3

Sun-tzu's Art of War

孫子兵法

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Translator's Introduction

OF THE *Seven Military Classics* only Sun-tzu's *Military Strategy,* traditionally known as the *Art of War,* has received much exposure in the West. First translated by a French missionary approximately two hundred years ago, it was reportedly studied and effectively employed by Napoleon and possibly by certain members of the Nazi High Command. For the past two thousand years it remained the most important military treatise in Asia, where even the common people knew it by name. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean military theorists and professional soldiers have all studied it, and many of the strategies have played a significant role in Japan's storied military history, commencing about the eighth century A.D.[1] Over the millennia the book's concepts have stimulated intense debates and vehement philosophical discussions, commanding the attention of significant figures in many realms. Although the book has been rendered into English numerous times, with the translations of Lionel Giles[2] and Samuel B. Griffith[3] still widely available, further translations continue to appear. Some of these are merely versions of Giles—acknowledged or otherwise—under a different cover, whereas others represent entirely new works.[4]

Sun-tzu and the Text

It has long been claimed that the *Art of War* is China's oldest and most profound military treatise, with all other works relegated to secondary status at best. Traditionalists attribute the book to the historical Sun Wu, who is recorded in the *Shih chi* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* as having been active in the last years of the sixth century B.C., beginning about 512 B.C. In their view the book should therefore date from this period and should contain his theories and concepts of military strategy. However, other scholars have (1) identified numerous historical anachronisms in the extant text that encompass terms, events, technology, and philosophical concepts;[5] (2) emphasized the absence of any evidence (such as should appear in the *Tso*

chuan, the classic record of the period's political events) corroborating Sun Wu's strategic role in the wars between Wu and Yüeh;[6] and (3) focused on the disparity between the advanced concepts and nature of large-scale warfare discussed in the *Art of War* and the more limited, primitive battles that characterized the end of the sixth century B.C.[7]

The traditionalist interpretation derives critical support from the numerous passages from the *Art of War* that are visible in most other military writings because, it is asserted, such extensive borrowing could only have been possible from the earliest text.[8] Moreover, this widespread copying is thought to provide ample evidence that the *Art of War* was considered early on the most important military treatise and was valued far more than any other work, oral or written. The origination of certain analytical concepts, such as terrain classification, is also credited to Sun-tzu; therefore, their utilization by the compilers of the *Ssu-ma Fa* is thought to prove Sun-tzu's historical priority indisputably rather than to raise the possibility that Sun-tzu benefited from other works.

However, even if the likelihood of later accretions and revisions is disregarded, the traditionalist position still ignores the development and existence of more than two thousand years of warfare and tactics prior to 500 B.C. and attributes the virtual creation of military strategy to Sun-tzu alone.[9] The concise, often abstract nature of his passages is cited as evidence that the book was composed at an early stage in the development of Chinese writing, but an equally compelling argument can be advanced that such a philosophically sophisticated style would only be possible from a foundation of extensive battlefield experience and a solid tradition of serious military contemplation.[10] Basic concepts and common passages seem to argue in favor of a comprehensive military tradition and evolving expertise rather than creation *ex nihilo.*

Excluding the now-untenable position of those skeptics who dismissed the book as a late fabrication,[11] three major views seem to prevail regarding the composition date of the *Art of War.* The first identifies it with the historic Sun Wu, with final compilation occurring shortly after his death in the early fifth century B.C.[12] The second, which is based on internal evidence, consigns it to the middle-to-late Warring States period, or the fourth to third centuries B.C.[13] The third, also founded on internal evidence supplemented by recently discovered texts, places it somewhere in the last half of the fifth century B.C.[14] It is unlikely that a final determination can ever be realized, especially because traditionalists tend to be very emotional in their defense of Sun-tzu's authenticity. However, it seems likely that the historical figure existed and that he not only served as a strategist and possibly a general but

also composed the core of the book that bears his name. Thereafter, the essential teachings were probably transmitted within the family or a close-knit school of disciples, being improved and revised with the passing decades while gradually gaining wider dissemination. The early text may even have been edited by Sun-tzu's famous descendant Sun Pin, who also extensively employed its teachings in his own *Military Methods.*[15]

The *Shih chi* incorporates the biographies of numerous distinguished military strategists and generals, including Sun-tzu.[16] However, the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* recounts the somewhat more interesting version that follows:

