

S Theory of tress on Peace in Chinese Military Strategy

**China in
Peaceful
Development**

Repatee on Gains from Reading

**Extraordinarily Abstruse Writing of
the East: *Zhou Yi***

Earliest Strategist Jiang Tai Gong

Lao Zi — Master of Strategists

Sun Zi — Sage of the War

**Mo Zi — Advocate of Universal Love
and Non-aggression**



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Huang Zu'an



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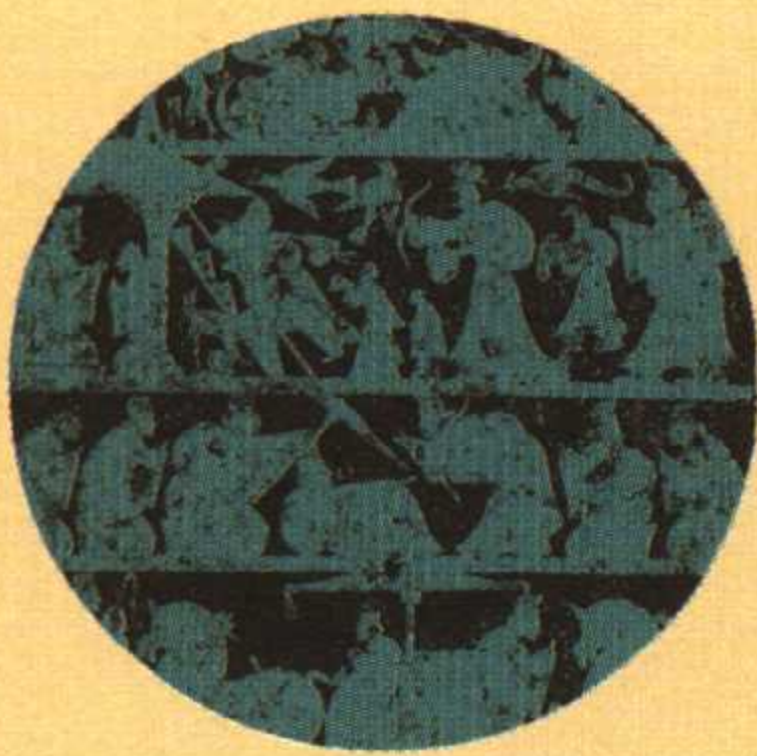
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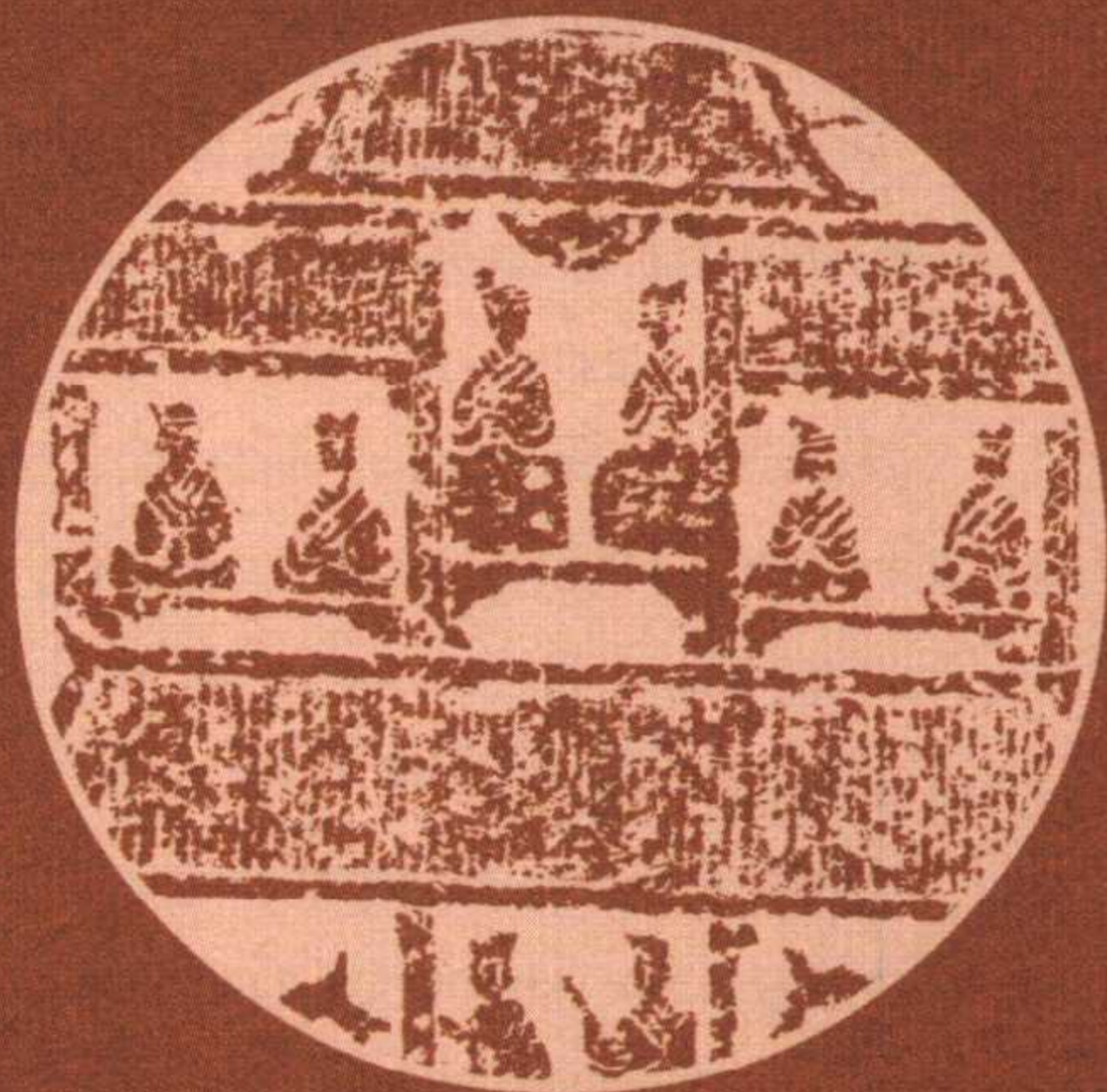
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I.

