses on one of these environments. The last section makes it clear that we must stop our advance in any environment when we run low on resources.

行軍 March Army

孫SUN子TZU曰SAID:

凡All處handle軍army相examine敵enemy: 1
絕Break off山mountain依depend on谷valley,
視Watch生birth處position高high,
戰Battle隆glorious無without登climb,
此Here處position山mountain之of軍army也also.



FOUR:

The number four 四 represents the connected ideas of four external compass points and the four steps used to advance a position.

絕Sever水water必must遠distant水water;
客Guest絕sever水water而and yet來arrive,
勿Do not迎welcome之it於to水water內inside,
令Command半half濟ford river而and yet
擊fight之of利advantage.

欲Want戰battle者is,
無Without附attaching於to水water而and
yet迎welcome客guest,
視Show生birth處position高high,
無Without迎welcome水water流flow,
此Here處position水water上up之of
軍army也also.

Chapter 9: Armed March

SUN TZU SAID:

I Anyone moving an army must adjust to the enemy.
When caught in the mountains, rely on their valleys.
Position yourself on the heights facing the sun.
To win your battles, never attack uphill.
This is how you position your army in the mountains.

⁶When water blocks you, keep far away from it.
Let the invader cross the river and wait for him.
Do not meet him in midstream.
Wait for him to get half his forces across and then
take advantage of the situation.

¹⁰You need to be able to fight.
You can't do that if you are caught in water when
you meet an invader.
Position yourself upstream, facing the sun.
Never face against the current.
Always position your army upstream when near
the water.



MARCH:

*This is the first of
the three longest
and most com-
plex chapters.
These chapters
explore all the
details that
make every situ-
ation unique.*

絕Break off 斥expand 澤pond,
惟However 亟urgently 至arrive 勿do not 留stay,
若If 交meet 軍army 於at 斥expand 澤pond之's 中middle,
必Must 依depend on 水water 草grass,
而and yet 背back 衆crowd 樹tree,
此Here 處position 斥expand 澤pond之's 軍army 也also.

平Level 陸plateau 處position 易change,
右Right 背back 高高high,
前Front 死die 後behind 生born,
此Here 處position 平level 陸plateau 之of 軍army 也also.

凡All 此here 四four 軍army之's 利advantage,
黃Yellow 帝emperor之's 所place 以by means of 勝victory
四four 帝emperor 也also.

凡All 軍army 善good 高高high 而and yet 惡bad 下below, 2
貴Sufficient 陽south, sunny hillside 而and yet 賤deficient
陰north, shady hillside,
養Provide for 生birth 而and yet 處position 貴substantial,
軍Army 無without 百hundred 疾diseases,
是Correct 謂meaning 必must 勝victory.

城Town 陵high mound 隄dike 防prevent,
必Must 處position 其this 陽south sunny hillside,
而And yet 右right 背back 之go.

此Here 軍army之's 利advantage,
地Ground之's 助assistance 也also.

¹⁵You may have to move across marshes.
Move through them quickly without stopping.
You may meet the enemy in the middle of a marsh.
You must keep on the water grasses.
Keep your back to a clump of trees.
This is how you position your army in a marsh.

²¹On a level plateau, take a position that you can change.
Keep the higher ground on your right and to the rear.
Keep danger in front of you and safety behind.
This is how you position yourself on a level plateau.

²⁵You can find an advantage in all four of these situations.
Learn from the great emperor who used positioning to conquer his
four rivals.

2 Armies are stronger on high ground and weaker on low.
They are better camping on sunny southern hillsides than on shady
northern ones.
Provide for your army's health and place men correctly.
Your army will be free from disease.
Done correctly, this means victory.

⁶You must sometimes defend on a hill or riverbank.
You must keep on the south side in the sun.
Keep the uphill slope at your right rear.

⁹This will give the advantage to your army.
It will always give you a position of strength.

上Above 雨rain 水water 沫tip 至stop, 3
欲Desire 濟ford river 者is,
待Wait 其this 定decide 也also.

凡All 地ground 有have 絕break off 天heaven 澗mountain
stream,
天Heaven 井well,
天Heaven 牢jail,
天Heaven 羅net,

HEAVEN:

The concept of heaven 天 indicates the natural cycle of changes in the environment that cannot be controlled but can be predicted.

天Heaven 陷submerge,
天Heaven 隙crevice,

必Must 亟urgently 去remove 之it,
勿Do not 近near 也also;

吾We 遠distant 之it,

敵Enemy 近near 之it;

吾We 迎welcome 之it,

敵Enemy 背back 之it.

軍Army 旁side 有have 險danger 阻block,
潢Reservoir 井well,
葦Reed 葭bulrush,

山Mountain 林woods,

薊Screen 薈dense vegetation 者is,

必Must 謹caution 覆overturn 索exact 之it,

此Here 伏hide 姦seduce 之of 所place 也also.

3 Stop the march when the rain swells the river into rapids.
You may want to ford the river.
Wait until it subsides.

⁴All regions can have seasonal mountain streams that can cut you off.

There are seasonal lakes.

There are seasonal blockages.

There are seasonal jungles.

There are seasonal floods.

There are seasonal fissures.

Get away from all these quickly.

Do not get close to them.

Keep them at a distance.

Maneuver the enemy close to them.

Position yourself facing these dangers.

Push the enemy back into them.

¹⁶Danger can hide on your army's flank.

There are reservoirs and lakes.

There are reeds and thickets.

There are mountain woods.

Their dense vegetation provides a hiding place.

You must cautiously search through them.

They can always hide an ambush.

METAPHORS:

All of these lessons can be connected metaphorically to competitive situations in your personal and business life.

敵Enemy 近near 而and yet 靜tranquil 者is, 4
 依depend on 其this 險obstruction 也also,
 遠Distant 而and yet 挑choose 戰battle 者is,
 欲Want 人men之s 進advance 也also.

其This 所place 居reside 易change 者is,
 利Advantage 也also.

衆Crowd 樹tree 動moves 者is,
 來Come 也also;

衆Crowd 草grass 多many 障obstruct 者is,
 疑Doubt 也also.

鳥Bird 起rise 者is,
 伏hide 也also;

獸Beast 駭startle 者is,
 覆overturn 也also.

塵Dust:

高High 而and yet 銳sharp 者is,
 車Cart 來come 也also;

卑Low 而and yet 廣wide 者is,
 徒Foot 來come 也also;

散Scattered 而and yet 條linear 達attain 者is,
 薪Wood 採gathered 也also;

少Little 而and yet 往toward 來coming 者is,
 營encampment 軍army 也also.

PLACE:

The ground is the place 所 of battle, but the nature of place is determined by changes over time under the control of heaven.

4 Sometimes, the enemy is close by but remains calm.
Expect to find him in a natural stronghold.
Other times he remains at a distance but provokes battle.
He wants you to attack him.

⁵He sometimes shifts the position of his camp.
He is looking for an advantageous position.

⁷The trees in the forest move.
Expect that the enemy is coming.
The tall grasses obstruct your view.
Be suspicious.

¹¹The birds take flight.
Expect that the enemy is hiding.
Animals startle.
Expect an ambush.

¹⁵Notice the dust.
It sometimes rises high in a straight line.
Vehicles are coming.
The dust appears low in a wide band.
Foot soldiers are coming.
The dust seems scattered in different areas.
The enemy is collecting firewood.
Any dust is light and settling down.
The enemy is setting up camp.

ADAPTATION:

Our many adaptations of Sun Tzu's work explain how you can apply these analogies and ideas to common competitive situations.

辭Words 卑low 而and yet 益increase 備prepare 者is, 5
進Advance 也also.

辭Words 強strong 而and yet 進advance 驅expel 者is,
退Retreat 也also.

輕Light 車carts 先first 出exit,
居Reside 其this 側side 者is,
陣Battle formation 也also.

無Without 約appointment 而and 請request 和harmony 者is,
謀Scheme 也also.

奔Run 走depart 而and yet 陳display 兵military 者is,
期Expect 也also.

半Half 進advance 而and 半half 退retreat 者is,
誘Bait 也also.

杖Fight 而and yet 立stand 者is,
飢Starving 也also.

汲Draw 而and yet 先first 飲drink 者is,
渴Thirsty 也also.

見View 利advantage 而and yet 不no 進advance 者is,
勞Weary 也also.

5 Your enemy speaks humbly while building up forces.
He is planning to advance.

³The enemy talks aggressively and pushes as if to advance.
He is planning to retreat.

⁵Small vehicles exit his camp first.
They move the army's flanks.
They are forming a battle line.

⁸Your enemy tries to sue for peace but without offering a treaty.
He is plotting.

¹⁰Your enemy's men run to leave and yet form ranks.
You should expect action.

¹²Half his army advances and the other half retreats.
He is luring you.

¹⁴Your enemy plans to fight but his men just stand there.
They are starving.

¹⁶Those who draw water drink it first.
They are thirsty.

¹⁸Your enemy sees an advantage but does not advance.
His men are tired.

鳥Birds 集assemble 者is,
處Empty 也also.

夜Night 呼call 者is,
恐Fear 也also.

FEAR:

The concept of fear 恐 is connected to ignorance, which is connected to the darkness of night 夜 and the inability to see what happens.

軍Army 擾disturb 者is,
將General 不 no 重serious 也also.

旗Flags 旌banners 動move 者is,
亂Disorder 也also.

吏Official 忿angry 者is,
倦Exhausted 也also.

粟Slaughter 馬horse 肉meat 食food 者is,
軍Army 無without 糧provisions 也also.

懸Hang 缶crock 不 no 返return 其this 已hut 者is,
窮Poor 寇pillage 也also.

諄Earnest 諄earnest 翁agreeable 翁agreeable,
徐Slow 與give 人men 言speak 者is,
失Lose 衆crowd 也also.

數Number 賞reward 者is,
窘Distressed 也also.

數Number 罰penalize 者is,
困Tired 也also.

²⁰Birds gather.
Your enemy has abandoned his camp.

²²Your enemy's soldiers call in the night.
They are afraid.

²⁴Your enemy's army is raucous.
The men do not take their commander seriously.

²⁶Your enemy's banners and flags shift.
Order is breaking down.

²⁸Your enemy's officers are irritable.
They are exhausted.

³⁰Your enemy's men kill their horses for meat.
They are out of provisions.

³²They don't put their pots away or return to their tents.
They are desperate.

³⁴Enemy troops appear sincere and agreeable.
But their men are slow to speak to each other.
They are no longer united.

³⁷Your enemy offers too many incentives to his men.
He is in trouble.

³⁹Your enemy gives out too many punishments.
His men are weary.

LESSONS:

There are many specific lessons in this section, but the general lesson is that information comes from interpreting the changes around us.

先First 暴violent 而and yet 後afterward 畏fear 其this
衆crowd 者is,
不 No 精select 之's 至arrive 也also.

來Come 委committee 謝thank 者is,
欲Desire 休rest 息breath 也also.

兵War 怒fury 而and yet 相appears 迎greet,
久Long time 而and yet 不 no 合join,
又Both 不 no 相appear 至go,
必Must 謹cautious 察examine 之it.

兵War 非weak 益augment 多many, 6
惟However 無without 武troops 進advance,
足Sufficient 以by means of 併side-by-side 力power,
期Expect 敵enemy,
取Obtain 人men 而and yet 至stop.

夫Husband 唯only 無without 慮strategize 而and yet
易change 敵enemy 者is,
必Must 擒catch 於at 人men.

CAUTION:

The proper reaction to ignorance is caution 謹, which requires edging into situations incrementally, being skeptical about appearances.

⁴¹Your enemy first acts violently and then is afraid of your larger force.

His best troops have not arrived.

⁴³Your enemy comes in a conciliatory manner.

He needs to rest and recuperate.