> In the third year of King Ho-lü's reign Wu's generals wanted to attack Ch'u, but no action was taken. Wu Tzu-hsü[17] and Po Hsi spoke with each other: "We nurture officers and make plans on behalf of the king. These strategies will be advantageous to the state, and for this reason the king should attack Ch'u. But he has put off issuing the orders and does not have any intention to mobilize the army. What should we do?"
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> After a while the King of Wu queried Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi: "I want to send forth the army. What do you think?" Wu Tzu-hsü and Po Hsi replied: "We would like to receive the order." The King of Wu secretly thought the two of them harbored great enmity for Ch'u. He was deeply afraid that they would take the army out, only to be exterminated. He mounted his tower, faced into the southern wind, and groaned. After a while he sighed. None of his ministers understood the king's thoughts. Wu Tzu-hsü secretly realized the king would not decide, so he recommended Sun-tzu to him.
>
> Sun-tzu, whose name was Wu, was a native of Wu.[18] He excelled at military strategy but dwelled in secrecy far away from civilization, so ordinary people did not know of his ability. Wu Tzu-hsü, himself enlightened, wise, and skilled in discrimination, knew Sun-tzu could penetrate and destroy the enemy. One morning when he was discussing military affairs he recommended Sun-tzu seven times. The King of Wu said: "Since you have found an excuse to advance this *shih,* I want to have him brought in." He questioned Su-tzu about military strategy, and each time that he laid out a section of his book the king could not praise him enough.
>
> Greatly pleased he inquired: "If possible, I would like a minor test of your military strategy." Sun-tzu said: "It is possible. We can conduct a minor test with women from the inner palace." The king said: "I agree." Sun-tzu said: "I would like to have two of your Majesty's beloved concubines act as company commanders, each to direct a company." He ordered all three hundred women to wear helmets and armor, to carry swords and shields, and [to] stand. He instructed them in military methods, that in accord with the drum they should advance, withdraw, go left or right, or turn around. He had them know the prohibitions and then ordered: "At the first beating of the drum you should all assem-

ble, at the second drumming you should advance with your weapons, and at the third deploy into military formation." At this the palace women all covered their mouths and laughed.

Sun-tzu then personally took up the sticks and beat the drums, giving the orders three times and explaining them five times. They laughed as before. Sun-tzu saw that the women laughed continuously and would not stop.

Sun-tzu was enraged. His eyes suddenly opened wide, his sound was like a terrifying tiger, his hair stood on end under his cap, and his neck broke the tassels at the side. He said to the Master of Laws: "Get the executioner's axes."

Sun-tzu [then] said: "If the instructions are not clear, if the explanations and orders are not trusted, it is the general's offense. When they have already been instructed three times and the orders explained five times, if the troops still do not perform, it is the fault of the officers. According to the rescripts for military discipline, what is the procedure?" The Master of Laws said: "Decapitation!" Sun-tzu then ordered the beheading of the two company commanders, the king's favorite concubines.[19]

The King of Wu ascended his platform to observe just when they were about to behead his beloved concubines. He had an official hasten down to them with orders to say: "I already know the general is able to command forces. Without these two concubines my food will not be sweet. It would be appropriate not to behead them."

Sun-tzu said: "I have already received my commission as commanding general. According to the rules for generals, when I, as a general, am in command of the army even though you issue orders to me, I do not [have to] accept them." [He then had them beheaded.]

He again beat the drum, and they went left and right, advanced and withdrew, and turned around in accord with the prescribed standards without daring to blink an eye. The two companies were silent, not daring to look around. Thereupon Sun-tzu reported to the King of Wu: "The army is already well-ordered. I would like your Majesty to observe them. However you might want to employ them, even sending them forth into fire and water, will not present any difficulty. They can be used to settle All under Heaven."

The King of Wu was suddenly displeased. He said: "I know that you excel at employing the army. Even though I can thereby become a hegemon, there is no place to exercise them. General, please dismiss the army and return to your dwelling. I am unwilling to act further."

Sun-tzu said: "Your Majesty only likes the words, he is not able to realize their substance." Wu Tzu-hsü remonstrated: "I have heard that the army is an inauspicious affair[20] and cannot be wantonly tested. Thus if one forms an army but does not go forth to launch a punitive attack, then the military Tao will be unclear. Now if your Majesty sincerely seeks talented *shih* and wants to mobilize the army to execute the brutal state of Ch'u, become hegemon of All under Heaven, and overawe the feudal lords, if you do not employ Sun-tzu as your general, who can ford the Huai, cross the Ssu, and traverse a thousand *li* to engage in battle?" Thereupon the King of Wu was elated. He had the drum beaten to convene the army's staff, assembled the troops, and attacked Ch'u. Sun-tzu took Shu, killing the two renegade Wu generals Kai Yu and Chu Yung.[21]

The *Shih chi* biography further states that "to the West he defeated the powerful state of Ch'u and advanced into Ying. To the north he overawed Ch'i and Chin, and his name became manifest among the feudal lords. This was due to Sun-tzu's power among them." Some military historians identify him with several campaigns against Ch'u that followed, commencing in 511 B.C.—the year after his initial interview with King Ho-lü—although he is never mentioned in any recorded source as having sole command of the troops. Presumably, Sun-tzu realized the difficulty of surviving under the evolving, unstable political conditions of his time and set an example for later ages by retiring to obscurity, leaving his work behind.[22]

The *Shih chi* biography differs in another fundamental aspect from the *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh* because it identifies Sun-tzu as a native of Ch'i rather than of Wu.[23] This would place his background in a state that enjoyed the heritage of the T'ai Kung's thought—one originally on the periphery of the ancient Chou political world, which was known for its diversity of views and imaginative theories. Because the *Art of War* clearly reflects many Taoist conceptions[24] and is philosophically sophisticated, Sun-tzu may well have been a man of Ch'i.

