**The art of war**

**一 计篇**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**Planning**

Master Sun says:

War is of great relevance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a path to survival or flight. It cannot be ignored.

War is governed by five crucial factors, which you must consider and implement:

。Politics

。Weather

。Terrain

。Leadership

。Training

Politics is what keeps the people in accord with their leader, supporting him with their very lives, unafraid of danger.

Weather involves the conditions of light and shade, heat and cold, hours and seasons.

Terrain may be near or far, difficult or easy, wide or narrow, and the prospect of life or death.

Leadership considers wisdom, trust, compassion, courage and severity.

Training considers logistics, discipline and protocol.

No leader should be unaware of these five issues. Those who are ignorant of them shall fail. When considering your plans, you should ask:

。Which ruler has the political upper hand?

。Which general is most capable?

。Who is favoured by the weather and terrain?

。Who enjoys the greater efficiency of organization?

。Who has the stronger army?

。Whose officers and men are best trained?

。Who rewards and punishes clearly?

Then you will know who will win and who will lose. A general who follows this plan and implements it is certain to win, and should be deployed. A general who does not listen to this plan or implement it is certain to lose, and should be dismissed.

On hearing these factors, only then should you assess mitigating circumstances. Modify your plans to use situational advantages.

Strategy is a doctrine of deceit. When you are capable, act as if incapable. When you are busy, act as if idle. When you are close, appear to be far away. When you are far away, appear to be close. Show openings to lure your enemy. Feign confusion to capture them. If your enemies are solid, make preparations. If your enemies are strong, retreat. When your enemies are angry, taunt them. When they are modest, make them proud. When they are idle, make them work. When they are united, drive them apart. Attack when they are unprepared. Turn up when they do not expect it. This is how the strategist succeeds, by giving nothing away beforehand.

In the temple before battle, the winners have plans with many merits. The losers have plans with fewer merits. Many merits win; a mere handful do not. If there are no merits at all, how much greater the defeat.

This is what we must consider, to determine who will win and who will lose.

**二 作战篇**

**CHAPTER TWO**

**Going to War**

Master Sun says:

This is how war is waged. With 1,000 swift four-horse chariots, 1,000 armoured wagons, 100,000 armoured men, food and provisions to travel 1,000 *li*.

This incurs costs at home and abroad, for the entertainment of consultants and visitors, for glue and lacquering materials, for chariot and armour supplies. Only with 1,000 pieces of gold per day to hand, can a general raise such a force of 100,000 men.

When going to war, a victory delayed too long will grind down the men and blunt their ardour. A prolonged siege will sap the men's strength and risks damage to the homeland. With weapons dulled and spirits blunted, strength drained and provisions exhausted, rival rulers will take advantage and launch their own attacks. Even a wise man will not be able to

right matters after that.

Thus, while soldiers have heard that it is stupid to move too fast, it is also unwise to take too long. There has never been a long war that worked to the benefit of a kingdom.

Those who do not understand the damage done by war cannot possibly hope to understand how a war might also do good. For the general skilled at war, there should only be a single levy of troops, and no more than one resupply. Bring what you need from home, and take provisions from your enemy. Thus, your army will have enough to eat. Sending forces far away is a heavy expense to the homeland. Meanwhile, a military force nearby will raise prices, and high prices exhaust the wealth of the common people.

Once impoverished, they are soon forced into service. Their strength drained and livelihood gone, homes are left deserted on the central plains. The cost to the common people will be three-tenths of their worth. For the treasury, the cost for broken wheels and worn-out horses；armour, helmets, arrows and crossbows; lances, shields, spears, and tents; oxen and wagons will amount to four-tenths of their worth.

And so, the wise general takes his food from the enemy. A single cup of enemy rice is worth twenty cups to us. A single bale of hay is worth twenty to us. Killing the enemy requires anger, but capturing enemy *materiel* requires rewards. And so, if ten or more chariots are captured during a battle, give a reward to those who took the first. Replace the flags, banners and signals on their chariots, and use them along with your own. Prisoners should be fed and treated well; you can win over the enemy to gain strength.

In war, victory is the prize, not long campaigns. The wise man knows that the leader of an army influences also the fate of the population at large, and steers his country towards safety or danger.

**三 谋攻篇**

**CHAPTER THREE**

**Strategies of Attack**

Master Sun says:

This is how war is waged. It is better to take a kingdom whole than to destroy it. It is better to take an army whole than to destroy it. It is better to take a battalion, a company or a platoon whole than to destroy them. It is not the pinnacle of martial achievement to fight and win a hundred battles. It is the pinnacle of martial achievement to win without fighting.