⁴⁵Your enemy is angry and appears to welcome battle.

This goes on for a long time, but he doesn't attack.

He also doesn't leave the field.

You must watch him carefully.

6 If you are too weak to fight, you must find more men.

In this situation, you must not act aggressively.

You must unite your forces.

Prepare for the enemy.

Recruit men and stay where you are.

⁶You must be cautious about making plans and adjust to the enemy.

You must gather more men.

MASTERY:

Remembering all these details would be impossible if they weren't connected to an underlying system that you can master.

卒Soldier 未not yet 親intimate 依depend on 而and yet 7
 罰penalize 之it,
 則Then 不no 服obey,
 不No 服obey 則then 難difficult 用use.

卒Soldier 已finished 親intimate 附depend on,
 而And yet 罰penalize 不no 行act,
 則Then 不no 可can 用use.

故Make 令commands 之it 以by means of 文culture,
 齊Together 之it 以by means of 武conquest,
 是Correct 謂meaning 必must 取obtain.



COMMAND:

The concept of command 令 is defined specifically as giving instructions of how a group of people must move—march 行—connecting a leader to his or her followers.

令Command 素simple 行march 以by means of
 教teaching 其these 民people,
 則Then 民people 服obey;
 令Command 不no 素simple 行march 以by
 means of 教teaching 其these 民people,
 則Then 民people 不no 服obey.

令Command 素simple 行march,
 與Give 衆crowd 相study 得obtain 也also.



7 With new, undedicated soldiers, you can depend on them if you discipline them.

They will tend to disobey your orders.

If they do not obey your orders, they will be useless.

4 You can depend on seasoned, dedicated soldiers.

But you must avoid disciplining them without reason.

Otherwise, you cannot use them.

7 You must control your soldiers with esprit de corps.

You must bring them together by winning victories.

You must get them to believe in you.

10 Make it easy for people to know what to do by training your people.

Your people will then obey you.

If you do not make it easy for people to know what to do, you won't train your people.

Then they will not obey.

14 Make your commands easy to follow.

You must understand the way a crowd thinks.



PEOPLE:

Strategy only works because humans are more predictable and controllable than events. If you think you can be successful alone, you need more training.

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter nine, Sun Tzu discusses the basics of recognizing conditions in new territory. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

1.1.0 Position Paths: the continuity of strategic positions over time.

1.2.2 Exploiting Exploration: how competitive landscapes are searched and positions utilized.

2.1 Information Value: knowledge and communication as the basis of strategy.

2.1.1 Information Limits: making good decisions with limited information.

2.2.1 Personal Relationships: why information depends on personal relationships.

2.2.2 Mental Models: how mental models simplify decision-making.

2.2.3 Standard Terminology: how mental models must be shared to enable communication.

2.3 Personal Interactions: making progress through personal interactions.

2.3.1 Action and Reaction: how we advance based on how others react to our actions.

2.3.2 Reaction Unpredictability: why we can never exactly predict the reactions of others.

2.3.3 Likely Reactions: the range of potential reactions in gathering information.

2.3.4 Using Questions: using questions in gathering information and predicting reactions.

4.0 Leveraging Probability: making better decisions regarding our choice of opportunities.

4.3 Leveraging Form: how we can leverage the form of our territory.

4.3.1 Tilted Forms: opportunities that are dominated by uneven forces.

4.3.2 Fluid Forms: opportunities that are dominated by fast-changing directional forces.

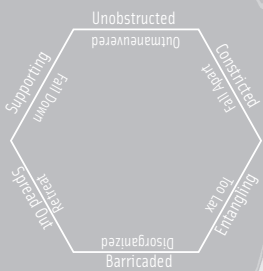
4.3.3 Soft Forms: opportunities that are dominated by forces that create uncertainty.

4.3.4 Neutral Forms: opportunities where the terrain has no dominant forces.

4.4 Strategic Distance: relative proximity in strategic space.

4.4.1 Physical Distance: the issues of proximity in physical space.

4.4.2 Intellectual Distance: the challenges of moving through intellectual space.



Chapter 10

地形

Ground Form – Field Position

This chapter examines six characteristics which we use to evaluate our competitive options. “Positioning” includes all aspects of organizing our resources at a specific place and time for a competitive contest. The concept of field position involves the idea that the shape of the ground—the nature of the opportunity—determines the future potential of our forces. A given field position—literally “ground form” (*di xing*)—is evaluated based on its potential for helping us move forward or defend ourselves. Each field position acts as a stepping-stone to a future position, but, to use a field position correctly, we must understand how its characteristics affect us.

One way to visualize the six characteristics of field positions is to think about the six sides of a cube. The cube represents three dimensions. We use these three dimensions—called obstacles, dangers, and distance—to evaluate the potential of a certain field position. Opposing sides on the cube are opposite extremes of one dimension. Every position or opportunity combines these six characteristics to one degree or another, falling somewhere within the cube.

In this three-dimensional matrix, *bing-fa* defines the best positions for waiting and defending as those that are close together and less dangerous but with more obstacles. The best areas for moving or attacking are where there is more distance, more danger, and fewer obstacles.

地 Ground Form 形

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

地Ground 形form 有has 通unobstructed 者subject, **1**
有Has 挂suspended 者subject,
有Has 支support 者subject,
有Has 隘narrow 者subject,
有Has 險obstructed 者subject,
有Has 遠distant 者subject.



SIX:

The number six 六 arises naturally from the three sets of opposites that define the three physical dimensions of the ground.

我I 可can 以by means of 往depart,
彼Mutually 可can 以by means of 來meeting,
曰Say 通unobstructed;
通Unobstructed 形form 者is,
先First 居reside 高high 陽south, sunny hillside,
利Advantage 糧provisions 道way 以by means
of 戰battle,
則Then 利advantage.

Chapter 10: Field Position

SUN TZU SAID:

I Some field positions are unobstructed.
Some field positions are entangling.
Some field positions are supporting.
Some field positions are constricted.
Some field positions give you a barricade.
Some field positions are spread out.

You can attack from some positions easily.
Other forces can meet you easily as well.
We call these unobstructed positions.
These positions are open.
On them, be the first to occupy a high, sunny area.
Put yourself where you can defend your supply routes.
Then you will have an advantage.



DEFINITIONS:

The chapter begins with more definitions. These definitions are hard to remember unless you learn their pattern.

DISASTER:

Sun Tzu uses the term disaster 難 to indicate the degradation of a position to the point where it becomes untenable and cannot support you or be defended.

可Can 以by means of 往depart,
難Disaster 以by means of 返return,
曰Say 挂suspended;
挂Suspended 形form 者is,
敵Enemy 無without 備preparation,
出Exit 而and yet 勝win 之it,
敵Enemy 若seems 有have 備preparation,
出Exit 而and yet 不no 勝win,
難Disaster 以by means of 返return,
不No 利advantage.

我I 出exit 而and yet 不no 利advantage,
彼Mutually 出exit 而and yet 不no 利advantage,
曰Say 支support;
支Support 形form 者is,
敵Enemy 雖although 利advantage 我I;
我I 無without 出exit 也also;
引Pull 而and yet 去remove 之it,
令Command 敵enemy 半half 出exit 而but 擊strike 之it,
利Advantage.

隘Narrow 形form 者is,
我I 先first 居reside 之it,
必Must 盈fill 之it 以by means of 待awaiting 敵enemy,
若Seems 敵enemy 先first 居reside 之it,
盈Full 而and yet 勿do not 從follow,
不Not 盈full 而and yet 從follow 之it.

¹⁴You can attack from some positions easily.
Disaster arises when you try to return to them.
These are entangling positions.
These field positions are one-sided.
Wait until your enemy is unprepared.
You can then attack from these positions and win.
Avoid a well-prepared enemy.
You will try to attack and lose.
Since you can't return, you will meet disaster.
These field positions offer no advantage.

REACTION:

The power of mastering strategy is that it gives you the tools to recognize common situations and know instantly how to react.

²⁴You cannot leave some positions without losing an advantage.
If the enemy leaves this ground, he also loses an advantage.
We call these supporting field positions.
These positions strengthen you.
The enemy may try to entice you away.
Still, hold your position.
You must entice the enemy to leave.
You then strike him as he is leaving.
These field positions offer an advantage.

³³Some field positions are constricted.
Get to these positions first.
You must fill these areas and await the enemy.
Sometimes, the enemy will reach them first.
If he fills them, do not follow him.
However, if he fails to fill them, you can go after him.

險Obstructed 形form 者is:
 我I 先first 居reside 之it,
 必Must 居reside 高high 陽south, sunny hillside 以by
 means of 待await 敵enemy,
 若Seems 敵enemy 先first 居reside 之it,
 引Pull 而and yet 去remove 之it,
 勿Do not 從follow 也also.

遠Distant 形form 者is,
 勢Influence 均fair,
 難Disaster 以by means of 挑choose 戰battle,
 戰Battle 而and yet 不no 利advantage.

凡All 此these 六six 者things,
 地Ground之's 道philosophy 也also,
 將General之's 至arrival 任assignment,
 不No 可can 不no 察examine 也also.

故Make 兵military 有have 走move 者is, 2
 有Have 弛relaxed 者subject,
 有Have 陷sink 者subject,
 有Have 崩collapse 者subject,
 有Have 亂disorder 者subject,
 有Have 北flee 者subject.

凡All 此these 六six 者things,
 非Weak 天heaven 地ground之's 災disaster,
 將General之's 過pass 也also.

SUBJECT:

*The character
 者 is usually
 translated as
 is but it is not
 the verb to be.
 Instead it is used
 to indicate the
 subject under
 the discussion.*

³⁹Some field positions give you a barricade.
Get to these positions first.
You must occupy their southern, sunny heights in order to
await the enemy.
Sometimes the enemy occupies these areas first.
If so, entice him away.
Never go after him.

⁴⁵Some field positions are too spread out.
Your force may seem equal to the enemy.
Still you will lose if you provoke a battle.
If you fight, you will not have any advantage.

⁴⁹These are the six types of field positions.
Each battleground has its own rules.
As a commander, you must know where to go.
You must examine each position closely.

2 Some armies can be outmaneuvered.
Some armies are too lax.
Some armies fall down.
Some armies fall apart.
Some armies are disorganized.
Some armies must retreat.

⁷Know all six of these weaknesses.
They create weak timing and disastrous positions.
They all arise from the army's commander.

TRAINING:

*Our Warrior Class
on-line training
teaches the
"warrior mind"
so that you can
recognize com-
mon situations
and respond
instinctively.*

夫Husband 勢force 均equal,
以By means of 一one 擊strike 十ten,
曰Say 走move.

吏Officers 弱weak 卒soldiers 強strong,
曰Say 弛relax.

卒Soldiers 強strong 吏officers 弱weak,
曰Say 陷sink.

大Big 吏officers 忿rage 而and yet 不no 服obey,
遇Meet 敵enemy 對hate 而and yet 自self 戰battle,
將General 不no 知knowledge 其this 能can,
曰Say 崩collapse.

將General 弱weak 不not 嚴strict,
教Teach 道philosophy 不not 明clear,
吏Officers 卒soldiers 無without 常rule,
視Show 兵war 縱vertical 橫horizontal,
曰Say 亂disorder.

GENERAL:

*The concept
general 將
means both the
commander and
a commander's
activities, that
is, making deci-
sions and giving
commands.*

將General 不no 能can 料predict 敵enemy,
以By means of 寡few 合join 衆crowd,
以By means of 弱weak 擊strike 強strong,
兵War 無without 選choice 鋒sword point,
曰Say 北flee.

¹⁰One general can command a force equal to the enemy.
Still his enemy outflanks him.
This means that his army can be outmaneuvered.

¹³Another can have strong soldiers but weak officers.
This means that his army is too lax.