Main Concepts in the *Art of War*

Sun-tzu's *Art of War,* as transmitted through the ages, consists of thirteen chapters of varying length—each ostensibly focused on a specific topic. Although most contemporary Chinese military scholars continue to characterize the entire work as an organic whole, marked by the logical progression and development of themes from start to finish, obvious relationships between supposedly connected passages are frequently difficult to determine or are simply nonexistent. However, the major concepts generally receive frequent, logically consistent treatment throughout, which supports the attribution of the book to a single figure or a well-integrated school of thought.[25]

The military writings unearthed in the Lin-i Han dynasty tomb include a copy of the *Art of War* essentially in its traditional form, together with significant additional material such as the "King of Wu's Questions."[26] The translation that follows has been based on the heavily annotated classical version because that version reflects the understanding and views of the past one thousand years and the beliefs on which government and military officials

based their actions in real history. The traditional text has been revised only when the tomb materials resolve otherwise-opaque passages, although the impact of such changes on the overall content remains minimal. Significant variations in characters and sentences are discussed in notes supplementing the translation.

Because the *Art of War* is remarkably lucid, if compressed and sometimes enigmatic, only a brief introduction of the major topics is undertaken here. General Griffith's translation, published by Oxford, remains widely available, and his detailed introduction to Sun-tzu's thought can be consulted by those who wish a more extensive, systematic English presentation.[27] The analytical literature in Chinese and Japanese is too copious to enumerate; selected works are cited in the notes because the commentators may cast light on different concepts or passages.

* * *

At the time the *Art of War* was probably composed, warfare had evolved sufficiently to endanger the very existence of virtually every state. Therefore Sun-tzu felt that mobilizing a nation for war and committing its army to battle could only be undertaken with the greatest gravity.[28] His entire approach to employing the army is thoroughly analytical, mandating careful planning and the formulation of an overall strategy before commencing the campaign. The focus of all grand strategy must be the development of a prosperous, contented populace whose willing allegiance to the ruler is unquestioned.[29] Thereafter, diplomatic initiatives can be effected, but military preparations should never be neglected. The primary objective should be to subjugate other states without actually engaging in armed combat, thereby realizing the ideal of complete victory. Whenever possible this should be achieved through diplomatic coercion, thwarting the enemy's plans and alliances, and frustrating its strategy. The government should resort to armed combat only if the enemy threatens the state with military action or refuses to acquiesce without being forced into submission through warfare. Even when exercising this option, every military campaign should focus on achieving maximum results with minimum risk and exposure, limiting as far as possible the destruction that is inflicted and suffered.

Sun-tzu emphasizes rational self-control throughout the *Art of War,* stressing the vital necessity to avoid all engagements not based on extensive, detailed analyses of the situation and combat options and of one's own capabilities.[30] Haste, fear of being labeled a coward, and personal emotions such as anger and hatred should never be permitted to adversely influence state and command decisionmaking.[31] The army should never be thrown rashly

into an engagement, thrust into a war, or mobilized unnecessarily. Instead, restraint should be exercised, although measures should be implemented to ensure that the army cannot be defeated. Accordingly, certain tactical situations and configurations of terrain should be avoided and instead be turned to one's advantage when opportune. Thereafter, the focus can be directed toward realizing the predetermined campaign strategy and implementing appropriate tactics to defeat the army.

Sun-tzu's basic strategy focuses on manipulating the enemy, creating the opportunity for an easy victory. To this end he classifies the types of terrain and their exploitation; advances numerous tactics for probing, manipulating, and weakening the enemy; conceptualizes the tactical situation in terms of extensive series of mutually defining elements;[32] and advocates the employment of both orthodox (*cheng*) and unorthodox (*ch'i*) troops to wrest the victory.[33] The enemy is lured into untenable positions with prospects of gain, enervated by being wearied and exhausted before the attack, and penetrated by forces that are suddenly concentrated at vulnerable points. The army should always be active, even when assuming a defensive posture, in order to create and seize the temporary tactical advantage (*ch'üan*) that will ensure victory. Avoiding a strong force is not cowardice but indicates wisdom because it is self-defeating to fight when and where it is not advantageous.[34]

The basic principle is "go forth where they do not expect it; attack where they are not prepared." This principle can only be realized through secrecy in all activities, through complete self-control and strict discipline within the army, and by being unfathomable. Warfare is a matter of deception—of constantly creating false appearances, spreading disinformation, and employing trickery and deceit. When such deception is imaginatively created and effectively implemented, the enemy will neither know where to attack nor what formations to employ and thus will be condemned to making fatal errors.

The corollary to being unknowable is seeking out and gaining detailed knowledge of the enemy through all available means, including the rigorous employment of spies. The fundamental principle is never to rely on the goodwill of others or on fortuitous circumstances but to guarantee through knowledge, active study, and defensive preparation that the enemy cannot mount a surprise attack or gain a victory through simple coercion.