The greatest form of soldiery is to disrupt your enemy's plans. In descending order, the next best options are:

。disrupting his communications

。confusing his soldiers

。and only then, attacking his cities

Attack his cities only when there is no alternative. Preparing your screens, your chariots and wagons, your tools, weapons and engines, will take three months. Reaching his battlements will take another three months. If the attack is unsuccessful, even the general who drives his men to swarm like ants will lose one-third of his force, and find that the walls still hold. A siege is a disaster.

And so, the skilled general will subdue his enemy without fighting, overcomes the walls without an attack, overthrows the kingdom without delay. He should certainly use every ruse under heaven, so that his army is unstoppable and his advantage complete. Such is the strategy of attack.

This is how you fight:

。When you outnumber ten to one, surround.

。When you outnumber five to one, invade.

。When you outnumber two to one, attack.

。When you are equally matched, divide his forces.

。When you are outnumbered, defend.

。When you are heavily outnumbered, escape.

A small opponent might be resolute, but the larger opponent will still capture him.

The general is the protector of the nation. If he has no weakness, the nation will be strong. If he is flawed, then the nation will be vulnerable. The prince/lord can compromise his general's plans in three ways:

。Ordering him to advance or retreat when such an action is impossible. This hobbles the army.

。Interfering in military affairs that he does not understand. This confuses the ranks.

。Making command decisions that he does not understand. This brings doubt to the officers.

With such doubt and confusion in your organisation, rivals will soon add to your difficulties. It is said that strife in an army will sap its victory.

And so, there are five points to knowing victory:

。Win by knowing when to fight and when not to fight.

。Win by knowing how to use both large and small forces.

。Win by uniting both upper and lower ranks in one accord.

。Win by lying in wait for the opponent who is unprepared.

。Win by being an able general without interference from his ruler.

Such are the five principles to knowing victory. And so it is said:

。Know the enemy and know yourself, and in a hundred battles there will be no danger.

。Know not the enemy yet know yourself, and you shall win half your battles.

。Know neither the enemy nor yourself, and you shall surely lose every fight.

**四、形篇**

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**Disposition**

Master Sun says

In ancient times, the skilled warrior first ensured that he could not lose, then waited for the enemy to bring him victory. I can make myself invulnerable, and wait for the enemy to help me win, but this outcome relies on the enemy. The skilled warrior cannot be defeated, but he cannot necessarily defeat the enemy, either. And so, we say that victory can be understood, but still not achieved.

Making your own defeat impossible requires defence, while achieving victory requires attack. Defend when you are at a disadvantage. Attack when you have the advantage. Those skilled in defence burrow deep into the earth. Those skilled at attack sweep down from the heights of heaven. Thus, victory is certain if you can keep yourself safe.

There is no achievement in seeing a victory that any man can see. Nor is there glory in winning such a victory that all under heaven speak of your skills, as no strength is involved to lift autumn fluff, as no insight is needed to tell the sun from the moon, as no sharp ears are needed to hear a clash of thunder.

In olden times, the truly skilled warriors won easy victories. Hence, when those skilled warriors were victorious, their wisdom brought them no fame. Their courage brought no honour. They fought battles without mistakes. Without mistakes, victory was certain, for the enemy had already lost.

And so, the skilled warrior only stands on ground where he cannot lose, and where he can only cause the enemy's downfall. For the victorious army first arranges its victory, and only then begins battle. A losing army begins battle, and only then attempts to win.

The skilled warrior cultivates this approach, and maintains safeguards and discipline. And so he may steer wins and losses by management:

。Commitment

。Numbers

。Supplies

。Comparisons

。Victory

The terrain determines the commitment. Commitment affects your numbers. Numbers affect your supplies. Supplies affect the comparison of your forces. The comparison of your forces sways your victory.

And so, the victorious army is like a brick weighed against a speck. The losing army is like a speck weighed against a brick. Such is the balance of victory for the fighting man. Like pent-up water dropping a thousand fathoms into a gorge. That is disposition.

**五 势篇**

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**Momentum**

Master Sun says:

Managing a multitude should be the same as managing a small number. If numbers are divided, fighting a multitude should be like fighting a small force；this is a matter of formations and signals. A large force can surely withstand against the enemy and stay undefeated through the application of the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Your army should move as a millstone crushing an egg, the solid against the hollow. Generally, use ordinary forces to join a battle, and extraordinary forces to win it. And so, the skilled application of the extraordinary is as boundless as heaven and earth, as inexhaustible as rivers and streams, ending only to begin again, like the sun and the moon, dying only to live again like the four seasons.

There are only five notes on a scale, but those five notes can be varied more times than it is possible to ever hear. There are no more than five colours, but they can combine to greater variation than can be seen. There are no more than five tastes, but they combine to form more flavours than can be tasted.