¹⁵Another has strong officers but weak soldiers.
This means that his army will fall down.

¹⁷Another has subcommanders that are angry and defiant.
They attack the enemy and fight their own battles.
The commander cannot know the battlefield.
This means that his army will fall apart.

²¹Another general is weak and easygoing.
He fails to make his orders clear.
His officers and men lack direction.
This shows in his military formations.
This means that his army is disorganized.

²⁶Another general fails to predict the enemy.
He pits his small forces against larger ones.
His weak forces attack stronger ones.
He fails to pick his fights correctly.
This means that his army must retreat.

EQUATIONS:

These definitions are like mathematical equations of interconnecting ideas that anyone can master if given the proper training.

凡All 此these 六six 者things,
敗Defeat之's 道philosophy 也also,
將General之's 至arrive 任allow,
不No 能can 不no 察examine 也also.

夫Husband 地ground 形form 者is, 3
兵War之's 助assistance 也also.

料Predict 敵enemy 制overpower 勝victory,
計Plan 險obstructed 阨adverse 遠distant 近near,
上Above 將general之's 道philosophy 也also.

知Know 此here 而and yet 用use 戰battle 者is,
必Must 勝win,
不Not 知know 此here 而and yet 用use 戰battle 者is,
必Must 敗be defeated.

故Make 戰battle 道philosophy 必must 勝win;
主Ruler 曰say:
無Without 戰battle;
必Must 戰battle 可can 也also.

RULER:

The ruler 主
means manag-
ing the produc-
tive resources
of a nation, as a
general 將 man-
ages its compet-
itive resources.

戰Battle 道philosophy 不no 勝victory,
主Ruler 曰Say 必must 戰battle,
無Without 戰battle 可can 也also.

³¹You must know all about these six weaknesses.
You must understand the philosophies that lead to defeat.
When a general arrives, you can know what he will do.
You must study each general carefully.

3You must control your field position.
It will always strengthen your army.

³You must predict the enemy to overpower him and win.
You must analyze the obstacles, dangers, and distances.
This is the best way to command.

⁶Understand your field position before you meet opponents.
Then you will succeed.
You can fail to understand your field position and meet opponents.
Then you will fail.

¹⁰You must provoke battle when you will certainly win.
It doesn't matter what you are ordered.
The government may order you not to fight.
Despite that, you must always fight when you will win.

¹⁴Sometimes provoking a battle will lead to a loss.
The government may order you to fight.
Despite that, you must avoid battle when you will lose.

PRINCIPLES:

*We developed
the Science
of Strategy
Institute as a
resource to help
make learning
these principles
easy, interest-
ing, and fun.*

故Make 進advance 不no 求seek 名fame,
退Retreat 不no 避evade 罪crime,
唯Only 民people 是correct 保preserve,
而And yet 利advantage 於to 主ruler,
國Nation之's 賞treasure 也also.

視Consider as 卒soldiers 如comparable to 嬰infant 兒son, **4**
故Make 可can 與give 之of 赴attend 深deep 谿brook,
視Consider as 卒soldiers 如comparable to 愛love 子child,
故Make 可can 與give 之of 俱all 死death.

厚Generous 而and yet 不no 能can 使use,
愛Love 而and yet 不no 能can 令command,
亂Disorder 而and yet 不no 能can 治govern,
譬Compare 若seem 驕proud 子child,
不No 能can 用use 也also.

知Know 吾our 卒soldiers 之it 可can 以by 擊strike, **5**
而And yet 不no 知know 敵enemy之's 不no 可can 擊strike,
勝Victory 之of 半half 也also;
知Know 敵enemy之's 可can 擊strike,
而And yet 不no 知know 吾our 卒soldiers 之it 不no 可can
以by means of 擊strike,
勝Victory 之of 半half 也also;
知know 敵enemy之's 可can 擊strike,
知Know 吾our 卒soldiers 之it 可can 以by 擊strike,
而And yet 不no 知know 地ground 形form之's 不no 可can
以by means of 戰battle,
勝Victory 之's 半half 也also.

¹⁷You must advance without desiring praise.
You must retreat without fearing shame.
The only correct move is to preserve your troops.
This is how you serve your country.
This is how you reward your nation.

4 Think of your soldiers as little children.
You can make them follow you into a deep river.
Treat them as your beloved children.
You can lead them all to their deaths.

⁵Some leaders are generous but cannot use their men.
They love their men but cannot command them.
Their men are unruly and disorganized.
These leaders create spoiled children.
Their soldiers are useless.

5 You may know what your soldiers will do in an attack.
You may not know if the enemy is vulnerable to attack.
You will then win only half the time.
You may know that the enemy is vulnerable to attack.
You may not know if your men have the capability of attacking him.
You will still win only half the time.
You may know that the enemy is vulnerable to attack.
You may know that your men are ready to attack.
You may not, however, know how to position yourself in the field for battle.
You will still win only half the time.

故Make 知know 兵war 者is,
動Act 而and yet 不no 迷confusion,
舉Lift 而and yet 不no 窮limit.

故Make 曰say:
知Know 彼each other 知know 己self,
勝Victory 乃consequently 不no 殆dangerous,
知Know 天heaven 知know 地earth,
勝Victory 乃consequently 能can 全complete.



CONFUSION:

The concept of confusion 迷 indicates both a lack of clear direction and a lack of consistency. By definition, an action cannot go in two opposing directions at once.

¹¹You must know how to make war.
You can then act without confusion.
You can attempt anything.

¹⁴We say:
Know the enemy and know yourself.
Your victory will be painless.
Know the weather and the field.
Your victory will be complete.



COMPLETION:

*Everyone tries
to use strategy,
but only those
skilled in its
methods are
successful. A
single missing
piece prevents
you from com-
pleting a puzzle.*

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter ten, Sun Tzu discusses the use of temporary positions in building relationships with voters. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

2.3 Personal Interactions: making progress through personal interactions.

2.3.1 Action and Reaction: how we advance based on how others reaction to our actions.

2.3.2 Reaction Unpredictability: why we can never exactly predict the react of others.

2.3.3 Likely Reactions: the range of potential reactions in gathering information.

2.3.4 Using Questions: using questions in gathering information and predicting reactions.

4.5 Opportunity Surfaces: judging potential opportunities from a distance.

4.5.1 Surface Area: choosing opportunities on the basis of their size.

4.5.2 Surface Barriers: how to select opportunities by evaluating obstacles.

4.5.3 Surface Holding Power: sticky and slippery situations.

4.6 Six Benchmarks: simplifying the comparisons of opportunities.

- 4.6.1 Spread-Out Conditions: recognizing opportunities that are too large.
- 4.6.2 Constricted Conditions: identifying and using constricted positions.
- 4.6.3 Barricaded Conditions: the issues related to the extremes of obstacles.
- 4.6.4 Wide-Open Conditions: the issues related to an absence of barriers.
- 4.6.5 Fixed Conditions: positions with extreme holding power.
- 4.6.6 Sensitive Conditions: positions with no holding power on pursuing opportunities.
- 4.7 Competitive Weakness: how certain opportunities can bring out our weaknesses.
 - 4.7.1 Command Weaknesses: the character flaws of leaders and how to exploit them.
 - 4.7.2 Group Weaknesses: organizational weakness and where groups fail.
- 4.8 Climate Support: choosing new positions based on future changes.
- 4.9 Opportunity Mapping: two-dimensional tool for comparing opportunity probabilities.



Scattering

Easy.

Disputed

Open

Intersecting

Dangerous.

Confined

Bad

Deadly

Chapter 11

九地

Types of Terrain: Reacting to Situations

The term translated as “terrain” or “ground” here (*di*) also means “situation.” This chapter describes nine dynamic situations that arise during a competitive campaign. In the circumstances, the movement, position, and relationship of forces, supporting and opposing, determines the situation on the ground.

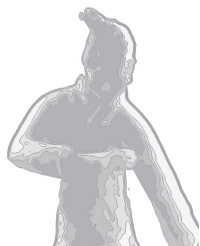
Each of these stages in the development of a campaign has its own clear tactical focus. As the effort continues toward winning a profitable position, you have to adjust your tactics to match the stage of your campaign’s development. This chapter’s first section describes the nine campaign stages and the specific tactical responses that they require.

The longer a given campaign takes, the more difficult the challenges that it faces. The nine campaign stages fall into three general groups. Early stages demand focus and concentration. Middle stages demand good management and organization. Later stages demand creativity and perseverance.

The evolution of a campaign through these stages depends largely on human psychology. People respond in a predictable way as campaigns continue without clear resolution.

Knowledge and unity are the keys to successfully concluding a campaign. Over time, you must especially develop the ability to recover from setbacks. Because you never know how long a campaign can take, you need to set the proper tone at the very start.

九 Nine Grounds 地



GROUND:

The concept of ground 地 also means terrain, situation, and condition, which is why it is used to describe so many aspects of a position.

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

用Use 兵war之's 法methods, I
 有Have 散scattered 地ground,
 有Have 輕easy 地ground,
 有Have 争contentious 地ground,
 有Have 來meeting 地ground,
 有Have 衢highway 地ground,
 有Have 重serious 地ground,
 有Have 圯ruined 地ground,
 有Have 圍surround 地ground,
 有Have 死death 地ground.

諸Various 侯noblemen 自self 戰battle 其this
 地ground 者is,
 爲Become 散scattered 地ground.

入Enter 人men之's 地ground 不no 深deep 者is,
 爲Become 輕easy 地ground.

我I 得obtain 則then 利advantage,
 彼Others 得obtain 亦also 利advantage 者is,
 爲Become 争contentious 地ground.

Chapter 11: Types of Terrain

SUN TZU SAID:

I Use the art of war.
Know when the terrain will scatter you.
Know when the terrain will be easy.
Know when the terrain will be disputed.
Know when the terrain is open.
Know when the terrain is intersecting.
Know when the terrain is dangerous.
Know when the terrain is bad.
Know when the terrain is confined.
Know when the terrain is deadly.

¹¹Warring parties must sometimes fight inside their own territory.
This is scattering terrain.

¹³When you enter hostile territory, your penetration is shallow.
This is easy terrain.

¹⁵Some terrain gives you an advantageous position.
But it gives others an advantageous position as well.
This will be disputed terrain.



TERRAIN:

This chapter describes both conditions on the ground and situations that arise over time as you advance your position.

我I 可can 以by means of 往go forward,
彼Others 可can 以by means of 來join 者is,
爲Become 來meeting 地ground.

諸Various 侯noblemen 之's 地ground 三three 屬belong,
先First 至arrive 而and yet 得obtain 天heaven 下below
衆crowd 者is,
爲Become 衢highway 地ground.

入Enter 人men 之's 地ground 深deeply,
背Back 城city 邑city state 多many 者is,
爲Become 重serious 地ground.

山Mountain 林forest,
險Danger 阻block,
沮Prevention 澤pond,
凡All 難disaster 行march 之's 道way 者is,
爲Become 圯ruined 地ground.

所Place 由from 入enter 者is 隘narrow,
所Place 從follow 歸return home 者is 迂close in,
彼Other 寡few 可can 以by means of 擊strike 吾we 之of
衆crowd 者is,
爲Become 圍surround 地ground.

疾Swift 戰battle 則then 存exist,
不No 疾swift 戰battle 則then 亡die 者is,
爲Become 死death 地ground.

¹⁸You can use some terrain to advance easily.
Others can advance along with you.
This is open terrain.

²¹Everyone shares access to a given area.
The first one to arrive there can gather a larger group than anyone else.
This is intersecting terrain.

²⁴You can penetrate deeply into hostile territory.
Then many hostile cities are behind you.
This is dangerous terrain.

²⁷There are mountain forests.
There are dangerous obstructions.
There are reservoirs.
Everyone confronts these obstacles on a campaign.
They make bad terrain.