Repartee on
Gains from
Reading



It can be said with certainty that the notion “peace is most precious” is widely acknowledged in China, having penetrated deep into people’s hearts. Whenever anything undesirable or a dispute occurs among sisters and brothers, between neighbors, colleagues and good friends, people customarily try to console them with the words “peace is most precious,” hoping they would live together in serenity with one another. Even when a conflict or a quarrel breaks out among strangers, other people on the spot usually try to console them with the words, “peace is most precious,” calling upon them to deal with the issue calmly and in a cool manner. This is certainly all the more so when it occurs within a family, for as the saying goes, “If a family lives in harmony, all endeavors shall prosper.” A family, whether it is a big family of four generations living under one roof, or merely a couple, a husband and wife, may surely flourish and grow if only they are gentle and amiable, discuss with each other the problems at hand, and try to solve the difficulties that arise. Otherwise, if family members scheme against each other, and try to cheat or outwit each other, this definitely leads to the decline and collapse of the family. The ancient Chinese saying, “When brothers fight at home, trouble emerges within one’s family,” means that disaster, decline and ruin are rooted within the family. On military matters, ancient Chinese strategists had very rich, profound and superb theories, and their

attitude toward war was very clear. Shang Yang (390-338 BC), a reformist of the State of Qin in the 4th century BC, said in the book *Writing and Painting Scheme of Merchant Circles*: “War is not good, but a war aimed at eliminating war may be carried out; killing is not good, yet killing a murderer in order to stop killing is permitted.” This is to say that the objective of war is to eliminate war and to uphold peace. This is the unwavering military wisdom of China’s ancient strategists.

1.

