

S U N I T Z U
T H E A R T
P E N G U I N
G R E A T I D
L I T T L E
S T R I K E
W I T H
C H A O S
O F
B O O K S
W A R



Sun-tzu ✓

The Art of War

TRANSLATED BY
JOHN MINFORD

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Making of Plans

Master Sun said:

War is
A grave affair of state;
It is a place
Of life and death,
A road
To survival and extinction,
A matter
To be pondered carefully.

There are Five Fundamentals
For this deliberation,
For the making of comparisons
And the assessing of conditions:
The Way,
Heaven,
Earth,
Command,
Discipline.

The Way
Causes men
To be of one mind
With their rulers,

To live or die with them,
And never to waver.

Heaven is

Yin and Yang,
Cold and hot,
The cycle of seasons.

Earth is

Height and depth,
Distance and proximity,
Ease and danger,
Open and confined ground,
Life and death.

Command is

Wisdom,
Integrity,
Compassion,
Courage,
Severity.

Discipline is

Organization,
Chain of command,
Control of expenditure.

Every commander is aware

Of these
Five Fundamentals.
He who grasps them

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Wins;
He who fails to grasp them
Loses.

For this deliberation,
For the making of comparisons,
And the assessing of conditions,
Discover:

Which ruler
Has the Way?

Which general
Has the ability?

Which side has
Heaven and Earth?

On which side
Is discipline
More effective?

Which army
Is the stronger?

Whose officers and men
Are better trained?

In which army
Are rewards and punishments
Clearest?

From these
Can be known
Victory and defeat.

Heed my plan,
Employ me,
And victory is surely yours;
I will stay.

Do not heed my plan,
And even if you did employ me,
You would surely be defeated;
I will depart.

Settle on the best plan,
Exploit the dynamic within,
Develop it without,

Follow the advantage,
And master opportunity:
This is the dynamic.

The Way of War is
A Way of Deception.

When able,
Feign inability;

When deploying troops,
Appear not to be.

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When near,
Appear far;

When far,
Appear near.

Lure with bait;

Strike with chaos.

If the enemy is full,
Be prepared.

If strong,
Avoid him.

If he is angry,
Disconcert him.

If he is weak,
Stir him to pride.

If he is relaxed,
Harry him;

If his men are harmonious,
Split them.

Attack
Where he is
Unprepared;
Appear

Where you are
Unexpected.

This is
Victory in warfare;
It cannot be
Divulged
In advance.

Victory belongs to the side
That scores most
In the temple calculations
Before battle.

Defeat belongs to the side
That scores least
In the temple calculations
Before battle.

Most spells victory;
Least spells defeat;
None, surer defeat.

I see it in this way,
And the outcome is apparent.

Waging of War

Master Sun said:

In War,

For an army of
One thousand
Four-horse swift chariots,
One thousand
Hide-armoured wagons,
For one hundred thousand
Mail-clad soldiers,
With provisions for
Four hundred miles;

Allowing for

Expenses at home and at the front,
Dealings with envoys and advisers;
Glue and lacquer,
Repairs to chariots and armour;
The daily cost of all this
Will exceed
One thousand taels of silver.

In War,

Victory should be
Swift.
If victory is slow,

Men tire,
Morale sags.
Sieges
Exhaust strength;
Protracted campaigns
Strain the public treasury.

If men are tired,
Morale low,
Strength exhausted,
Treasure spent;
Then the feudal lords
Will exploit the disarray
And attack.
This even the wisest
Will be powerless
To mend.

I have heard that in war
Haste can be
Folly
But have never seen
Delay that was
Wise.

No nation has ever benefited
From a protracted war.

Without a full understanding of
The harm
Caused by war,

It is impossible to understand
The most profitable way
Of conducting it.

The Skilful Warrior

Never conscripts troops
A second time;
Never transports provisions
A third.

He brings equipment from home
But forages off the enemy.
And so his men
Have plenty to eat.

Supplying an army

At a distance
Drains the public coffers
And impoverishes
The common people.

Where an army is close at hand,

Prices rise;
When prices rise,
The common people
Spend all they have;
When they spend all,
They feel the pinch of
Taxes and levies.

Strength is depleted
On the battlefield;
Families at home
Are destitute.

The common people
Lose seven-tenths
Of their wealth.
Six-tenths of the public coffers
Are spent
On broken chariots,
Worn-out horses,
Armour and helmets,
Crossbows and arrows,
Spears and bucklers,
Lances and shields,
Draft animals,
Heavy wagons.

So a wise general
Feeds his army
Off the enemy.
One peck
Of enemy provisions
Is worth twenty
Carried from home;
One picul
Of enemy fodder
Is worth twenty
Carried from home.

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The killing of an enemy
Stems from
Wrath;

The fighting for booty
Stems from
A desire for reward.

In chariot fighting,
When more than ten
Enemy chariots are captured,
The man to take the first
Should be rewarded.

Change the enemy's
Chariot flags and standards;
Mingle their chariots
With ours.

Treat prisoners of war kindly,
And care for them.
Use victory over the enemy
To enhance your own strength.

In War,
Prize victory,
Not a protracted campaign.

The wise general
Is a Lord of Destiny;
He holds the nation's
Peace or peril
In his hands.

Strategic Offensive

Master Sun said:

In War,

Better take

A state

Intact

Than destroy it.

Better take

An army,

A regiment,

A detachment,

A company,

Intact

Than destroy them.

Ultimate excellence lies

Not in winning

Every battle

But in defeating the enemy

Without ever fighting.

The highest form of warfare

Is to attack

Strategy itself;

The next,
To attack
Alliances;

The next,
To attack
Armies;

The lowest form of war is
To attack
Cities.
Siege warfare
Is a last resort.

In a siege,
Three months are needed
To assemble
Protective shields,
Armoured wagons,
And sundry
Siege weapons and equipment;
Another three months
To pile
Earthen ramps.

The general who cannot
Master his anger
Orders his troops out
Like ants,
Sending one in three
To their deaths,