Permutations in battle arise from nothing more than the ordinary and the extraordinary. But the ordinary and extraordinary combine in more ways than can ever be known. Each brings on the other, like a circle without end. Who can exhaust the possibilities?

It is like the tumble of rocks in fast-flowing waters, set to motion by momentum. It is like the swoop of a diving falcon, that strikes and kills at the critical moment.

And so, for the skilled warrior, momentum should be focused, and timing swift. Momentum is like a drawn crossbow, timing like the released trigger.

In the tumult and confusion, in the chaos of battle, he is not confused. In the mud and clamour, his formations wheel, but they cannot be defeated. Chaos begets order. Fear begets courage. Weakness begets strength.

Between order and chaos, there is calculation. Between courage and fear there is momentum. And so, he who is skilled at manipulating the enemy creates formations that draw the enemy in. He gives what the enemy will certainly take, and so lures him onward, his own soldiers lying in wait.

The skilled warrior looks to apply mass momentum, so as not to rely on individual men. He chooses men who can use momentum. Using momentum for men in battle is like rolling logs and rocks. Logs and rocks are at peace on flat ground, but dangerous on a slope.They stop on corners, but roll on curves. And so the skilled warrior fights with the momentum of his men. Like a rock rolling down a thousand-fathom mountain, such is that momentum.

**六 虚实篇**

**CHAPTER SIX**

**The Weak and the Strong**

Master Sun says:

He who is first to the field of battle has the luxury of waiting for his enemy. He who is late to the field of battle must rush to either fight or dig in. And so the skilled warrior decides for his foe, and does not permit his foe to decide for him. He may summon the enemy to him by offering a lure, and he may push his enemy back by causing him harm. If an enemy is resting, he may force him to labour. If sated, he can cause him hunger. If at rest, he can force him to move.

Appear where your foe must hurry to meet you. Move swiftly to where you are least expected. You may march 1,000 *li* without tiring, by marching through places that are unoccupied. An attack that is certain to succeed is an attack against an undefended site. A defence that is sure to repel is from an invulnerable site.

And so the skilled attacker leaves his enemy unsure of what needs to be defended. The skilled defender leaves his enemy unsure of what needs to be attacked. Subtle beyond subtle, let nothing be seen by observers. Divine beyond divine, let nothing be heard by listeners. By this means, may you control

your enemy's fate.

Advance without delay, by rushing towards the weak point. Retreat without pursuit, by moving too fast to be caught. And so, when we desire to fight, even though our enemy is behind a high rampart or deep ditch, he cannot help but engage, because we have attacked the place where he must send help.

When we do not desire to fight, although a line drawn on the ground is our only defence, the enemy will not engage us, because we have lured him away.And so, the foe's disposition is known, and ours is not；while we are united, he is divided. United, we act as one. Divided, he acts in tenths. And our whole force attacks a single point, our multitude against his reduced force.

Where a multitude may strike against a few, I say that this is the place to engage, where he is compromised. We seek to fight in places that are unforeseen. Not knowing our plans, the enemy must make ready in many places. And while he makes many preparations, we seek to engage where he is at his weakest. And so a ready front weakens the rear. A ready rear weakens the front. A ready left flank weakens the right. A ready right flank weakens the left. And if he tries to defend everywhere, he will be weak everywhere.

The few must make ready for attack. The many make others to make ready for them. And so, he who knows the time and place of battle can march 1,000 *li* and fight. He who does not know the time and place of battle has a left flank that cannot aid the right, and a right flank that cannot aid the left, a front that cannot aid the rear, and a rear that cannot aid the front, be it many tens of *li* away, or only one!

If we look at the men of Yue, their army seemed to be great, but that would not help them win. And so we said that we could bring victory, for although an enemy may be many, he can be rendered powerless.

And so we scheme to see the rights and wrongs in his evaluations. We provoke, to know which of his principles are firm or mobile. We compare to know the good or bad conditions in his land. We observe, to know which of his positions are overly fortified or undermanned.

And so army deployments are at their pinnacle when they appear formless. Without form, not even an embedded spy can observe you. Not even a wise man could plot a counter-move. Obvious deployment is an error that can wrest victory from a multitude, although the multitude will not understand why.

Men know that I win through tactics, but they do not know how it may be so. In battle, victories do not repeat themselves. Adjust your tactics all the time. An army formation is like water. As water rushes from the heights to the lowest depths, an army wins by avoiding the strong and targeting the weak. As water is made by terrain to flow in certain ways, so an army must flow with the enemy's situation.

And so, an army does not gain momentum by using the same formations. He who can adapt with the enemy's variations will seize victory and be spoken of as a god.

And so, among the five elements, no one is dominant. Among the four seasons, none is ever present. Days can be short and long. The moon waxes and wanes.