³²In some areas, the entry passage is narrow.
You are closed in as you try to get out of them.
In this type of area, a few people can effectively attack your much larger force.
This is confined terrain.

³⁶You can sometimes survive only if you fight quickly.
You will die if you delay.
This is deadly terrain.

是Correct 故make 散scattered 地ground 則then 無without
 戰battle,
 輕Easy 地ground 則then 無without 止stopping,
 争Contentious 地ground 則then 無without 攻attacking,
 來Meeting 地ground 則then 無without 絕breaking off,
 衢Highway 地ground 則then 交meet 和harmony,
 重Serious 地ground 則then 掠plunder,
 圯Ruined 地ground 則then 行march,
 圍Surround 地ground 則then 謀scheme,
 死Death 地ground 則then 戰battle.

古Ancient 之of 所place 謂call 善good 用use 兵war 者is, 2
 能Can 使use 敵enemy 人men 前front 後behind 不no
 相examine 及reach,
 衆Crowd 寡few 不no 相examine 恃rely on,
 貴Sufficient 賤deficient 不no 相examine 救rescue,
 上Above 下below 不no 相examine 收collect,
 卒Soldier 離leave 而and yet 不no 集assemble,
 兵War 合join 而and yet 不no 齊orderly.

DEATH:

The concept translated as death 死 also means deadly, desperate, to kill, and final. It is the final stage in all campaigns.

合Join 於to 利advantage 而and yet 動move,
 不No 合join 於to 利advantage 而and yet
 止stop.

敢Daring 拘asks:
 “敵Enemy 衆crowd 齊orderly 而and yet
 將general 來arrive,
 待Wait 之it 若if 何what?”

³⁹To be successful, you must control scattering terrain by avoiding battle.

Control easy terrain by not stopping.

Control disputed terrain by not attacking.

Control open terrain by staying with the enemy's forces.

Control intersecting terrain by uniting with your allies.

Control dangerous terrain by plundering.

Control bad terrain by keeping on the move.

Control confined terrain by using surprise.

Control deadly terrain by fighting.

2 Go to an area that is known to be good for waging war.

Use it to cut off the enemy's contact between his front and back lines.

Prevent his small parties from relying on his larger force.

Stop his strong divisions from rescuing his weak ones.

Prevent his officers from getting their men together.

Chase his soldiers apart to stop them from amassing.

Harass them to prevent their ranks from forming.

⁸When joining battle gives you an advantage, you must do it.

When it isn't to your benefit, you must avoid it.

¹⁰A daring soldier may ask:

"A large, organized enemy army and its general are coming.

What do I do to prepare for them?"

TEXT BLOCKS:

Each new block of text (indicated by the large numbers) describes each "terrain" in more detail. The text assumes the context.

曰Say:
“先First 奪seize 其this 所place 愛love,
則Then 聽listen 矣will;
軍Army之's 情condition 主ruler 速speed,
乘Multiply by 人men之's 不no 及reach,
由From 不no 虞worry 之of 道philosophy,
攻Attack 其this 所place 不no 戒guard 也also.”

凡All 爲become 客guest之's 道philosophy, 3
深Deeply 入enter 則then 專concentrate,
主Ruler 人men 不no 克repress.

掠Plunder 於to 饒abundant 野countryside,
三Three 軍armies 足sufficient 食food.

謹Caution 養provide for 而and yet 無without 勞weariness,
併Side-by-side 氣spirit 積accumulates 力force,
運Transport 兵war 計plans 謀scheme,
爲Become 不no 可can 測measure,
投Throw 之it 無without 所place 往depart for,
死Dead 且and 不no 北flee,
死Dead 焉how 不no 得obtain,
士Officer 人men 盡exhaust 力power.

兵War 士officers 甚very 陷sink 則then 不no 懼dread,
無Without 所place 往toward 則then 固sturdy,
深Deep 入enter 則then 拘arrest,
不No 得obtain 已finish 則then 鬥struggle.

¹³Tell him:

“First seize an area that the enemy must have.

Then he will pay attention to you.

Mastering speed is the essence of war.

Take advantage of a large enemy’s inability to keep up.

Use a philosophy of avoiding difficult situations.

Attack the area where he doesn’t expect you.”

3You must use the philosophy of an invader.
Invade deeply and then concentrate your forces.
This controls your men without oppressing them.

⁴Get your supplies from the riches of the territory.
It is sufficient to supply your whole army.

⁶Take care of your men and do not overtax them.
Your esprit de corps increases your momentum.
Keep your army moving and plan for surprises.
Make it difficult for the enemy to count your forces.
Position your men where there is no place to run.
They will then face death without fleeing.
They will find a way to survive.
Your officers and men will fight to their utmost.

¹⁴Military officers who are committed lose their fear.
When they have nowhere to run, they must stand firm.
Deep in enemy territory, they are captives.
Since they cannot escape, they will fight.

是Correct 故make,
 其This 兵war 不no 修fix 而and yet 戒guard against,
 不No 求strive for 而and yet 得obtain,
 不No 約bind 而and yet 親intimate,
 不No 令command 而and yet 信trust.

禁Prohibit 祥guessing 至stop 疑doubt,
 至Stop 死death 無without 所place 之go.

吾Our 士officer 無without 餘surplus 財wealth,
 非Wrong 惡hate 貨money 也also;
 無Without 餘surplus 命life,
 非Wrong 惡hate 壽longevity 也also.

令Command 發launch 之of 日day,
 士Officers 卒soldiers 坐sit 者is 涕tears 霑moisten 襟lapel,
 偃Cease 卧lie down 者is 涕tears 交meet 頤cheeks,
 投Throw 之it 無without 所place 往depart for,
 則Then 諸various 劒cut 之of 勇brave 也also.

SNAKE:

The use of the term snake 蛇 is an analogy for an army on the march on a long trail and for the twisting path of the campaign itself.

故Make 善good 用use 兵war 者is, 4
 譬Compare 如like 率instant 然reflex,
 率Instant 然reflex 者is 常ordinary
 山Mountain 之's 蛇snake 也also,
 擊Strike 其this 首head 則then 尾tail 至
 arrive,
 擊Strike 其this 尾tail 則then 首head
 至arrive,
 擊Strike 其this 中middle 則then 首head 尾
 tail 俱all 至arrive.

¹⁸Commit your men completely.
Without being posted, they will be on guard.
Without being asked, they will get what is needed.
Without being forced, they will be dedicated.
Without being given orders, they can be trusted.

²³Stop them from guessing by removing all their doubts.
Stop them from dying by giving them no place to run.

²⁵Your officers may not be rich.
Nevertheless, they still desire plunder.
They may die young.
Nevertheless, they still want to live forever.

²⁹You must order the time of attack.
Officers and men may sit and weep until their lapels are wet.
When they stand up, tears may stream down their cheeks.
Put them in a position where they cannot run.
They will show the greatest courage under fire.

4 Make good use of war.
This demands instant reflexes.
You must develop these instant reflexes.
Act like an ordinary mountain snake.
If people strike your head then stop them with
your tail.
If they strike your tail then stop them with your
head.
If they strike your middle then use both your head
and tail.

DETAIL:

*The point of
these three
long chapters is
that when you
diagnose your
situation, you
know instantly
how to react ap-
propriately.*

敢Daring 拘asks:
“兵War 可can 使use 如like 率instant 然reflex?”
曰Say:
“可can.”

夫Husband 吳boast 人men 與give 越exceed 人men
相examine 惡hate 也also.
當Regard as 其this 同together 舟boat 濟ford river 而and
yet 遇run into 風wind,
其This 相examine 救rescue 也also 如comparable to 左left
右right 手hand.

是Correct 故make,
方Square 馬horse 埋bury 輪wheels,
未Not yet 足sufficient 恃rely on 也also,
齊Orderly 勇brave 若compare to 一one,
政Government 之's 道philosophy 也also;
Tough 柔tender 皆together 得obtain,
地Ground 之's 理administration 也also.

故Make 善good 用use 兵war 者is,
攜Carry 手hand 若seem 使use 一one 人man,
不No 得obtain 已finish 也also.

將General 軍army 之's 事profession, 5
靜Tranquil 以by means of 幽secluded,
正Proper 以by means of 治govern,
能Can 愚fool 士officers 卒soldiers 之's 耳ear 目eye,
使Use 民people 無without 知knowing.

⁸A daring soldier asks:

“Can any army imitate these instant reflexes?”

We answer:

“It can.”

¹²To command and get the most out of proud people, you must study adversity.

People work together when they are in the same boat during a storm.

In this situation, one rescues the other just as the right hand helps the left.

¹⁵Use adversity correctly.

Tether your horses and bury your wagon’s wheels.

Still, you can’t depend on this alone.

An organized force is braver than lone individuals.

This is the art of organization.

Put the tough and weak together.

You must also use the terrain.

²²Make good use of war.

Unite your men as one.

Never let them give up.

5 The commander must be a military professional.

This requires confidence and detachment.

You must maintain dignity and order.

You must control what your men see and hear.

They must follow you without knowing your plans.

易Change 其this 事profession,
革Transform 其this 謀scheme,
使Use 人men 無without 識knowledge.

易Change 其this 居residence,
迂Detour 其this 途road,
使Use 人men 不no 得obtain 慮strategy.

帥Commander 與give 之of 期period,
如Compare to 登climbing 高high 而and yet 至remove
其this 梯ladder,
帥Commander 與give 之of 深deep 入enter 之of 諸various
侯noblemen 之s 地ground,
而And yet 發launch 其this 機opportunity.

若Seem 驅expel 羣herd 羊sheep,
驅Expel 而and yet 往depart,
驅Expel 而and yet 來meeting,
莫Not 知know 所place 之go,
收Collect 三three 軍armies 之of 衆crowd,
投Throw 之it 於to 險obstruction,
此Here 將general 軍army 之s 事profession 也also.

九Nine 地grounds 之of 變change,
屈Bend 伸stretch 之of 利advantage,
人Men 情love 之of 理administrate,
不No 可can 不no 察examine 也also.

⁶You can reinvent your men's roles.
You can change your plans.
You can use your men without their understanding.

⁹You must shift your campgrounds.
You must take detours from the ordinary routes.
You must use your men without giving them your strategy.

¹²A commander provides what is needed now.
This is like climbing high and being willing to kick away your ladder.
You must be able to lead your men deeply into different surrounding territory.
And yet, you can discover the opportunity to win.

¹⁶You must drive men like a flock of sheep.
You must drive them to march.
You must drive them to attack.
You must never let them know where you are headed.
You must unite them into a great army.
You must then drive them against all opposition.
This is the job of a true commander.

²³You must adapt to the different terrain.
You must adapt to find an advantage.
You must manage your people's affections.
You must study all these skills.

凡All 爲become 客guest 之's 道philosophy, 6
 深Deep 則then 專concentrate,
 淺Shallow 則then 散scatter;
 至Remove 國nation 越transverse 境boundary 而and yet
 帥commander 者is,
 絕Break off 地ground 也also;
 四Four 徹unobstructed 者is,
 衢Highway 地ground 也also;
 入Enter 深deeply 者is,
 重Serious 地ground 也also;
 入Enter 淺shallow 者is,
 輕Easy 地ground 也also;
 背Back 固walls 前front 隘narrow 者is,
 圍surround 地ground 也also;
 無Without 所place 往depart for 者is,
 死Death 地ground 也also.

是Correct 故make 散scatter 地ground 吾our 將general
 一one 其this 志ambition;
 輕Easy 地ground 吾our 將general 使use 之it 屬belong;
 争Contend 地ground 吾our 將general 趨tend 其this 後tarry,
 來Meeting 地ground 吾our 將general 謹caution 其this 守defend,
 衢Highway 地ground 吾our 將general 固solid 其this 結knot;
 重Serious 地ground 吾our 將general 從follow 其this 食food;
 圯Ruined 地ground 吾our 將general 進advance 其this 途road;
 圍Surround 地ground 吾our 將general 塞clog 其this
 闕open door;
 死Death 地ground 吾our 將general 示teach 之it 以by
 means of 不no 命life.

