

Chinese Thoughts on Warfare from the Zhou dynasty

“Warfare is the greatest affair of state, the basis of life and death, the Tao to survival or extinction. It must be thoroughly pondered and analyzed.” Sun Tzu The Art of War

“Even though a state may be vast, those who love warfare will inevitably perish. Even though calm may prevail under Heaven, those who forget warfare will certainly be endangered.” Si ma fa

“The army’s victory lies in selecting the troops. Its courage lies in the regulations. Its skill lies in the strategic configuration of power. Its sharpness lies in trust. Its power lies in the Tao. Its wealth lies in a speedy return. Its strength lies in giving rest to the people. Its injury lies in frequent battles.” Sun Bin Art of War

“The army cannot be mobilized out of personal anger. If victory can be foreseen then the troops can be raised. If victory cannot be foreseen, then the mobilization should be stopped.” Wei Liaozi

“Today, if the people turn their backs to the border gates and decide the issue of life and death, if they have been taught to die without hesitation, there is a reason. Training and instructions have caused the defenders to inevitably be solid; those engaged in battle to inevitably fight; perverse plans not to be put into action; perverse people not to speak; orders to be effected without any changes; the army to advance without doubt; and the light units to be like a clap of thunder, to rush at the enemy like the terrified. Raise those of merit, distinguish those of virtue, making their distinction as clear as black and white. Cause the people to follow the orders of their superiors just as the four limbs respond to the mind. If the forward units break up the enemy’s ranks, throw their formation into chaos, and crush their hardness like water bursting through, there is a basis for it. This is termed the Army’s Instructions. They provide the means to open sealed borders, preserve the altars of state, eliminate disaster and harm, and complete Martial Virtue.” Wei Liaozi

“A campaign army takes measure as its prime concern so that the people’s strength will be adequate. Then, even when the blades clash, the infantry will not run and the chariots will not gallop. When pursuing a fleeing enemy the troops will not break formation, thereby avoiding chaos. The solidarity of a campaign army derives from military discipline that maintains order in formation, does not exhaust the strength of men or horses, and whether moving slowly or rapidly, does not exceed the measure of the commands” Simafa

“There are five types of incendiary attack: The first is to incinerate men, the second to incinerate provisions, the third to incinerate supply trains, the fourth to incinerate armories, and the fifth to incinerate formations. Implementing an incendiary attack depends on the proper conditions. Equipment for incendiary attack should be fully prepared before required. Launching an incendiary attack has its appropriate seasons, igniting the fire the proper days. As for the seasons, it is the time of the dry spell; as for the day, when the moon is in chi, pi, i, or chen. When it is in these four lunar lodges, these are days the wind will arise.” Sun Tzu The Art of War

“If the territory is vast but the cities small, you must first occupy their land. If the cities are large but the land narrow, you must first attack their cities. If the country is vast and the populace few, then isolate their strategic points. If the land is confined but the people numerous, then construct high mounds in order to overlook them. Do not destroy their material profits nor seize the people’s

agricultural seasons. Be magnanimous toward their government officials, stabilize the people's occupations, and provide relief for their impoverished, for then your Virtue will be sufficient to overspread All under Heaven." Wei Liaozi

"King Wei of Ch'i, inquiring about employing the military, said to Sun Pin: "If two armies confront each other, their two generals looking across at each other, with both of them being solid and secure so that neither side dares to move first, what should be done?" Sun Pin replied: "Employ some light troops to test them, commanded by some lowly but courageous officer. Focus on fleeing, do not strive for victory. Deploy your forces in concealment in order to abruptly assault their flanks. This is termed the 'Great Attainment.' "" Sun Bin The Art of War

"Thus the strategy for employing the military: Do not approach high mountains; do not confront those who have hills behind them. Do not pursue feigned retreats. Do not attack animated troops. Do not swallow an army acting as bait. Do not obstruct an army retreating homeward. If you besiege an army you must leave an outlet. Do not press an exhausted invader. These are the strategies for employing the military" Sun Tzu The Art of War

"The tactics for defensive aquatic warfare: You must make the infantry numerous and the chariots few. Command them to fully prepare all the necessary equipment, such as hooks, repelling poles, cypress wood, pestles, light boats, oars, baskets, and sails. When advancing, you must follow close on; when withdrawing do not press together. When mounting a flank attack follow the current's flow, taking their men as the target. The tactics for aggressive aquatic warfare: nimble boats should be used as flags, swift boats should be used as messengers. When the enemy goes off pursue him; when the enemy comes forth press him. Resist or yield . . . in accord with the situation, organize against them. When they shift their forces, make them change their plans; when they are deploying, strike them; when they are properly assembled, separate them. Accordingly, the weapons include spades and the chariots have defensive infantry. You must investigate their numerical strength as many or few, strike their boats, seize the fords, and show the people that the infantry is coming. These are the tactics for aquatic warfare." Sun Bin The Art of War

"Five types of terrain are conducive to defeat: gorges with streams; valleys; river areas; marshes; and salt flats. Crossing rivers; confronting hills; going contrary to the current's flow, occupying killing ground; and confronting masses of trees— all these that I have just mentioned, in all five, one will also not be victorious." Sun Bin The Art of War