**七 军争篇**

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

**Deployment**

Master Sun says:

This is how war is waged. The general receives orders from his prince, recruits the army and assembles the forces. He ensures all is well and pitches his camp. But nothing is more difficult than army deployment.

Army manoeuvres are difficult because they must make the obscure plain and create opportunity from setbacks. And so, you take a long road, but entice your enemy with lures. Although you set off late, you still arrive early. He who knows how to do this knows schemes of the hidden and the plain.

An army manoeuvre that brings advantage may be dangerous. If the entire army sets off on a manoeuvre, it may not arrive in time. When only the soldiers are sent on a manoeuvre, they may lose their equipment. And so when the men leave behind their heavy armour, rushing without rest for day and night, rushing at double the pace, for 100 *li* in order to gain an advantage, your three generals might be captured. For the fierce troops will go ahead, and the hesitant will drop back, such that by this method, only one in ten will arrive.

When an advantage requires a deployment over fifty *li*, you might lose a senior officer, as only half will arrive.

When an advantage requires a deployment over thirty li, only two-thirds will arrive.

Besides, an army without equipment is lost. Without provisions, it is lost. Without supplies, it is lost.

And so, if you do not know an ally's strategies, you cannot form an alliance with him. If you do not know the mountains and forests, the choke-points in passes or the boggy ground in marshes, you are unable to set your army in motion. If you do not use local guides, you cannot use the terrain to your advantage.

And so, war stands on deception. Move with the advantage, disperse or concentrate as situations change. When swift, be like the wind. When at rest, be like the forest. When raiding, be like fire. When immobile, be like a mountain, and as inscrutable as shadow. When in motion, be like lightning.

When you plunder, divide the spoils. When you seize territory, divide the profits. Deliberate before moving. First know the hidden and the plain in your calculations, and you will be victorious. That is the art of army deployment.

The Book of Military Administration says:“When one

speaks and is not heard, bring gongs and drums. When one looks and does not see, bring flags and banners.'

And so, for night fighting, use gongs and drums. For fighting during the day, use flags and banners. Thus, you will command the ears and eyes of your men as one. When the men are united, the brave will not advance alone, nor will the cowardly retreat. Such is the way that you use the multitude.

So it is that a whole army may be robbed of its vigour. A general may be robbed of his resolve. At dawn, the spirit is homeward bound. After noon, the spirit dulls. At dusk, spirits revert. The skilled warrior avoids those whose spirits are keen, but attacks those who are dull or homeward bound. That is how one manages ardour.

Orderly in the face of chaos, calm in the face of commotion, this is how one manages the heart.

Close by, awaiting the enemy's march from afar, at rest, while the enemy labours, well fed while the enemy hungers. This is how one manages strength.

Do not attack well-aligned banners. Do not attack serried ranks. This is how one manages variations.

This is how war is waged. Do not turn against those on higher ground. Do not resist those whose backs are against a hill. Do not pursue those who feign retreat. Do not attack keen soldiers. Do not take military bait. Do not obstruct a retreating unit. When surrounding a unit, be sure to leave an escape. If they are ready to fight to the death, do not press too hard.

This is how war is waged.

**八 九变篇**

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**Variables**

Master Sun says:

This is how war is waged. The general receives order from his prince, recruits the army and assembles the forces.

。Where terrain is difficult, do not camp.

。Where terrain is open, make alliances.

。Where terrain is isolated, do not wait.

。Where terrain is surrounded, make plans.

。Where terrain is deadly, fight.

。Some roads must not be taken.

。Some troops should not be assaulted.

。Some cities should not be attacked.

。Some terrain should not be contested.

Some orders from your prince should not be followed.

And so, the general who uses these nine variations knows how to wage war. A general who does not use the nine variations, even if he knows the lie of the land, will not be able to use the terrain to his advantage. The leader of an army who does not know the craft of these nine variations, even if he knows the five contingencies, will not be able to use his men

well.

And so the wise man in his deliberations is sure to consider the opportunities and the threats. By seizing the opportunities, a mission is sound. By understanding the threats, misfortune can be averted.

Weaken your rivals by doing them harm. Busy your rivals with activity. Confound your rivals with distractions.

This is how war is waged.

Do not trust that they will not come. Trust that you will be ready if they do.

Do not trust that they will not attack. Trust that you are unassailable if they do.

For the general, there are five dangers:

。If reckless, he may be killed.

。If timid, he may be captured.

。If quick to anger, he may be provoked.

。If proud, he may be humiliated.

。If kind-hearted, he may be guilted.

These five factors are, for a general, indulgences that bring disaster when waging war.

When an army is routed, its leader slain, it is surely due to these five dangers. They cannot be ignored.