6 Always use the philosophy of invasion.
Deep invasions concentrate your forces.
Shallow invasions scatter your forces.
When you leave your country and cross the border, you must take control.
This is always critical ground.
You can sometimes move in any direction.
This is always intersecting ground.
You can penetrate deeply into a territory.
This is always dangerous ground.
You penetrate only a little way.
This is always easy ground.
Your retreat is closed and the path ahead tight.
This is always confined ground.
There is sometimes no place to run.
This is always deadly ground.

¹⁶To use scattering terrain correctly, you must inspire your men's devotion.

On easy terrain, you must keep in close communication.
On disputed terrain, you try to hamper the enemy's progress.
On open terrain, you must carefully defend your chosen position.
On intersecting terrain, you must solidify your alliances.
On dangerous terrain, you must ensure your food supplies.
On bad terrain, you must keep advancing along the road.
On confined terrain, you must stop information leaks from your headquarters.
On deadly terrain, you must show what you can do by killing the enemy.

故Make兵war之's情feelings,
圍Surround則then禦protect,
不No得obtain已finish則then鬥struggle,
逼Force則then從follow.

是Correct故cause不no知knowledge諸various
侯noblemen之's謀scheme者is,
不No能can豫in advance交meet.

不No知knowledge山mountain林forest,險danger阻block,
沮prevention澤pond之's形form者is,
不No能can行march軍army,
不No用use鄉hometown導guide者is,
不No能can得obtain地ground利advantage.

此Here三three者are,
不No知knowledge一one,
非Wrong霸dominate主ruler之's兵war也also.

NATION:

*The term nation
國 refers to
the productive
resources of
a country, as
distinct from
the army 軍 as
its competitive
resources.*

夫Husband霸dominate主ruler之's兵war,
伐Cutdown大big國nation則then其this
衆crowd不no得obtain聚assembly,
威Fear of authority加add於to敵enemy,
則Then其this來meeting不no得obtain
合join.

²⁵Make your men feel like an army.
Surround them and they will defend themselves.
If they cannot avoid it, they will fight.
If they are under pressure, they will obey.

7 Do the right thing when you don't know your different enemies' plans.
Don't attempt to meet them.

³You don't know the position of mountain forests, dangerous obstructions, and reservoirs?
Then you cannot march the army.
You don't have local guides?
You won't get any of the benefits of the terrain.

⁷There are many factors in war.
You may lack knowledge of any one of them.
If so, it is wrong to take a nation into war.

¹⁰You must be able to control your government's war.
If you divide a big nation, it will be unable to put together a large force.
Increase your enemy's fear of your ability.
Prevent his forces from getting together and organizing.

ADAPTABILITY:

When Sun Tzu says we must know all factors to be successful, he is telling us that we have to study them, not just be exposed to them once.

是Correct 故cause 不no 争struggle 天heaven 下below之's
來meeting;
不No 養provide for 天heaven 下below之's 權authority,
信Trust 己self之's 私selfish,
威Fear of authority 加add 於to 敵enemy,
故Make 其this 城city 可can 拔pull out,
其This 國nation 可can 隳fall.

施Bestow 無without 法method 之of 賞reward,
懸Suspend 無without 政government之's 令command,
犯Commit 三three 軍army之's 衆crowd,
若Seem 使use 一one 人man.

犯Commit 之it 以by means of 事profession,
勿Do not 告report 以by means of 言speak;
犯Commit 之it 以by means of 利advantage,
勿Do not 告report 以by means of 害harm;
投Launch 之it 亡death 地ground 然however 後fall behind
存exist,
陷Submerge 之it 亡death 地ground 然however 後fall
behind 生born;

夫Husband 衆crowd 陷sink 於to 害misfortune,
然However 後fall behind 能can 爲become 勝victory 敗defeat,
故Make 爲become 兵war之's 事profession;
在Exist at 順arrange 詳detailed 敵enemy之's 意intention,
併Side by side 敵enemy 一one 向direction,
千Thousand 里miles 殺kill 將general,
是Correct 謂mean 巧skillful 能can 爲become 事profession.

¹⁴Do the right thing and do not arrange outside alliances before their time.

You will not have to assert your authority prematurely.

Trust only yourself and your self-interest.

This increases the enemy's fear of you.

You can make one of his allies withdraw.

His whole nation can fall.

²⁰Distribute rewards without worrying about having a system.

Halt without the government's command.

Attack with the whole strength of your army.

Use your army as if it were a single man.

²⁴Attack with skill.

Do not discuss it.

Attack when you have an advantage.

Do not talk about the dangers.

When you can launch your army into deadly ground, even if it stumbles, it can still survive.

You can be weakened in a deadly battle and yet be stronger afterward.

³⁰Even a large force can fall into misfortune.

If you fall behind, however, you can still turn defeat into victory.

You must use the skills of war.

To survive, you must adapt yourself to your enemy's purpose.

You must stay with him no matter where he goes.

It may take a thousand miles to kill the general.

If you correctly understand him, you can find the skill to do it.

是Correct 故cause 政government 舉lift 之of 日day, 8
 夷Barbarians 關close off 折break 符accord,
 無Without 途road 其this 使envoy,
 厲Encourage 於to 廊corridor 廟temple 之's 上above,
 以By means of 誅execute 其this 事profession,
 敵Enemy 人men 開open 闡close,
 必Must 亟urgently 入enter 之it.

先First 其this 所place 愛love,
 微Slight 與give 之of 期period,
 踐Trample 墨ink 隨follow 敵enemy,
 以By means of 決decision 戰battle 事profession.



是Correct 故cause 始start 如comparably to
 處position 女woman,
 敵Enemy 人men 開open 户door,
 後Afterward 如comparable 脫skin 兔rabbit,
 敵Enemy 不no 及reach 拒refuse.

LOVE:

The concept of love 愛 is consistently represented by Sun Tzu as a weakness, a dangerous excess of a necessary characteristic of a leader, caring for people.



8 Manage your government correctly at the start of a war.
Close your borders and tear up passports.
Block the passage of envoys.
Encourage the halls of power to rise to the occasion.
You must use any means to put an end to politics.
Your enemy's people will leave you an opening.
You must instantly invade through it.

⁸Immediately seize a place that they love.
Do it quickly.
Trample any border to pursue the enemy.
Use your judgment about when to fight.

¹²Doing the right thing at the start of war is like
approaching a woman.
Your enemy's men must open the door.
After that, you should act like a streaking rabbit.
The enemy will be unable to catch you.



SEDUCTION:

*What situation
better describes
strategic com-
petition based
on position-
ing yourself in
people's minds
better than
romantic seduc-
tion?*

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter eleven, Sun Tzu explains instant situation response. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

6.0 Situation Response: selecting the actions most appropriate to a situation.

6.1 Situation Recognition: situation recognition in making advances.

6.1.1 Conditioned Reflexes: how we develop automatic, instantaneous responses.

6.1.2 Prioritizing Conditions: parsing complex competitive conditions into simple responses.

6.2 Campaign Evaluation: how we justify continued investment in an ongoing campaign.

6.2.1 Campaign Flow: seeing campaigns as a series of situations that flow logically from one to another.

6.2.2 Campaign Goals: assessing the value of a campaign by a larger mission.

6.3 Campaign Patterns: how knowing campaign stages gives us insight into our situation.

6.3.1 Early-Stage Situations: the common situations that arise the earliest in campaigns.

6.3.2 Middle-Stage Situations: how progress creates transitional situations in campaigns.

6.3.3 Late-Stage Situations: understanding the final and most dangerous stages of campaigns.

6.4 Nine Situations: the nine common competitive situations.

6.4.1 Dissipating Situations: situations where defensive unity is destroyed.

6.4.2 Easy Situations: recognizing situations of easy initial progress.

6.4.3 Contentious Situations: identifying situations that invite conflict.

- 6.4.4 Open Situations: recognizing situations that are races without a course.
- 6.4.5 Intersecting Situations: recognizing situations that bring people together.
- 6.4.6 Serious Situations: identifying situations where resources can be cut off.
- 6.4.7 Difficult Situations: recognizing situations where serious barriers must be overcome.
- 6.4.8 Limited Situations: identifying situations defined by a bottleneck.
- 6.4.9 Desperate Situations: identifying situations where destruction is possible.
- 6.5 Nine Responses: using the best responses to the nine common competitive situations.
 - 6.5.1 Dissipating Response: responding to dissipation by the use of offense as defense.
 - 6.5.2 Easy Response: responding to easy situations by overcoming complacency.
 - 6.5.3 Contentious Response: responding to contentious situations by knowing how to avoid conflict.
 - 6.5.4 Open Response: responding to open situations by keeping up with the opposition.
 - 6.5.5 Intersecting Response: the formation of situational alliances.
 - 6.5.6 Serious Response: responding to serious situations by finding immediate income.
 - 6.5.7 Difficult Response: the role of persistence in responding to difficult situations.
 - 6.5.8 Limited Response: the need for secret speed in limited situations.
 - 6.5.9 Desperate Response: using all our resources in responding to desperate situations.
- 6.6 Campaign Pause: knowing when to stop advancing a position.



Chapter 12

火攻

Fire Strike – Attacking with Fire

Although Sun Tzu uses this chapter to cover a specific weapon, fire, its broader subject is using any weapon, with an emphasis on leveraging forces in the environment as weapons. Fire (*huo*) is a useful analogy for broad, indiscriminate attacks. Like many such weapons, fire is a danger both to the target and to the attacker. Sun Tzu uses the Chinese term *gong*, translated as “attack,” in many ways. Sometimes, he means moving into new areas, other, hampering opponents. Here, he means attacking opponents with a weapon.

Fire is an environmental weapon. We can only start a fire if the conditions in the environment—that is, on the ground and in heaven—support it. So we must choose the proper ground for fire attacks. More importantly, we don’t control fire once it is started. Its direction, speed, and duration depend on factors of climate, which are beyond our control, but which we can observe.

In describing environmental attacks, Sun Tzu identifies five different targets for these attacks. Though enumerated as targets for fire, they illustrate the five categories of targets for attack by any type of weapon. These five targets are listed in priority from the least important to the most important.

The most important aspects of environmental attacks are how we follow up if we are attacking, or how we respond if we are attacked. Sun Tzu offers five approaches that depend on how the fire attack is waged and the situations that develop from the attack.

火 Fire Strike 攻

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

凡All 火fire 攻attacks 有have 五five:]

一1. 曰Say 火fire 人men,

二2. 曰Say 火fire 糧provisions,

三3. 曰Say 火fire 輜supply wagons,

四4. 曰Say 火fire 庫houses,

五5. 曰Say 火fire 隊group.

行Do 火fire 必must 有have 因cause,

因Cause 必must 素raw material 具prepare.

發Launch 火fire 有have 時season,

起Begin 火fire 有have 日day.



FIRE:

The element of fire 火 is one of the five classical elements of Chinese science, but Sun Tzu explains it using his element of climate.

時Season 者situation,

天Heaven之s 燥dry 也also.

日Day 者situation,

月Month 在during 箕grasses 壁wall 翼wing 軫cart 也also.

凡All 此here 四four 宿constellation 者situation,

風Wind 起begin 之of 日day 也also.

Chapter 12: Attacking With Fire

SUN TZU SAID:

I There are five ways of attacking with fire.
The first is burning troops.
The second is burning supplies.
The third is burning supply transport.
The fourth is burning storehouses.
The fifth is burning camps.