Throughout the book Sun-tzu discusses the essential problem of command: forging a clearly defined organization that is in control of thoroughly disciplined, well-ordered troops. The critical element is spirit, technically known as *ch'i*—the essential, vital energy of life.[35] This is the component associated with will and intention; when the men are well trained, properly

fed, clothed, and equipped, and if their spirits are roused, they will fight vigorously. However, if physical or material conditions have blunted their spirit; if an imbalance exists in the relationship between command and troops; if for any reason the troops have lost their motivation, they will be defeated. Conversely, the commanding general must manipulate the situation so as to avoid the enemy when its spirits are strong—such as early in the day—and exploit any opportunity presented by its diminishment, attacking when its troops no longer have any inclination to fight, such as when they are about to return to camp. Prolonged warfare can only lead to enervation; therefore, careful planning is paramount to guarantee the swift execution of the campaign strategy. Certain situations, such as fatal terrain on which a desperate battle must be fought, are conducive to eliciting the army's greatest efforts. Others are debilitating, dangerous, and even fatal and must be scrupulously avoided. Rewards and punishments provide the basis for control, but every effort must be made to foster and maintain the proper attitude of desire and commitment on the part of the men. Accordingly, all detrimental stimuli, such as omens and rumors, must be prohibited.[36]

Finally, Sun-tzu sought to maneuver the army into a position where it enjoyed such a great tactical advantage that the impact of its attack, the impulse of its "strategic configuration of power" [*shih,*][37] would be like the sudden onrush of water cascading down from mountain peaks. Deploying the troops into a suitable configuration [*hsing*];[38] creating a favorable "imbalance of power" [*ch'üan*];[39] concentrating forces on focused targets; exploiting advantages of terrain; and stimulating the men's spirits would all be directed toward this moment, toward this decisive objective.

1. Initial Estimations[1]

Sun-tzu said:

"Warfare is the greatest affair of state, the basis of life and death, the Way [Tao] to survival or extinction. It must be thoroughly pondered and analyzed.

* * *

"Therefore, structure it according to [the following] five factors, evaluate it comparatively through estimations, and seek out its true nature.[2] The first is termed the Tao, the second Heaven, the third Earth, the fourth generals, and the fifth the laws [for military organization and discipline].

"The Tao[3] causes the people to be fully in accord with the ruler.[4] [Thus] they will die with him; they will live with him and not fear danger.[5]

"Heaven encompasses yin and yang, cold and heat, and the constraints of the seasons.[6]

"Earth encompasses far or near, difficult or easy, expansive or confined, fatal or tenable terrain.[7]

"The general encompasses wisdom, credibility, benevolence, courage, and strictness.

"The laws [for military organization and discipline] encompass organization and regulations, the Tao of command, and the management of logistics.[8]

"There are no generals who have not heard of these five. Those who understand them will be victorious; those who do not understand them will not be victorious.

* * *

"Thus when making a comparative evaluation through estimations, seeking out its true nature, ask:

Which ruler has the Tao?
Which general has greater ability?
Who has gained [the advantages of] Heaven and Earth?

Whose laws and orders are more thoroughly implemented?
Whose forces[9] are stronger?
Whose officers and troops are better trained?
Whose rewards and punishments are clearer?

"From these I will know victory and defeat!

* * *

"If a general follows my [methods for] estimation and you employ him, he will certainly be victorious and should be retained. If a general does not follow my [methods for] estimation and you employ him, he will certainly be defeated, so dismiss him.[10]

* * *

"After estimating the advantages in accord with what you have heard, put it into effect with strategic power [*shih*][11] supplemented by field tactics which respond to external factors.[12] As for strategic power, [it is] controlling the tactical imbalance of power [*ch'üan*] in accord with the gains to be realized.[13]

* * *

"Warfare is the Way [Tao] of deception.[14] Thus although [you are] capable, display incapability to them. When committed to employing your forces, feign inactivity. When [your objective] is nearby, make it appear as if distant; when far away, create the illusion of being nearby.[15]

* * *

"Display profits to entice them. Create disorder [in their forces] and take them.[16]

"If they are substantial,[17] prepare for them; if they are strong, avoid them.

"If they are angry, perturb them;[18] be deferential to foster their arrogance.[19]

"If they are rested, force them to exert themselves.

"If they are united, cause them to be separated.

"Attack where they are unprepared.

"Go forth where they will not expect it.

"These are the ways military strategists are victorious. They cannot be spoken of in advance.[20]

* * *

"Before the engagement, one who determines in the ancestral temple that he will be victorious has found that the majority of factors are in his favor. Before the engagement one who determines in the ancestral temple that he will not be victorious has found few factors are in his favor.

"If one who finds that the majority of factors favor him will be victorious while one who has found few factors favor him will be defeated, what about someone who finds no factors in his favor?[21]

"If I observe it from this perspective, victory and defeat will be apparent."

2. Waging War

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the military [is this]:[22] If there are one thousand four-horse attack chariots, one thousand leather-armored support chariots, one hundred thousand mailed troops, and provisions are transported one thousand *li*, then the domestic and external campaign expenses, the expenditures for advisers and guests, materials such as glue and lacquer, and providing chariots and armor will be one thousand pieces of gold per day. Only then can an army of one hundred thousand be mobilized.