**九 行军篇**

**CHAPTER NINE**

**On the March**

Master Sun says:

And now to the matter of locating your forces and observing your enemy.

Crossing mountains, rely on valleys. Camp on high, facing south, so that in battle there is no need to climb further. This is how you position your army in mountainous regions.

Crossing water, be sure to move away from it. If your enemy crosses water to face you, do not meet him in the shallows. Let half of his force be ferried, and then attack for the advantage.

When readying for battle, do not stay near the water to face your foe. Camp on high ground, in the sun.Do not face a foe who is upstream. This is how you position your army near water.

Crossing salt marshes, do not linger, get out fast. But if your foe attacks while you are in the marsh, be sure to take cover in the reeds, and keep the trees to your rear. This is how you position your army in marshland.

On level ground, position on a gentle slope, with the

right flank and rearguard towards the high ground.So that death is before you, but life behind. This is how you position your army on flat ground.

Generally, these forms will bring you the upper hand. It is how the Yellow Sovereign won against his four opponents.

Armies like the high and hate the low; they prize sunlight and despise shadow. Secure positioning also fosters health. An army lacking a hundred diseases is said to be sure of victory.

Be sure to set up with a mound, hill, dike or embankment, in sunlight, to your back and rear. This gives advantage to the army, with the terrain as their assistant.

When there is rain upstream, the waters froth. Halt if crossing, and wait for them to settle.

In deep, ‘heavenly' torrents, wells, prisons, cages, sinks or fissures, be sure to leave immediately. Do not approach them. We move away from these, and the foe goes near. We should face them, and the enemy should have them at his back.

He who nears narrow defiles or rough ground, lakes or ponds, rushes or reeds, mountains or forest or dense scrub, should conduct prudent and repeated searches, for such are ideal locations for ambush or scouts.

When your enemy is close by but still quiet, he presumes that he has the strategic advantage. When your enemy is far away but calling you to battle, he desires you to make the advance. If he is dug in on gentle terrain, the advantage is his.

When the trees move, he is coming. Where obstacles appear in the thick grasses, he hopes to mislead you. If birds take flight, it means ambush. If beasts stampede, it means a surprise attack.

If dust is high and narrow, chariots approach. If dust is low and wide, infantry approaches. If scattered in pockets, they are collecting firewood. If patchy and intermittent, they are pitching camp.

When he speaks humbly but continues to make preparations, he plans to advance. Where he speaks arrogantly but continues to advance, he plans to fall back. When he suggests a truce without a treaty, he is planning something.

When the light chariots come forward at the flanks, he is forming up. When there is rushing and running and soldiers falling to, it is time.

When half advance and half retreat, it is a trap.

When they stand but lean on their spears, they are hungry. When those who draw water are first to drink it, they are thirsty. When they see an opportunity but do not advance, they are tired. When birds flock, your enemy has broken camp.

When there are shouts in the night, they are afraid. When there is disorder in the army, the general lacks authority. When flags and signals shift, there is discord. When officers are angry, they are tired.

When they feed grain to the horses and eat meat themselves, when they do not stow cooking utensils or return to camp, they are determined to fight to the death.

When there are whispers, and nods, and quiet words among the troops, your enemy has lost his men.

When there are frequent rewards, he is hard-pressed.

When there are frequent punishments, he is collapsing.

When they are first violent but then fearful, the army has lost its spirit.

When envoys come with kind words, the enemy hopes for a respite.

If an enemy force draws up for a prolonged period, angry but not engaging, and not withdrawing, this must be examined with extreme caution.

An army that is not greater in number than its opponent need not be insufficient. We need not advance direct, but merely concentrate our strength and draw reinforcements. He who unthinkingly belittles his opponent is sure to end up a captive.

If soldiers are not yet devoted to you, they will become disobedient when punished. If disobedient, they are difficult to employ. If soldiers are devoted to you and punishment is not meted out, they cannot be employed.

And so, those who combine protocol and discipline are said to be sure to win. When discipline is habitually enforced, the men soon learn obedience. When discipline is habitually disregarded, the men soon learn disobedience. The enforcement of discipline benefits both the army and the officers.

**十 地形篇**

**CHAPTER TEN**

**Terrain**

Master Sun says:

Terrain can be:

。Accessible

。Compromised

。Level

。Confined

。High

。Remote

If we can set up but he can still approach, it is Accessible. With the accessible form, first take a high position in the sun. This benefits your materiel during battle, and brings an advantage.

If we can enter but retreat is difficult, this is Compromised. With the compromised form, it may be possible to make a surprise attack against an unprepared enemy, and so gain victory. However, if the enemy seems prepared and your attack is unsuccessful, retreat is difficult and you will be at a disadvantage.