“止” and “戈” Combine to Become “武”

Legend has it that written characters for the Chinese language were created by Cang Jie, an official historian of Emperor Huangdi, 5,000 years ago. Cang Jie, said to be of unusual character, with the appearance of a dragon, with four eyes, had the ability to keenly observe the tracks left on the ground by the claws of various birds and the hooves of horses, sensitively analyzing and differentiating them, so as to distinguish them. When inspiration came upon him, he began creating written characters. The occasion shook heaven and earth, and ears of corn fell from heaven to the ground, and ghosts cried all night. This implies that in the early period of

primitive agriculture, there had already been writing. After characters were created, people would use them to categorize things, and officials would also use them to improve administrative efficiency.

The birth and spread of these characters were validated by the public, necessitating a long process of evolution; thus characters were formed gradually through frequent exchanges among people over long periods of time. Cang Jie might be one of the inventors, and even more may be the one who collated and created the archetypes for Chinese characters. Eminent thinker Xun Kuang, or Xun Zi (c. 313-238 BC), stated in *"Uncovering" of Xun Zi*: "There are many, many character aficionados, but only the story about Cang Jie could be handed down, because he devoted his life to the collation of writings and summed up many forms into one common formulation."

Archeological excavations revealed that early Chinese characters were evident during the late period of Dawenkou Culture during the Neolithic Age, 4,800 to 4,300 years ago. These characters were carved on pottery, in a pictographic image or composed of two to three images. The former with a single image was a pictographic character as termed in philology. For example, the long-handled battle-ax used in ancient China, the sun, mountain and fish, formed in two to three images, are characters possessing meanings of their own. For instance, the word "旦" (dawn), the upper part means the sun while the lower part the earth, indicating the

sun just emerges from behind the horizon. What is extremely significant is that 79 pieces of pottery from the mid-Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century BC), unearthed in the early 1970s in Gaocheng City, Hebei Province, were engraved with various characters, among which there were the two Chinese words “止” and “戈.” The word “止” is in the shape of the five toes of the foot; while the word “戈” was drawn in the shape of battle-ax, a weapon mounted on a long handle, a sharp edge at both ends and placed horizontally on the top — the battle-ax was used to strike horizontally and to kill by hooking, as an offensive weapon. Also found at the same time was a character “干,” i.e., the shape of a leather shield for defensive purposes.

The pictographic characters of “止” and “戈” combined to become “武” meaning weapon, so the meaning of “武” is crystal clear — figuratively speaking, it means: throwing the killing weapon on the ground and treading on it, never to be used again. Historian Ban Gu of the Han Dynasty (206-220 BC) said: Cang Jie created the character “武” made of “止” and “戈” implying that the highly moral and intelligent ancient people used force with the aim to prevent savagery, remedy disaster and disorder, stop war, and not let such things that harm the people continue unrestrained.

The forebears of the Chinese nation lived from generation to generation on the lands of the Yellow and Yangtze river valleys in the northern temperate zones, on riverside terraces, hill sides, plains and marshlands. About 8,000 years

ago, they ended the practice of slash-and-burn farming methods, and entered into the agricultural stage. They used stone spades and bone shears to turn the soil, so that the structure of the soil somewhat improved, and the seasons that the land could be used were prolonged; unlike the slash-and-burn period, when the land used changed every year, so dwelling places had to be shifted year after year. With the change to settled agriculture in one location, people sang the praises of the peaceful life, which featured “rising to work at sunrise and retiring at sunset,” and after a considerable period of time, they became imbued with the overall harmonious concept known as “the oneness of heaven and humanity.” This mainly signified harmony between humans and the natural environment; at the same time it also included ordered harmony between humans, and even inner human harmony, that is, what is known as “when one is at ease he feels peace at heart.” There were also conflicts and fights among our forebears in ancient times, but their basic principle for handling the matter was to control chaos through war, and to stop war with war.