* * *

"When employing them in battle, a victory that is long in coming will blunt their weapons and dampen their ardor.[23] If you attack cities, their strength will be exhausted.[24] If you expose the army to a prolonged campaign, the state's resources will be inadequate.

"When the weapons have grown dull and spirits depressed, when our strength has been expended and resources consumed, then the feudal lords will take advantage of our exhaustion to arise. Even though you have wise generals, they will not be able to achieve a good result.

"Thus in military campaigns I have heard of awkward speed but have never seen any skill in lengthy campaigns. No country has ever profited from protracted warfare. Those who do not thoroughly comprehend the dangers inherent in employing the army are incapable of truly knowing the potential advantages of military actions.

* * *

"One who excels in employing the military does not conscript the people twice or transport provisions a third time.[25] If you obtain your equipment

from within the state and rely on seizing provisions from the enemy, then the army's foodstuffs will be sufficient.

"The state is impoverished by the army when it transports provisions far off. When provisions are transported far off, the hundred surnames[26] are impoverished.

"Those in proximity to the army will sell their goods expensively.[27] When goods are expensive, the hundred surname's wealth will be exhausted. When their wealth is exhausted, they will be extremely hard pressed [to supply] their village's military impositions.[28]

"When their strength has been expended and their wealth depleted, then the houses in the central plains will be empty.[29] The expenses of the hundred surnames will be some seven-tenths[30] of whatever they have. The ruler's irrecoverable expenditures—such as ruined chariots, exhausted horses, armor, helmets, arrows and crossbows, halberd-tipped and spear-tipped [large, movable] protective shields, strong oxen,[31] and large wagons—will consume six-tenths of his resources.

"Thus the wise general will concentrate on securing provisions from the enemy. One bushel of the enemy's foodstuffs is worth twenty of ours; one picul of fodder is worth twenty of ours.

* * *

"Thus what [motivates men] to slay the enemy is anger; what [stimulates them] to seize profits[32] from the enemy is material goods. Thus in chariot encounters, when ten or more chariots are captured, reward the first to get one. Change their flags and pennants to ours; intermix and employ them with our own chariots. Treat the captured soldiers well in order to nurture them [for our use]. This is referred to as 'conquering the enemy and growing stronger.'

* * *

"Thus the army values being victorious; it does not value prolonged warfare. Therefore, a general who understands warfare is Master of Fate for the people, ruler of the state's security or endangerment."

3. Planning Offensives

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the method for employing the military is this: Preserving the [enemy's] state capital is best, destroying their state capital second-best.[33]

Preserving their army is best, destroying their army second-best.[34] Preserving their battalions is best, destroying their battalions second-best. Preserving their companies is best, destroying their companies second-best. Preserving their squads is best, destroying their squads second-best. For this reason attaining one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the pinnacle of excellence. Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence.

* * *

"Thus the highest realization of warfare is to attack the enemy's plans; next is to attack their alliances; next to attack their army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities.

"This tactic of attacking fortified cities is adopted only when unavoidable. Preparing large movable protective shields, armored assault wagons, and other equipment and devices will require three months. Building earthworks[35] will require another three months to complete. If the general cannot overcome his impatience but instead launches an assault wherein his men swarm over the walls like ants, he will kill one-third of his officers and troops, and the city will still not be taken. This is the disaster that results from attacking [fortified cities].

"Thus one who excels at employing the military subjugates other people's armies without engaging in battle, captures other people's fortified cities without attacking them, and destroys others people's states without prolonged fighting. He must fight under Heaven with the paramount aim of 'preservation.'[36] Thus his weapons will not become dull, and the gains can be preserved. This is the strategy for planning offensives.

* * *

"In general, the strategy for employing the military is this: If your strength is ten times theirs, surround them; if five, then attack them; if double, then divide your forces.[37] If you are equal in strength to the enemy, you can engage him. If fewer, you can circumvent him. If outmatched, you can avoid him. Thus a small enemy that acts inflexibly[38] will become the captives of a large enemy.

* * *

"The general is the supporting pillar of state. If his talents are all-encompassing, the state will invariably be strong. If the supporting pillar is marked by fissures, the state will invariably grow weak.

"Thus there are three ways by which an army is put into difficulty by a ruler:

"He does not know that the Three Armies should not advance but instructs them to advance or does not know that the Three Armies should not withdraw and orders a retreat. This is termed 'entangling the army.'

"He does not understand the Three Armies' military affairs but [directs them] in the same way as his [civil] administration.[39] Then the officers will become confused.

"He does not understand the Three Armies' tactical balance of power [*ch'üan*] but undertakes responsibility for command. Then the officers will be doubtful.

"When the Three Armies are already confused and doubtful, the danger of the feudal lords [taking advantage of the situation] arises. This is referred to as 'a disordered army drawing another on to victory.'

"Thus there are five factors from which victory can be known:

"One who knows when he can fight, and when he cannot fight, will be victorious.

"One who recognizes[40] how to employ large and small numbers will be victorious.

"One whose upper and lower ranks have the same desires will be victorious.

"One who, fully prepared, awaits the unprepared will be victorious.

"One whose general is capable and not interfered with by the ruler will be victorious.