⁷To make fire, you must have the resources.
To build a fire, you must prepare the raw materials.

⁹To attack with fire, you must be in the right season.
To start a fire, you must have the time.

¹¹Choose the right season.
The weather must be dry.

¹³Choose the right day.
Pick a season when the grass is as high as the side
of a cart.

¹⁵Choose the right time of day.
You want days when the wind rises in the morning.



ENVIRONMENT:

The rules in this chapter apply to all weapons, but they are tailored for "environmental" weapons that leverage time.

凡All 火fire 攻attacks, 2
必Must 因cause 五five 火fires 之'變transform 而and yet
應comply 之it.

火Fire 發launch 於to 內internal,
則Then 早early 應comply 之it 於to 外external.

火Fire 發launch 而and yet 其this 兵war 靜tranquil 者is,
待Wait 而and yet 勿do not 攻attack.

極Extreme 其this 火fire 央power,
可Can 從follow 而and yet 從follow 之it,
不No 可can 從follow 而and yet 止stop.

火Fire 可can 發launch 於to 外external,
無Without 待wait 於to 內internal,
以By means of 時time 發launch 之it.

火Fire 發launch 上upper 風wind,
無Without 攻attack 下lower 風wind,
晝Daytime 風wind 久long time,
夜Night 風wind 止stop.

TRANSFORM:

*The character
transform 變
also means
change, and it is
the key aspect
of climate, just
as form 形 is
the key aspect of
ground.*

凡All 軍army 必must 知know 有have 五five
火fires 之'變transform,
以By means of 數several 守guard 之it.

2 Everyone attacks with fire.

You must create five different situations with fire and be able to adjust to them.

³You start a fire inside the enemy's camp.
Then attack the enemy's periphery.

⁵You launch a fire attack, but the enemy remains calm.
Wait and do not attack.

⁷The fire reaches its height.
Follow its path if you can.
If you can't follow it, stay where you are.

¹⁰Spreading fires on the outside of camp can kill.
You can't always get fire inside the enemy's camp.
Take your time in spreading it.

¹³Set the fire when the wind is at your back.
Don't attack into the wind.
Daytime winds last a long time.
Night winds fade quickly.

¹⁷Every army must know how to adjust to
the five possible attacks by fire.
Use many men to guard against them.

WEAPONS:

Sun Tzu does not teach about using specific weapons because he knew that all physical weapons would become outdated.

故Make 以by 火fire 佐assist 攻attack 者is 明bright, 3
 以By means of 水water 佐assist 攻attack 者is 强powerful,
 水Water 可can 以by means of 絕break-off,
 不No 可can 以by means of 奪seize.

夫Husband 戰battle 勝victory 攻attack 取obtain, 4
 而And yet 不No 修fix 其this 功achievement 者is
 凶unlucky,
 命Order 曰say 費waste 留remain.

故Make 曰say:
 明bright 主ruler 慮strategize 之it,
 良Good 將general 修fix 之it,
 非Weak 利advantage 不no 動act,
 非Weak 得obtain 不no 用use,
 非Weak 危danger 不no 戰battle.

主Ruler 不no 可can 以by means of 怒fury 而and yet
 興prosper 師troops,
 將General 不no 可can 以by means of
 愠anger 而and yet 故make 戰battle;
 合Join 於to 利advantage 而and yet 動act,
 不No 合join 於to 利advantage 而and yet 止
 stop.

EMOTION:

The personal characteristic associated with climate is emotion, and fire is specifically associated with anger 愠 and fury 怒.

3 When you use fire to assist your attacks, you are clever.
Water can add force to an attack.
You can also use water to disrupt an enemy.
It does not, however, take his resources.

4 You win in battle by getting the opportunity to attack.
It is dangerous if you fail to study how to accomplish this achievement.
As commander, you cannot waste your opportunities.

⁴We say:

A wise leader plans success.

A good general studies it.

If there is little to be gained, don't act.

If there is little to win, do not use your men.

If there is no danger, don't fight.

¹⁰As leader, you cannot let your anger interfere with the success of your forces.

As commander, you cannot let yourself become enraged before you go to battle.

Join the battle when it is in your advantage to act.

If there is no advantage in joining a battle, stay put.

RESPONSE:

If people are not taught how to respond to situations, they respond emotionally. The goal of strategy is to respond appropriately.

怒Fury 可can 以by means of 復recover 喜happiness,
 愠Anger 可can 以by means of 復recover 悅joy,
亡Dead 國nation 不no 可can 以by means of 復recover 存live,
 死Dead 者is 不no 可can 以by means of 復recover 生birth.

故Make 明bright 主ruler 周caution 之one,
 良Good 將general 警warn 之one.

此Here 安peaceful 國nation 全whole 軍army 之's
 道philosophy 也also.

◆ ◆ ◆



RECOVER:

*The character
recover 復 indi-
cates the ability
to return to a
previous state,
which is easy
with emotional
(climate) states,
but impossible
in matters of life
and death.*

¹⁴Anger can change back into happiness.
Rage can change back into joy.
A nation once destroyed cannot be brought back to life.
Dead men do not return to the living.

¹⁸This fact must make a wise leader cautious.
A good general is on guard.

²⁰Your philosophy must be to keep the nation peaceful and the
army intact.



DECISIONS:

*Mastering
the science of
strategy leads to
better decisions
because you will
know a whole
range of
responses and
will have to rely
less on your
emotions.*

Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In chapter twelve, Sun Tzu discusses the use of environmental weapons. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

9.0 Understanding Vulnerability: the use of common environmental attacks.

9.1 Climate Vulnerability: our vulnerability to environmental crises arising from change.

9.1.1 Climate Rivals: how changing conditions create opponents.

9.1.2 Threat Development: how changing conditions create environmental threats.

9.2 Points of Vulnerability: our points of vulnerability during an environmental crisis.

9.2.1 Personnel Risk: the vulnerability of key individuals.

9.2.2 Immediate Resource Risk: the vulnerability of the resources required for immediate use.

9.2.3 Transportation/Communication Risk: how firestorms choke normal channels of movement and communication.

9.2.4 Asset Risk: the threats to our fixed assets.

9.2.5 Organizational Risk: targeting the roles and responsibilities within an organization.

9.3 Crisis Leadership: maintaining the support of our supporters during attacks.

- 9.3.1 Mutual Danger: how we use mutual danger to create mutual strength.
- 9.3.2 Message Control: communication methods to use during a crisis.
- 9.4 Crisis Defense: how vulnerabilities are exploited and defended during a crisis.
 - 9.4.1 Division Defense: preventing organizational division during a crisis.
 - 9.4.2 Panic Defense: preventing the mistakes arising from panic during a crisis.
 - 9.4.3 Defending Openings: how to defend openings created by a crisis.
 - 9.4.4 Defending Alliances: dealing with guilt by association.
 - 9.4.5 Defensive Balance: using short-term conditions to tip the balance in a crisis.
- 9.5 Crisis Exploitation: how to successfully use an opponent's crisis.
 - 9.5.1 Adversarial Opportunities: how our opponents' crises can create opportunities.
 - 9.5.2 Avoiding Emotion: the danger of exploiting environmental vulnerabilities for purely emotion reasons.
- 9.6 Constant Vigilance: where to focus our attention to preserve our positions.



Chapter 13

用間

Using Spies: Using Information

This final chapter addresses the most important and delicate element of strategy: developing good sources for sensitive information. The term translated as “ ” is *gaan*, which means a “go-between” or “a space between.” Think of it as an information channel. The intelligence addressed in this chapter specifically means acquiring information that is not available to everyone, information from individual people.

The value of information can only be understood in the larger context of the costs of competition. Information replaces other costs. Sun Tzu offers five types of information that tie directly to the five key elements: philosophy, climate, ground, leader, and methods. Each addresses a certain type of costs.

The critical information that you need can only come from developing a network of people who act as your intelligence sources. Each of the five types of information requires a different type of information flow. In his system, there are four information flows that bring information into our organization and only one that broadcasts information.

The main purpose of broadcasting information is to use *gui*, that is, which is translated as “deception” or “illusion”. More generally, it means “perception” as in shaping people’s perceptions. Sharing our philosophy to potential allies via missionaries is a powerful way to shape perceptions.

用 Use Spies 間

孫SUN 子TZU 曰SAID:

凡All 興prosper 師troops 十ten 萬ten thousand, 1
出Exit 征journey 千thousand 里miles,
百Hundred 姓clans之's 費waste,
公Public 家family之's 奉offer,
日Day 費waste 千thousand 金unit of currency.



WASTE:

The concept of waste 費 is the economic result of substituting material resources for knowledge or information resources.

內Inside 外outside 騷stimulate 動act,
怠Idle 於to 道way 路road,
不No 得obtain 操hold 事profession 者is,
七Seven 十ten 萬ten thousand 家family.

相Examine 守defend 數number 年year,
以By means of 争conflict 一one 日day之's
勝victory,

而And yet 愛love 爵lord 祿official salary
百hundred 金unit of currency,
不No 知know 敵enemy之's 情condition 者is,
不No 仁benevolence之's 至stop 也also.

非Weak 人men 之of 將general 也also,
非Weak 主ruler之's 佐assistance 也also,
非Weak 勝victory之's 主ruler 也also.

Chapter 13: Using Spies

SUN TZU SAID:

I All successful armies require thousands of men.
They invade and march thousands of miles.
Whole families are destroyed.
Other families must be heavily taxed.
Every day, a large amount of money must be spent.

⁶Internal and external events force people to move.
They are unable to work while on the road.
They are unable to find and hold a useful job.
This affects seventy percent of thousands of families.

¹⁰You can watch and guard for years.
Then a single battle can determine victory in a day.
Despite this, bureaucrats worship the value of their salary money too dearly.
They remain ignorant of the enemy's condition.
The result is cruel.

¹⁵They are not leaders of men.
They are not servants of the state.
They are not masters of victory.



CIRCLE:

This chapter completes a circle. The book begins with analysis, but analysis begins with your information sources.

故Make 明bright 君monarch 賢worthy 將general,
 所Place 以by means of 動movement 而and yet 勝win 人men,
 成Accomplish 功achievement 出exit 於to 衆crowd 者is,
 先First 知know 也also;
 先First 知know 者topic,
 不No 可can 取obtain 於to 鬼demon 神soul,
 不No 可can 象image 於to 事profession,
 不No 可can 驗check 於to 度degree,
 必Must 取obtain 於from 人men,
 知Know 敵enemy 之's 情condition 者is 也also.

SPIES:

Though translated here as spies, the character 間 specifically means a between space, as we might say a go-between or a channel of information.

故Make 用use 間spies 有have 五five: 2
 有Have 鄉countryside 間spies,
 有Have 内inside 間spies,
 有Have 反reverse 間spies,
 有Have 死dead 間spies,
 有Have 生birth 間spies.
 五Five 間spies 俱all 起rise,
 莫Not 知know 其this 道philosophy,
 是Correct 謂meaning 神spirit 紀arrange,
 人Men 君monarch 之's 賞treasure 也also.

鄉Countryside 間spies 者topic,
 因Source 其this 鄉countryside 人men 而and yet 用use 之it.

内Inside 間spies 者is,
 因Source 其this 官official 人men 而and yet 用use 之it.

¹⁸People need an intelligent leader and a worthy commander.
You must move your troops to the right places to beat others.
You must accomplish your attack and escape unharmed.
This requires foreknowledge.
You can obtain foreknowledge.
You can't get it from demons or spirits.
You can't see it from professional experience.
You can't check it with analysis.
You can only get it from other people.
You must always know the enemy's situation.

2 You must use five types of spies.

You need local spies.
You need inside spies.
You need double agents.
You need doomed spies.
You need surviving spies.

⁷You need all five types of spies.

No one must discover your methods.
You will then be able to put together a true picture.
This is the commander's most valuable resource.