If we approach with no advantage, but our enemy also approaches with no advantages, this is Level. With the level form, even if we have the edge on the enemy, we do not approach. Instead, we withdraw to lure him out. When half the enemy have approached, we strike, thus gaining better advantage.

With the Confined form, if we are first on the scene, we should certainly dig in and await the enemy. If the enemy seems to have dug in first, do not attack. If he has not dug in, attack.

With the High form, if we are first on the scene, be sure to take a high sunny position and await the enemy. If the enemy seems to have arrived first, lure him down by pulling back, but do not advance.

With the Remote form, assuming neither of you has the upper hand, it is difficult to begin battle. Battle itself does not bring advantage.

Such are the six approaches to terrain. It is a general's duty not to ignore them.

The troops may be prone to:

。Desertion

。Insubordination

。Subversion

。Disorder

。Chaos

。Rout

These six conditions are not natural occurrences, but the result of a general's failures.

All things being equal:

。If attacking a force ten times your size, you invite Desertion.

。If the men are strong but the officers weak, you invite Insubordination.

。If officers are strong but the men are weak, you invite Subversion.

。If senior officers are angry and disobedient, and pre-emptively make personal sallies against the enemy, the general will be unsure in his commands, and there will be Disorder.

。If a general is weak and undisciplined, and does not make his commands clear, then the officers and troops will be unreliable, and the ranks slow to form up. You invite Chaos.

。If a general is unable to assess his enemy, ordering a small force against a multitude, or weak forces against the strong, without the best men in the front line, there will be a Rout.

Such are the six approaches to defeat. It is a general's

duty not to ignore them.

Terrain should be the ally of an army. Assess your enemy to manage victory. Evaluate choke-points and level ground, far and near. That is the manner of a general at the front.

Know this in battle and victory is certain. Ignore this in battle, and defeat is certain.

And so, when victory is certain but the lord orders you to stand down, make battle unavoidable. When the approach favours defeat, but the lord orders you into battle, make battle impossible.

And so, do not march in search of fame. Do not retreat in fear of dishonour. But keep your men safe, and bring the best advantage to your superiors, that you may be a treasure to your nation.

See your men as infant children and they will follow you into the deepest valley. See your men as beloved sons, and they will follow you to the death. But if a general is kind yet undisciplined, or loving but unclear with orders, unable to shake off his own confusion, then the knights will be as spoiled sons, impossible to employ.

If we know our soldiers' capabilities, but not the enemy's invulnerability, we will win only half the battles. If we know the enemy's vulnerability, but not our soldiers' weak spots, we will win only half the battles. If we know our soldiers' capabilities, and we also know the enemy's vulnerability, but do not realise

the terrain does not favour battle, we will win only half the battles.

When the wise warrior moves, he is never at a loss. He strikes without doubts. And so it is said:

Know the enemy, and know yourself.

Win without danger.

Know Earth, and know Heaven.

And you shall win every time.

**十一 九地篇**

**CHAPTER ELEVEN**

**The Nine Situations**

Master Sun says:

This is how war is waged.

Your situation may be:

。Compromised

。Liminal

。Contested

。Insecure

。Focal

。Committed

。Impeded

。Surrounded

。Mortal

When you do battle on the territory of a rival lord, your situation is Compromised.

When you enter his territory, but not too deeply, your situation is Liminal.

When both we and he might gain the upper hand，your situation is Contested.

Where we may occupy, but he may approach, your situation is Insecure.

When his lands are enclosed on three sides, and the first to arrive takes the multitude of All Under Heaven, then your situation is Focal.

When entering his territory so deeply that enemy forts and cities are at your rear, then your situation is Committed.

When mountains and forests, ridges and obstructions and boggy ground make it hard to march on the roads, your situation is Impeded.

When entry to territory is through narrow confines, and retreat is difficult, with our army vulnerable to attacks from his units, your situation is Surrounded.

Where only desperate battle keeps you from destruction, your situation is Mortal.

。When your situation is Compromised, do not fight.

。Where your situation is Liminal, do not halt.

。Where your situation is Contested, do not attack.

。Where your situation is Insecure, do not march onwards.

。Where your situation is Focal, make alliances.

。Where your situation is Committed,plunder.

。Where your situation is Impeded, march on.

。Where your situation is Surrounded, make plans.

。Where your situation is Mortal, fight.

Since olden times it has been said that the skilled warrior made it impossible for the enemy's front and rear to communicate, impossible for his separate units to count on one another, impossible for his bold men to inspire his cowards, impossible for the officers and men to trust each other, impossible for his disrupted formations to re-form, impossible for his fighting soldiers to keep to their posts.

If your enemy needs to engage, make him redeploy. If he needs to move, make him stop.

If you ask me how you might prepare for the arrival of a well-organised enemy army, I would say: first seize that which he loves, then he will listen.