"These five are the Way [Tao] to know victory.

"Thus it is said that one who knows the enemy and knows himself[41] will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement."

4. Military Disposition[42]

Sun-tzu said:

"In antiquity those that excelled in warfare first made themselves unconquerable[43] in order to await [the moment when] the enemy could be conquered.

"Being unconquerable lies with yourself; being conquerable lies with the enemy.

"Thus one who excels in warfare[44] is able to make himself unconquerable, but cannot necessarily cause the enemy to be conquerable.

"Thus it is said a strategy for conquering the enemy can be known but yet not possible to implement.

"One who cannot be victorious assumes a defensive posture; one who can be victorious attacks. In these circumstances by assuming a defensive posture, strength will be more than adequate, whereas in offensive actions it would be inadequate.[45]

"Those who excel at defense bury themselves away below the lowest depths of Earth. Those who excel at offense[46] move from above the greatest heights of Heaven. Thus they are able to preserve themselves and attain complete victory.

"Perceiving a victory that does not surpass what the masses could know is not the pinnacle of excellence. Wrestling victories for which All under Heaven proclaim your excellence is not the pinnacle of excellence.

"Thus lifting an autumn hair cannot be considered great strength; seeing the sun and moon cannot be considered acute vision; hearing the sound of thunder cannot be considered having sensitive ears.

"Those that the ancients[47] referred to as excelling at warfare conquered those who were easy to conquer. Thus the victories of those that excelled in warfare were not marked by fame for wisdom or courageous achievement.[48] Thus their victories were free from errors. One who is free from errors directs his measures toward [certain] victory, conquering those who are already defeated.

"Thus one who excels at warfare first establishes himself in a position where he cannot be defeated while not losing [any opportunity] to defeat the enemy.

"For this reason, the victorious army first realizes the conditions for victory, and then seeks to engage in battle. The vanquished army fights first, and then seeks victory.

" " "

"One[49] who excels at employing the military cultivates the Tao[50] and preserves the laws; therefore, he is able to be the regulator of victory and defeat.[51]

" " "

"As for military methods[52]: the first is termed measurement; the second, estimation [of forces]; the third, calculation [of numbers of men]; the fourth, weighing [relative strength]; and the fifth, victory.

"Terrain gives birth to measurement;[53] measurement produces the estimation [of forces].[54] Estimation [of forces] gives rise to calculating [the numbers of men]. Calculating [the numbers of men] gives rise to weighing [strength]. Weighing [strength] gives birth to victory.

" " "

"Thus the victorious army is like a ton compared with an ounce, while the defeated army is like an ounce weighed against a ton! The combat of the victorious[55] is like the sudden release of a pent-up torrent down a thousand-fathom gorge. This is the strategic disposition of force [*hsing*]."[56]

5. Strategic Military Power[57]

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, commanding a large number is like commanding a few. It is a question of dividing up the numbers. Fighting with a large number is like fighting with a few. It is a question of configuration and designation.[58]

" " "

"What enable the masses of the Three Armies to invariably withstand the enemy without being defeated are the unorthodox [*ch'i*] and orthodox [*cheng*].[59]

"If wherever the army attacks it is like a whetstone thrown against an egg, it is due to the vacuous and substantial.[60]

" " "

"In general, in battle one engages with the orthodox and gains victory through the unorthodox. Thus one who excels at sending forth the unorthodox is as inexhaustible as Heaven,[61] as unlimited as the Yangtze and Yellow rivers.[62] What reach an end and begin again are the sun and moon. What die and are reborn[63] are the four seasons.

"The notes do not exceed five, but the changes[64] of the five notes can never be fully heard. The colors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five colors can never be completely seen. The flavors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five flavors can never be completely tasted. In warfare the strategic configurations of power [*shih*] do not exceed the unorthodox and orthodox, but the changes of the unorthodox and orthodox can never be completely exhausted. The unorthodox and orthodox mutually produce each other, just like an endless cycle.[65] Who can exhaust them?

" " "

"The strategic configuration of power [*shih*] [is visible in] the onrush of pent-up[66] water tumbling stones along. The [effect of] constraints[67] [is visible in] the onrush[68] of a bird of prey breaking the bones of its [target]. Thus the strategic configuration of power [*shih*] of those that excel in warfare is sharply focused, their constraints are precise.[69] Their strategic configuration of power [*shih*] is like a fully drawn crossbow, their constraints like the release of the trigger.

" " "

"Intermixed and turbulent, the fighting appears chaotic, but they cannot be made disordered. In turmoil and confusion, their deployment is circular,[70] and they cannot be defeated.

" " "

"[Simulated] chaos is given birth from control;[71] [the illusion of] fear is given birth from courage; [feigned] weakness is given birth from strength. Order and disorder are a question of numbers; courage and fear are a question of the strategic configuration of power [*shih*]; strength and weakness are a question of the deployment [of forces (*hsing*)].

"Thus one who excels at moving the enemy deploys in a configuration [*hsing*] to which the enemy must respond. He offers something which the enemy must seize. With profit he moves them, with the foundation[72] he awaits them.