Sima Qian (c. 135-? BC), author of China’s first general history, presented a series of biographies recorded as *Shi Ji* (*Records of the Historian*). It is recorded in “The Biographies of Five Sovereigns” in *Shi Ji* that before the age of Emperor Huangdi was the age of Shen Nong. Shen Nong was the first person in ancient China to teach people to use a spade to turn the soil and cultivate farm crops, and was also

known as Emperor Yandi. In the later period of the age of Shen Nong, various tribes sent troops to fight each other, causing insurmountable difficulties for the people, with Shen Nong unable to send armed troops to suppress those who waged wars of aggression. Emperor Huangdi trained soldiers and sent expeditions against the tribes who disrupted orderly society, and various tribes came to pledge allegiance to the emperor. The most violent tribe was the Chiyou, who emerged in the eastern region downstream from the Yellow River. Their troops were tough, brave and aggressive, skilled at making powerful and sharp weapons. They went westward to first defeat the Yandi tribe, occupied their land. The Yandi asked the Huangdi tribe for assistance. The Yandi and Huangdi both belonged to the Huaxia group. In order to safeguard the overall interests of the group, Huangdi offered to form a league with the Yandi to contain the Chiyou. At that time, the Chiyou had concentrated 81 branch tribes, and took the initiative to launch attacks against Huangdi by relying on their strong troops and superior weapons. Huangdi led various tribes, who adopted the bear, wolf, leopard and dragon as their totems, to meet the Chiyou troops in the region of Zhuolu. After several rounds of fighting, Huangdi, with the support of the Xuannu tribe, finally launched counterattacks. A strong wind was blowing, and dust filled the air, as Huangdi's soldiers sounded the bugle, and beat the war drums. Taking advantage of the haste and confusion among the Chiyou troops, Huangdi's tribes used southward posi-

tioning carts to show the direction and defeated the enemy in one blow, capturing and killing the Chiyu leader. This campaign was known in history as the "Zhuolu Battle." It was also referred to as the origin of ancient Chinese war. Yandi and Huangdi henceforth became known as the common original ancestor of the Chinese nation, and therefore the battle was considered the war that laid the foundation of the Yandi-Huangdi civilization.

The invention of writing script is generally regarded as one of the most important signifiers of the birth of civilization, as noted in the histories of various ancient countries around the world. Renowned anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan said that civilized society originates in the invention of phonetic letters, and the use of words. Chinese characters originated mainly as pictographs. The word "武," made up of "止" and "戈" demonstrating that the idea that "peace is most precious" in containing chaos and stopping war with war, had been formed as early as the initial periods of Chinese civilization. Agriculture following the mandate of heaven and meeting the requirements of the times, to be self-sufficient, was the economic foundation for the emergence of this concept, with the overall harmonious mode of thinking of the oneness of heaven and humans as its ideological root cause; while the Battle of Zhuolu, featuring "cultivation of virtue to inspire the army," and other wars featuring "restraint from enjoyment when on an expedition," were precisely its real basis. Such concept and mode of thinking is

the distinctive feature of ancient Chinese military thought, shining with unique brilliance in world military history.

2.

China's Martial Sage

There is a valiant, robust, romantic and unconventional hero in Greek mythology, the God of War Ares, son of the God Zeus and his wife Hera. He is one of the gods residing on Mount Olympus. He has an inclination to kill, and represents the savagery of war and slaughter. He is not favored by gods, with even his parents disliking him. The only people to accompany him in battle were his younger sister, the Goddess Eros, and the two sons he bore with his sweetheart Aphrodite, the Spartan goddess of war. Aphrodite was at first the goddess of love and fertility, occasionally even presiding over marriages. In ancient Greek myth, she more often appears as a goddess of erotic love and beauty, and was once widely worshipped as the goddess of navigation. In Sparta, Thebes, Cyprus and other places, Aphrodite is worshipped as a goddess of war.

In ancient Chinese myths, there are many heroic deities, but there is no god responsible for war. There is a deity of archery in the field of weaponry. This deity, Hou Yi, made bows and arrows himself. He was well versed in archery,