In war, speed is the key. Exploit your enemy if he is not ready. Take the road he does not watch. Attack the place he does not guard.

When occupying territory, this is the approach. To prevent the defending force from counterattacking, enter deeply. When food is in abundance, plunder, so that your army has sufficient provisions. Ration judiciously and do not overwork them. Build strength by uniting their spirits. Plan and implement your troop movements so that they are unpredictable.

Throw men into a place with no escape, with death more likely than retreat, and they will attack with all their might. Soldiers lose all fear when they lose all hope.

When there is no escape, they push back. When deep in enemy territory, they seize. When they have no choice left, they fight.

And so, without command, they will be vigilant. Without requests, they still do their best. Without promises, they are loyal. Without orders, they will be trusty.

Ban superstition and banish doubt, and they will go to death and beyond.

My soldiers are not rich, but they do not hate possessions. My soldiers are not immortal, but nor do they hate life. On the day the command comes to march out, they slump with tears on their collars. They lie on the ground with tears on their cheeks.

But throw them into a place with no escape, and they are as bold as Zhu and Gui.

The skilled warrior is like the *shuai-ran*, a snake found in the mountains of Heng. Strike at its head, and it lashes with its tail. Strike at its tail and it snaps with its head.

If you ask me how you might steer an army into behaving like the *shuai-ran*, I say it is possible. The men of Wu and the men of Yue hate each other, but if they were in the same boat, cast adrift on the wind, they would help each other, as the left hand helps the right.

And so, it has never been enough to trust in the securing of horses and the burying of chariot wheels. Make all courage as one in your management; that is the approach. Take hold of both the hard and soft; this is the principle in such situations.

And so the skilled warrior commands as if he is leading a single man by the hand. He leaves no choice.

The leader of an army should be calm and tranquil, straight and organised. He should keep his men unknowing, deceiving their eyes and ears. He should keep his men ignorant of changing plans and reverses in strategy. He should ensure that his men do not grasp changing positions and shifts in the odds.

When the time comes to lead, it is as if he climbs up high and kicks away the ladder. He plunges deep into enemy territory before going into action. He drives them on like a flock of sheep, driving them forward and back, though nobody knows where.

Assemble the military force, then throw them into jeopardy; such is the job of the general.

The Nine Situations vary; advantage changes with retreats and advances, and with principles of morale. This cannot be ignored.

When in enemy territory, this is the approach: go deeper for unity or risk desertions.

When leaving your kingdom and crossing the border, your forces come into a Compromised situation.When vulnerable from four sides, you are in an Insecure situation. When deep in enemy territory you are in a Committed situation. When you are only on the border, you are in a Liminal situation. When you have the enemy behind you and limited options, you are in a Surrounded situation. When you have no escape, your situation is Mortal.

。In a Compromised situation, we should make our will as one.

。In a Liminal situation, we should encourage fraternisation.

。In a Contested situation, we should call in the reinforcements.

。In an Insecure situation, we should remain on the defensive.

。In a Focal situation, we should cultivate our allies.

。In a Committed situation, we should focus on our supply lines.

。In an Impeded situation, we should continue our advance.

。In a Surrounded situation, we should guard the choke-points.

。But in a Mortal situation, we should make it clear that there is no chance of survival. For it is in the nature of an army to push back when cornered. They obey when hemmed in.

He who does not know the strategies of a rival warlord

cannot become his ally. He who does not know the dispositions of the mountains and forests, ridges and obstructions, or boggy ground, is unable to march his army.

He who does not use native guides is unable to use the terrain to his advantage.

He who forgets even one of these several points is unfit to command the army of a Hegemon.

When the army of a supreme monarch attacks a great

kingdom, it is not possible to raise an army against him.For his reputation intimidates his foes, so that they do not unite against him.

Nor does he fight against fellow vassals of the Sovereign, nor does he scheme against them. His self-confidence and reputation intimidate his enemies. And so, their cities may be taken, and their kingdoms brought down.

Give out rewards unheeding of the rules. Give orders without rationale. Command your entire host as if managing a single individual. Give them their tasks, but do not give your reasons. Face them with the threat, but do not tell them of your advantages.

Thus they will survive a Compromised situation. Thus they will survive a Mortal situation. Confined and hard-pressed, they still snatch victory from defeat.

And so, in warfare, keep careful watch on what your foe is thinking. When the enemy is in your sights, you may kill a general from 1,000 *li*'s distance. We call this achievement through sheer cunning.

Thus, on the day that war is declared, shut down communications. Cancel passwords. Confine ambassadors. Be resolute in the council chamber, that you may achieve your goals.

When your enemy leaves an opening, be sure to go straight through it. First see what he loves, and conceal your timing. Bumble along as if blind, until the crucial moment of battle.