"Thus one who excels at warfare seeks [victory] through the strategic configuration of power [*shih*], not from reliance on men. Thus he is able to select men and employ strategic power [*shih*].[73]

"One who employs strategic power [*shih*] commands men in battle as if he were rolling logs and stones. The nature of wood and stone is to be quiet when stable but to move when on precipitous ground. If they are square they stop, if round they tend to move. Thus the strategic power [*shih*] of one who excels at employing men in warfare is comparable to rolling round boulders down a thousand-fathom mountain. Such is the strategic configuration of power [*shih*]."

6. Vacuity and Substance[74]

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, whoever occupies the battleground first and awaits the enemy will be at ease; whoever occupies the battleground afterward and must race to the conflict will be fatigued. Thus one who excels at warfare compels men and is not compelled by other men.[75]

"In order to cause the enemy to come of their own volition, extend some [apparent] profit. In order to prevent the enemy from coming forth, show them [the potential] harm.

"Thus if the enemy is rested you can tire him; if he is well fed you can make him hungry; if he is at rest you can move him. Go forth to positions to which he must race.[76] Race forth where he does not expect it.[77]

"To travel a thousand *li* without becoming fatigued, traverse unoccupied terrain. To ensure taking the objective in an attack, strike positions that are undefended. To be certain of an impregnable defense, secure positions which the enemy will not attack.[78]

"Thus when someone excels in attacking, the enemy does not know where to mount his defense; when someone excels at defense, the enemy does not know where to attack. Subtle! Subtle! It approaches the formless.[79] Spiritual! Spiritual! It attains the soundless. Thus he can be the enemy's Master of Fate.

"To effect an unhampered[80] advance, strike their vacuities. To effect a retreat that cannot be overtaken, employ unmatchable speed.[81] Thus if I want to engage in combat, even though the enemy has high ramparts and deep moats, he cannot avoid doing battle because I attack objectives he must rescue.

"If I do not want to engage in combat, even though I merely draw a line on the ground and defend it, he will not be able to engage me in battle because we thwart his movements.

"Thus if I determine the enemy's disposition of forces [*hsing*] while I have no perceptible form,[82] I can concentrate [my forces] while the enemy is fragmented. If we are concentrated into a single force while he is fragmented into ten, then we attack him with ten times his strength. Thus we are many and the enemy is few. If we can attack his few with our many, those who we engage in battle will be severely constrained.

"The location where we will engage the enemy must not become known to them. If it is not known, then the positions which they must prepare to defend will be numerous. If the positions the enemy prepares to defend are numerous, then the forces we will engage will be few. Thus if they prepare to defend the front, to the rear there will be few men. If they defend the rear, in the front there will be few. If they prepare to defend the left flank, then on the right there will be few men. If they prepare to defend the right flank, then on the left there will be few men. If there is no position left undefended, then there will not be any place with more than a few. The few [are the ones] who prepare against others; the many [are the ones] who make others prepare against them.[83]

"Thus if one knows the field of battle and knows the day of battle, he can traverse a thousand *li* and assemble to engage in combat.[84] If he does not know the field of battle nor know the day for battle, then the left flank cannot aid the right nor the right flank aid the left; the front cannot aid the rear

nor the rear aid the front.[85] How much more so when the distant are some tens of *li* away and the near several *li* apart? As I analyze it, even though Yüeh's army is numerous, of what great advantage is it to them for attaining victory?[86] Thus I say victory can be achieved.[87] Even though the enemy is more numerous, they can be forced not to fight.

" " "

"Thus critically analyze them to know the estimations for gain and loss. Stimulate them to know the patterns of their movement and stopping. Determine their disposition of force [*hsing*] to know the tenable and fatal terrain. Probe them to know where they have an excess, where an insufficiency.

"Thus the pinnacle of military deployment approaches the formless. If it is formless, then even the deepest spy cannot discern it or the wise make plans against it.

" " "

"In accord with the enemy's disposition [*hsing*] we impose measures on the masses that produce victory, but the masses are unable to fathom them. Men all know the disposition [*hsing*] by which we attain victory, but no one knows the configuration [*hsing*] through which we control the victory. Thus a victorious battle [strategy] is not repeated, the configurations [*hsing*] of response [to the enemy] are inexhaustible.[88]

" " "

"Now the army's disposition of force [*hsing*] is like water. Water's configuration [*hsing*][89] avoids heights and races downward. The army's disposition of force [*hsing*][90] avoids the substantial and strikes the vacuous. Water configures [*hsing*] its flow[91] in accord with the terrain; the army controls its victory in accord with the enemy. Thus the army does not maintain any constant[92] strategic configuration of power [*shih*]; water[93] has no constant shape [*hsing*]. One who is able to change and transform in accord with the enemy and wrest victory is termed spiritual![94] Thus [none of] the five phases constantly dominates; the four seasons do not have constant positions; the sun shines for longer and shorter periods; and the moon wanes and waxes."[95]

7. Military Combat[96]

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the army is this: [From the time] the general receives his commands from the ruler, unites the armies, and assembles the masses, to confronting the enemy and encamping, there is nothing more difficult than military combat. In military combat what is most difficult is turning the circuitous into the straight, turning adversity into advantage.