¹¹You need local spies.

Get them by hiring people from the countryside.

¹³You need inside spies.

Win them by subverting government officials.

POWER:

*Knowledge is power. Strategy depends on secret knowledge. For example, the code **WEL96543** discounts your first order at our Strategy Store.*

反Reverse 間spies 者topic,
因Source 其this 敵enemy 間spies 而and yet 用use 之it.

死Dead 間spies 者topic,
爲Become 誑deluded 事profession 於to 外outside,
令Command 吾our 間spies 知know 之it,
而And yet 傳pass 於to 敵enemy 也also.

生Birth 間spies 者topic,
反Return 報report 也also.

故Make 三three 軍army 之's 事job, 3
親Intimate 莫not 親intimate 於with 間spies,
賞Money 莫not 厚generous 於to 間spies,
事Profession 莫not 密secret 於to 間spies.

非Weak 聖sage 智wisdom 不no 能can 用use 間spies,
非Weak 仁love 義justice 不no 能can 用use 間spies,
非Weak 微tiny 妙subtle 不no 能can 得obtain 間spies 之of
壹 fullness.

微Tiny 哉alas! 微Tiny 哉alas!
無Without 所place 不no 能can 用use 間spies 也also.

間Spies 事profession 未not yet 投distribute 而and yet
先first 聞hear 者topic,
間Spies 與give 所place 告tell 者things 兼currently
皆together 死dead.

¹⁵You need double agents.
Discover enemy agents and convert them.

¹⁷You need doomed spies.
Deceive professionals into being captured.
Let them know your orders.
They then take those orders to your enemy.

²¹You need surviving spies.
Someone must return with a report.

3Your job is to build a complete army.
No relations are as intimate as the ones with spies.
No rewards are too generous for spies.
No work is as secret as that of spies.

⁵If you aren't clever and wise, you can't use spies.
If you aren't fair and just, you can't use spies.
If you can't see the small subtleties, you won't get the truth from spies.

⁸Pay attention to small, trifling details!
Spies are helpful in every area.

¹⁰Spies are the first to hear information, so they must not spread information.
Spies who give your location or talk to others must be killed along with those to whom they have talked.

凡All 軍army之's 所place 欲desire 擊strike, 4
 城City之's 所place 欲desire 攻attack,
 人Men之's 所place 欲desire 殺kill,
 必Must 先first 知know 其this 守defend 將general,
 左Left 右right,
 謁Meet with superior 者is,
 門Door 者is,
 舍Huts 人men之's 姓clan 名name,
 令Command 吾our 間spies 必must 索demand 知know 之it.

必Must 索demand 敵enemy 間spies 之of 來next 間spies
 我mine 者is,
 因Source 而and yet 利benefit 之it,
 導Lead 而and yet 舍shelter 之it,
 故Make 反reverse 間spies 可can 得obtain 而and yet 用use
 使envoy 也also.

因Source 是correct 而and yet 知know 之it,
 故Make 鄉countryside 間spies, 內inside 間spies 可can
 得obtain 而and yet 使cause 也also;
 因Source 是correct 而and yet 知know 之it,
 故Make 死dead 間spies 為become 誑deluded 事profession,
 可Can 使cause 告tell 敵enemy;
 因Source 是correct 而and yet 知know 之it,
 故Make 生birth 間spies 可can 使cause 如comparable to
 期phase.

4 You may want to attack an army's position.
You may want to attack a certain fortification.
You may want to kill people in a certain place.
You must first know the guarding general.
You must know his left and right flanks.
You must know his hierarchy.
You must know the way in.
You must know where different people are stationed.
You must demand this information from your spies.

¹⁰You want to know the enemy spies in order to convert them into your men.
You find a source of information and bribe them.
You must bring them in with you.
You must obtain them as double agents and use them as your emissaries.

¹⁴Do this correctly and carefully.
You can contact both local and inside spies and obtain their support.
Do this correctly and carefully.
You create doomed spies by deceiving professionals.
You can use them to give false information.
Do this correctly and carefully.
You must have surviving spies capable of bringing you information at the right time.

五Five 間spies之'事profession,
 主Ruler 必must 知know 之it,
 知Know 之it 必must 存exist 於from 反reverse 間spies,
 故Make 反reverse 間spies 不no 可can 不not 厚generous
 也also.

昔Ancient 殷Shang之's 興prosperity 也also, 5
 伊He 操hold 存exist 夏dynasty.

周Cautious 之of 興prosperity 也also,
 呂Lu 牙Ya 存exist 殷Shang.



故Make 明bright 君monarch 賢worthy 將general,
 能Can 以by 上above 智wisdom 為become
 間者is,
 必Must 成accomplish 大big 功achievement,
 此Here 兵war之's 要need,
 三Three 軍armies之' 所place 恃rely on
 而and yet 動move 也also.

REVERSE:

The concept of reversal 反 is central to Sun Tzu's strategy since every situation depends on generating its opposite, in this case, undermining an enemy's knowledge.



²¹These are the five different types of intelligence work.
You must be certain to master them all.
You must be certain to create double agents.
You cannot afford to be too cost conscious in creating these double agents.

5 This technique created the success of ancient Shang.
This is how the Shang held its dynasty.

³You must always be careful of your success.
Learn from Lu Ya of Shang.

⁵Be a smart commander and a good general.
You do this by using your best and brightest people for ing.
This is how you achieve the greatest success.
This is how you meet the necessities of war.
The whole army's position and ability to move depends on these spies.



EXCESS:

*Lu Ya was an officer under a Shang-dynasty tyrant who got inside a tyrant's information network to overthrow him. See our **Amazing Secrets** book for more.*



Related Articles from *Sun Tzu's Playbook*

In his final chapter, Sun Tzu explains how to use information channels. To learn the step-by-step techniques involved, we recommend the Sun Tzu's Art of War Playbook articles listed below.

2.0.0 Developing Perspective: adding depth to competitive analysis.

2.1 Information Value: knowledge and communication as the basis of strategy.

2.1.1 Information Limits: making good decisions with limited information.

2.1.3 Strategic Deception: misinformation and disinformation in competition.

2.1.4 Surprise: how the creation of surprise depends on the nature of information.

2.2 Information Gathering: gathering competitive information.

2.2.1 Personal Relationships: why information depends on personal relationships.

2.2.3 Standard Terminology: how mental models must be shared to enable communication.

2.3 Personal Interactions: making progress through personal interactions.

2.3.4 Using Questions: using questions in gathering information and predicting reactions.

- 2.3.5 Infinite Loops: predicting reactions on the basis of the “you-know-that-I-know-that-you-know” problem.
- 2.3.6 Promises and Threats: the use of promises and threats as strategic moves.
- 2.4 Contact Networks: the range of contacts needed to create perspective.
 - 2.4.1 Ground Perspective: getting information on a new competitive arena.
 - 2.4.2 Climate Perspective: getting perspective on temporary external conditions.
 - 2.4.3 Command Perspective: developing sources for understanding decision-makers.
 - 2.4.4 Methods Perspective: developing contacts who understand best practices.
 - 2.4.5 Mission Perspective: how we develop and use a perspective on motivation.
- 2.5 The Big Picture: building big-picture strategic awareness.
- 2.6 Knowledge Leverage: getting competitive value out of knowledge.
- 2.7 Information Secrecy: defining the role of secrecy in relationships.

Glossary of Key Chinese Concepts

Though we use one-word translations for the Chinese characters in our transliteration, the concepts expressed by Sun Tzu are very sophisticated. The purpose of this glossary is to explain a little more about the key concepts and their relationships to each other. Our book *The Art of War Plus Its Amazing Secrets* explains these concepts in more detail. Other possible translations for the concept are shown in italics. The Chinese names shown after the English are primarily Pinyin, but we occasionally use Cantonese terms to make each term unique.

above SHANG 上: (*up, better than*) superiority in time or position; opposite of XIA, below.

advance JEUN 進: to move forward in a campaign; opposite of BEI, retreat.

army JUN 軍: (*military, to use and army*) pertaining to a military force; the most dangerous type of ZHENG, conflict.

arrive DIE 至: (*reach, stop*) end of movement to a destination; opposite of HEUI, to go.

attack GONG 攻: (*attack*) action against an opponent; a movement into new territory; the opposite of SHOU, to defend.

battle ZHAN 戰: meeting an opponent or challenge; literally "big weapon"; not necessarily fighting, as in the idea of conflict, ZHENG.

below XIA 下: (*under, following*) a lower position or status; opposite of SHANG, above.

benefit LI 利: (*advantage*) an opportunity arising from having a better position relative to opponents; a key characteristic of position.

big DA 大: forces that are much larger than opponents' forces; opposite of SIU, small.

birth SHAANG 生: (*born*) creation; one of five types of spies; opposite of SI, dead.

blunt DUN 鈍: dull, a slow mental attitude; opposite of RIU, sharp.

boast WU 吳: to brag, also the name of an ancient Chinese kingdom for which Sun Tzu was hired as a general.

brave(ry) YONG 勇: courage of conviction; willingness to act on vision; one of the six characteristics of a leader.

broken PO 破: (*divide*) an attack on QUAN, whole, and the opposite of YI, oneness.

change BIAN 變: (*transform*) transition from one condition to another; the ability to adapt to different situations.

chaos JUAN 亂: (*disorder*) conditions that

cannot be predicted exactly; the natural state of confusion arising from competition; one of six weaknesses of an organization; opposite of CHI, control.

city CHENG 城: fortified town; any strong position that is costly to attack.

command LING 令: orders or the act of ordering subordinates.

complete QUAN 全: (*whole*) lacking nothing needed or being finished; creates YI, oneness or unity; arises from TAO, philosophy; the opposite of PO, broken.

concentrate ZHUAN 專: (*focus*) the process of bringing resources together for a single purpose; the opposite of FEN, divide.

conflict ZHENG 争: contentious, disputed, direct confrontation of arms; the nature of highly desirable ground; one of nine types of DI, terrain or situations.

count SHU 數: (*calculate, number*) mathematical evaluation of a situation.

countryside XIANG 鄉: (*local*) having local knowledge; knowing a specific ground; one of five types of spies.

crowd ZONG 衆: large group of people; a strong concentration of forces at a certain position; the opposite of SHOA, few.

death SI 死: (*dead, deadly, extreme*) end of life or efforts; an extreme situation in which the only option is to fight; one of nine situations or types of terrain; one of five types of spies; opposite of SAANG, birth.

deception GUI 詭: (*bluffing, illusion*) misleading the competition; an attack on an opponent's JAIING, vision; the essence of war.

defend SHOU 守: to guard or keep a possession; to remain in a position; the opposite of GONG, attack.

detour YU 迂: the indirect or unsuspected path to a goal; the more difficult path to opportunity; opposite of JIK, direct.

direct JIK 直: (*straight*) a straight or obvious

path to a goal; opposite of YU, detour.

distant YUAN 遠 : remote from current location; occupying positions that are not close to one another; one of six field positions; one of the three dimensions for evaluating opportunities; the most extreme case of this dimension.

divide FEN 分 : (*separate*) to break apart a larger force; opposite of HAP, to join, and ZHUAN, to concentrate.

drive KEUI 驅 : (*expel*) to motivate people to move and to keep them moving.

easy QING 輕 : (*light*) requiring little effort; a situation that requires little effort; one of nine situations or types of terrain; opposite of CHONG, dangerous or serious.

emotion XIN 心 : (*feeling*) a visceral reaction to JIAN, vision, necessary to inspire DONG, action; an important component of esprit de corps; never a sufficient cause for GONG, attack.

emptiness XU 處 : (*insubstantial, weakness*) devoid of force; identifying a point of attack or a path of movement; full of need; needy, poor; the opposite of SAT, fullness.