And so, at first, you should seem coy like a woman, so that the enemy opens the door. But then dart like a hare, and the enemy cannot hold you back.

**十二 火攻篇**

**CHAPTER TWELVE**

**Incendiary Attacks**

Master Sun says:

There are five forms of incendiary target:

。Humans

。Provisions

。Equipment

。Storehouses

。Military Units

Have good reason for setting a fire, and always have the tools to hand. There is a time for spreading fire. There is a day for starting it.

The time is when the weather is parched. The day is when the Moon is in the Winnowing Basket, the Wall, the Wings or the Axle. When the Moon is in these mansions, the wind rises during the day.

Generally, incendiary attacks can develop in five ways:

。When fire starts within his camp, quickly take action on his perimeter. But if fire spreads and his troops do not panic, wait and do not attack.

。When the fire is at its pinnacle, if you see an opportunity, take it. If you do not, then stay where you are.

。When fire starts on the perimeter, do not wait for it to spread within. Set fires at a good time.

。When fire starts upwind, do not attack down-wind.

。Remember that wind endures by day, and ceases at night.

The soldier must be aware of these five incendiary variables, and bear them in mind.

And so, it is smart to use fire as an auxiliary attack. It is strong to use water. For water will cause him damage, but not destroy his *materiel.*

Sad is he who goes into battle, wins and conquers, yet does not reap the rewards of the victor. Fate calls this an opportunity wasted. And so it is said that the enlightened lord considers, but the good general manages.

Do not move without the advantage. Do not act without gain. Do not fight unless in peril.

The lord must not raise an army merely in anger. The general must not be provoked into battle.

Move if there is an advantage to engagement. If engagement brings no benefit, halt.

Rage may return to joy; anger may return to happiness. But a nation once destroyed may not be restored. The dead cannot be brought back to life.

And so the wise ruler is cautious, the good general is watchful, so to keep the kingdom safe and the army whole. Such is the way.

**十三 用间篇**

**CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

**Espionage**

Master Sun says:

When raising 100,000 men, and setting off on a march of 1,000 *li*, it is the common people who pay. The lord will need to find 1,000 pieces of gold per day. There will be unrest at home and abroad, beggars on the roads and lanes. Some 700，000 house-holds will be unable to manage their affairs.

A single day's battle might bring victory, but it could take years to bring that about. It is inhumane to undertake this, if you might know the enemy's state of mind for but a few hundred pieces of gold. Fail to do this, and you are no general, no aide to your ruler, no master of victory.

And so, the enlightened prince and the perceptive general use advance knowledge so that they move to bring victory, and their achievements surpass the multitude.

Advance knowledge cannot be found among ghosts and gods. It cannot be extrapolated from precedent. It cannot be calculated with experiments. Instead, it surely comes from men who know the enemy's state of mind.

And so, there are five types of spy to use:

。Native

。Embedded

。Double

。Dud

。Live

Use of these five tools leads to unknowable courses of action, and so it is called the Divine Thread. It is most precious to a prince.

A Native asset is a countryman of your enemy.

An Embedded asset is an officer in your enemy's administration.

A Double agent is an enemy spy that now works for you.

A Dud spy is one to whom we deliberately give false information, knowing he shall spread it to the enemy.

A Live spy returns with intelligence reports.

And so, in military affairs, your spies should be the ones you hold most dear, the ones most generously rewarded, and the ones whose tasks are most secret. You cannot use spies without great wisdom. You cannot use spies without great benevolence. You cannot obtain value from spies without accrued morsels of data.

Start small, in increments. There is no place where spies cannot be put to use.

If a spy's intelligence leaks before it is declassified, the spy and all he told must be put to death.

Where there is an army to strike, a city to attack, a person to kill, you must surely obtain advance knowledge of the defending general, his left-and right-hand men, his aides, his watchmen, and his body-guards.

We must certainly send out our spies to discover these details. And certainly, we should expect that enemy agents will come to spy on us. By offering them bribes and asylum, we may turn them into spies that work instead for us.

Using their knowledge, we might recruit Native or Embedded agents to work for us.

Using their knowledge, we can put Dud spies to use with bad intelligence, and feed it to the enemy.

Using this knowledge, Live spies can be sent into the field when the time is right.

The ruler must be appraised of the roles of the five types of spy. This information must come from double agents, and hence the double agent can never be too greatly rewarded.

In ancient times, the Yin dynasty came to power because of Yi Zhi, of the Xia. The Zhou dynasty came to power because of Lu Ya, of the Yin.

And so the enlightened prince and the perceptive general should be ready to use the most wise of people as spies, so they can achieve great things. This is essential to the soldier. For when the military makes its move, it is where they have placed their trust.