enemy DIK 敵 : someone who desires the same position; a competitor.

entice YOU 誘 : to lure an opponent away from a position; a method of GUI, deception.

equal YUN 均 : evenly balanced; lack of any significant advantage or disadvantage.

evade BI 避 : (*avoid*) the tactic used by small competitors when facing large opponents.

expensive GWAI 貴 : costly in terms of money or resources. Closely related conceptually to the idea of FEI, to consume or waste.

fall apart BENG 崩 : collapse over time; one of six weaknesses of an organization.

feelings CHING 情 : (*affection, love, situation*) the bonds of relationship that must be managed like other situations.

few SHAO 寡 : a small force or group; a weak point exhibiting the characteristic of XU, emptiness; opposite of ZHONG, crowd.

fire HUO 火 : the only weapon whose use Sun Tzu details; used as an analogy for attacks in general and environmental attacks in particular.

flee BEI 北 : (*northward*) run away without fighting; one of six weaknesses of an organization; opposite of JEUN, advance.

follow CONG 從 : to obey, to submit to, and to trail; opposite of GWO, pass.

force LEI 力 : power in the simplest sense; with dominant energy.

form XING 形 : (*position*) a shape or condition of DI, the ground; using the benefits of the ground; formations of troops; bringing together resources at a specific time and place; one of the four key skills in making progress.

fullness SAT 壹 : (*substantial, wealthy, strong*) the state of being crowded; the opposite of XU, empty.

general JIANG 將 : (*commander*) the leader of an army; the decision-maker in a competitive unit; the superior of officers and men; one of the five key factors in analysis. The conceptual opposite of FA, the laws, which do not require decisions.

ghost(hy) SHEN 神 : (*spirit, supernatural being*) the essence of a person or group of people.

go away HEUI 去 : to depart; to leave an area; opposite of DIE, arrive.

good SHAN 善 : acting correctly; making the correct decisions.

govern CHI 治 : (*rule, control*) literally, to harness a river; to manage or govern people or situations; the opposite of JUAN, disorder.

government JING 政 : (*political affairs*) the force of authority, the ability to organize.

ground DI 地 : (*earth, situation, condition*) a specific place, condition, or situation; where one competes and simultaneously the prize of competition; one of five key factors in competitive analysis; the opposite of TIAN, heaven.

group DUI 隊 : (*troop*) a grouping of people; one of the five targets of fire attacks.

guest KE 客 : (*invader*) inside an opponent's territory; one who consumes resources.

hang(ing) GUA 懸 : (*suspended, entangling*) a position that cannot be returned to; any condition that leaves no place to go; one of six field positions.

heaven TIAN 天 : divine providence; climate; weather; trends that change over time; one of five key factors in analysis.

highway QU 衢 : (*intersecting*) a situation or type of ground which facilitates travel; one of nine types of terrain.

house KU 庫 : (*storehouse*) place where sup-

plies can be stockpiled; one of the five targets for fire attacks.

hurry CU 趨: to rush into or to be attracted to; a dangerous method to move; opposite of DAI, wait.

influence SHI 勢: (*force*) used specifically by Sun Tzu as the result of QI JANG, innovation; in some ways the opposite of JIE, restraint.

innovation QI JANG 奇正: a combination of QI, the unusual, and JANG, the standard; the change that creates SHI, momentum.

inside NEI 内: (*internal*) within a territory or organization; an insider; one of five types of spies; opposite of WAI, outside.

join HAP 合: to unite with allies to create a larger force; opposite of FEN, divide.

know(ing) ZHI 知: (*knowledge*) to understand or comprehend; the basis of all other skills; the foundation of success.

learn XIAO 效: (*compare*) to compare qualities between two competing opponents; to double-check.

listen TING 聽: (*obey*) to gather knowledge (ZHI); part of planning (GAI).

little SIU 少: (*small*) forces that are small in relative size; the opposite of DA, big.

long time JIU 久: avoiding action for a period of time; lacking immediacy.

march HANG 行: (*act, go, walk*) action toward a position or goal; used as a near synonym for DONG, act.

marsh ZE 澤: one of the four types of land; analogy for uncertain situations.

misstep SOU 走: (*go astray*) used to describe being outmaneuvered; one of six weaknesses of an army.

meet(ing) JIAO 來: (*joining, crossing*) to come together; to intersect; an open situation that encourages a race; one of nine situations or types of terrain.

men REN 人: (*person, people*) members of an army or organization; individuals; one of the five targets of fire attacks.

method FA 法: procedures, techniques; steps to accomplish a goal; one of the five key factors in analysis. The realm of groups who must follow procedures. The conceptual opposite of JIANG, the general, who is free from law because he makes the law.

mountain SHAN 山: (*hill, peak*) one of four

types of land; analogy for uneven places with peaks and valleys.

myriad WAN 萬: a large, complex group; a big organization.

narrow AI 狹: constricted, a confined space or narrow niche; one of six field positions; the limited extreme of the dimension YUAN, distance; opposite of GUANG, wide.

nation GUO 國: state; the productive part of an organization; the seat of political power; the entity that controls an army or competitive part of the organization.

nine JIU 九: (*many*) used to indicate many different types as well as the specific number.

no BU 不: (*not*) negates the meaning of the following ideogram; the character that provides the opposing idea for concepts that have no natural opposite.

north, shady hillside YIN 陰: (*female principle*) used to mean a weak position; opposite of YANG, south, sunny hillside.

not to know BU ZHI 不知: (*ignorance*) a failure to understand or to gather information; the cardinal sin in BING-FA; opposite of ZHI, know.

obstacle XIAN 險: containing obstacles; one of six field positions; opposite of TONG, unobstructed.

one YI 一: the first number, used by Sun Tzu to indicate unity; opposite of ZHONG, crowd, in one sense, and PO, divided, in another.

open TONG 通: (*unobstructed, expert*) without obstacles or barriers; available for easy movement; accepting of new ideas; one of six field positions; opposite of XIAN, obstructed.

outside WAI 外: (*external*) not within a territory or organization; an outsider; a remote perspective that gives an objective view; opposite of NEI, internal.

pass Gwo 過: (*pass through, go across*) to exceed or surpass; opposite of CONG, follow.

philosophy TAO 道: (*way*) a system of thought; literally road or path, as in the "path to victory"; one of the five key factors in analysis.

place SUO 所: (*location*) a specific position on the ground; common term to indicate a position.

plan GAI 計: analysis of a situation; used as a combination of ZHI (knowledge) and JIAN (vision); used in combination with GUI (deception) to create GUI GAI, deceptive

plans, tricks, or traps.

plateau LIU 陸 : one of the five types of land; analogy for level, solid, and certain ground.

plunder LUE 掠 : (rob, take by force) gathering provisions from enemy territory.

profession YAO 事 : (business, affair) skill; ability; responsibility.

provisions LIANG 糧 : (resources, food) necessary supplies, most commonly food; one of the five targets of fire attacks.

relax SHI 弛 : (loosen) too lax; too easy-going; one of six weaknesses of an army.

restraint JIE 節 : to withhold action until the proper time; a companion concept to SHI, momentum.

reverse FAN 反 : (double agent) to turn around in direction; to change a situation; to switch a person's allegiance; one of five types of spies.

reward BAO 賞 : (treasure) the necessary compensation for success; winning is not beating the competition, but producing a reward; victory must pay.

ruin(ed) PI 圯 : (bad) destroyed; terrain that is broken and difficult to traverse; one of the nine situations or types of terrain.

savings JI 糴 : (stores, accumulate) resources that have been stored up; one of the five targets of fire attacks.

say YUE 曰 : to talk, to discuss; used to identify key concepts that require discussion in the original Chinese.

scatter(ing) SAN 散 : to disperse; a situation that causes a force to scatter; one of nine conditions or types of terrain.

see(ing) JIAN 見 : (vision, foreseen) the skill of the general in observing TIAN, heaven, and finding LI, a benefit or advantage.

seize LU 奪 : to catch; to capture; to imprison; taking control of desired ground to discourage an opponent's attack.

serious CHONG 重 : (heavy) requiring effort and skill; the situation of being deeply committed to a campaign, with opposition behind; one of nine situations or types of terrain.

sharp RIU 銳 : (keen) acuity of mind; the fine point of a weapon; opposite of DUN, dull.

siege GONG CHENG 攻城 : (strike city) action against entrenched positions; one of the five attacks; the least desirable form of

attack.

sink HAAM 陷 : (plunge, trap) fall down or into; one of six weaknesses of organizations.

south, sunny hillside YANG 陽 : (male principle) used to mean a strong position; opposite of YIN, north, shady hillside.

spirit HEI 氣 : (air, steam, gas) something insubstantial; a characteristic of DONG, movement, so opponents cannot know a position.

spy GAAN 間 : (conduit) literally, an opening between; go-between, channel of information.

straight JANG 正 : (right, proper, correct) the expected normal behavior; the standard approach; the opposite of QI, unusual.

strange QI 奇 : (unusual, odd) the unexpected; the surprising; result of the creative impulse; the opposite of JANG, straight.

supply wagons ZI 輜 : the transportation of supplies; one of the five targets of fire attacks.

support ZHII 支 : to prop up; to enhance; one of six field positions; the opposite extreme of GUA, entangling.

surround WEI 圍 : (confined) to encircle; the normal tactic for a much larger force encircling a smaller one; the characteristic of a special transitional situation in which a larger force can be attacked by a smaller one; one of nine situations or types of terrain.

victory SING 勝 : (win) success in an endeavor; winning a battle; the only goal of BING-FA; it produces more than it consumes.

wait DAI 待 : staying in place patiently; nonaction when there is no opportunity; the opposite of CU, hurry.

war BING 兵 : (weapons, soldiers) competition; the use of force.

waste FEI 費 : (consume) to expend limited resources; the result of unnecessary conflict.

water SHUI 水 : one of four types of land; analogy for fluid conditions that change rapidly.

wide GUANG 廣 : lacking constraint; ground form opposite of AI, narrow.

wind FENG 風 : (custom, fashion) the pressure of environmental forces; a necessary ingredient for fire or environment attacks.

Index of Topics in *The Art of War*

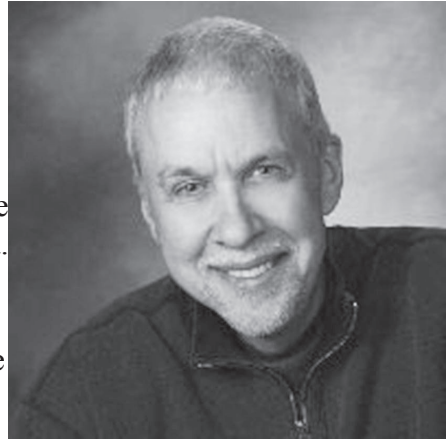
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About the Translator and Author

Gary Gagliardi is recognized as America's leading expert on Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. An award-winning author and business strategist, his many books on Sun Tzu's strategy have been translated around the world. He has appeared on hundreds of talk shows nationwide, providing strategic insight on the breaking news. He has trained decision makers from some of



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Gary began using Sun Tzu's competitive principles in a successful corporate career and when he started his own software company. In 1990, he wrote his first *Art of War* adaptation for his company's salespeople. By 1992, his company was on *Inc. Magazine's* list of the 500 fastest-growing privately held companies in America. He personally won the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Blue Chip Quality Award and was an Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist. His customers—AT&T, GE, and Motorola, among others—began inviting him to speak at their conferences. After becoming a multimillionaire when he sold his software company in 1997, he continued teaching *The Art of War* around the world.

Gary has authored several breakthrough works on *The Art of War*. Ten of his books on strategy have won book award recognition in nine different non-fiction categories.

If you enjoyed this work, contact the author at Garyg@SunTzuS.com and let him know. He enjoys communicating with interested readers.

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