"Thus if you make the enemy's path circuitous and entice them with profit, although you set out after them you will arrive before them. This results from knowing the tactics[97] of the circuitous and the direct.

" " "

"Thus combat between armies is advantageous; combat between masses is dangerous.[98] If the entire army contends for advantage, you will not arrive in time. If you reduce the army's size to contend for advantage, your baggage and heavy equipment will suffer losses.

"For this reason if you abandon your armor [and heavy equipment][99] to race forward day and night without encamping, covering two days normal distance at a time, marching forward a hundred *li* to contend for gain, the Three Armies' generals will be captured. The strong will be first to arrive, while the exhausted will follow. With such tactics only one in ten will reach [the battle site]. If one contends for gain fifty *li* away, it will cause the general of the Upper Army to stumble, and by following such tactics half the men will reach [the objective]. If you contend for gain at thirty *li*, then two-thirds of the army will reach [the objective].

"Accordingly, if the army does not have baggage and heavy equipment it will be lost; if it does not have provisions it will be lost; if it does not have stores it will be lost.

" " "

Thus one who does not know the plans of the feudal lords cannot prepare alliances beforehand. Someone unfamiliar with the mountains and forests, gorges and defiles, the shape of marshes and wetlands cannot advance the army. One who does not employ local guides cannot gain advantages of terrain.

" " "

"Thus the army is established by deceit, moves for advantage, and changes through segmenting and reuniting. Thus its speed is like the wind, its slowness like the forest; its invasion and plundering like a fire;[100] unmoving, it is like the mountains. It is as difficult to know as the darkness; in movement it is like thunder.

" " "

"When you plunder a district, divide the wealth among your troops. When you enlarge your territory, divide the profits. Take control of the strategic balance of power [*ch'üan*] and move. The one who first understands the tactics of the circuitous and the direct will be victorious. This is the strategy for military combat.

* * *

"The *Military Administration* states: 'Because they could not hear each other they made gongs and drums; because they could not see each other they made pennants and flags.' Gongs, drums, pennants, and flags are the means to unify the men's ears and eyes. When the men have been unified the courageous will not be able to advance alone, the fearful will not be able to retreat alone. This is the method for employing large numbers.

"Thus in night battles make the fires and drums numerous, and in daylight battles make the flags and pennants numerous in order to change the men's ears and eyes.[101]

* * *

"The *ch'i* of the Three Armies can be snatched away; the commanding general's mind can be seized. For this reason in the morning their *ch'i* is ardent; during the day their *ch'i* becomes indolent; at dusk their *ch'i* is exhausted.[102] Thus one who excels at employing the army avoids their ardent *ch'i* and strikes when it is indolent or exhausted. This is the way to manipulate *ch'i*.

* * *

"In order await the disordered; in tranquility await the clamorous. This is the way to control the mind.

* * *

"With the near await the distant; with the rested await the fatigued; with the sated await the hungry. This is the way to control strength.

* * *

"Do not intercept well-ordered flags; do not attack well-regulated formations.[103] This is the way to control changes.

* * *

"Thus the strategy for employing the military: Do not approach high mountains; do not confront[104] 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.[105] Do not press an exhausted invader. These are the strategies for employing the military."[106]

8. Nine Changes[107]

Sun-tzu said:

"In general, the strategy for employing the military is this. After the general has received his commands from the ruler, united the armies, and assembled the masses:[108]

"Do not encamp on entrapping terrain.[109]

"Unite with your allies on focal terrain.[110]

"Do not remain on isolated terrain.

"Make strategic plans for encircled terrain.

"On fatal terrain you must do battle.[111]

"There are roads that are not[112] followed.

"There are armies that are not attacked.

"There are fortified cities that are not assaulted.

"There is terrain for which one does not contend.[113]

"There are commands from the ruler which are not accepted.[114]

"Thus the general who has a penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes knows how to employ the army. If a general does not have a penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the topography, he will not be able to realize the advantages of terrain.

"One who commands an army but does not know the techniques for the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the five advantages,[115] will not be able to control men.

* * *

"For this reason the wise must contemplate the intermixture of gain and loss. If they discern advantage [in difficult situations], their efforts can be trusted. If they discern harm [in prospective advantage], difficulties can be resolved.

* * *

"Accordingly, subjugate the feudal lords with potential harm; labor the feudal lords with numerous affairs; and have the feudal lords race after profits.

* * *

"Thus the strategy for employing the army: Do not rely on their not coming, but depend on us having the means to await them. Do not rely on their not attacking, but depend on us having an unassailable position.

* * *

"Thus generals have five dangerous [character traits]:

"One committed to dying can be slain.

"One committed to living can be captured.

"One [easily] angered and hasty [to act] can be insulted.

"One obsessed with being scrupulous and untainted can be shamed.

"One who loves the people can be troubled.

"Now these five dangerous traits are excesses in a general, potential disaster for employing the army. The army's destruction and the general's death will invariably stem from these five, so they must be investigated."

9. Maneuvering the Army

Sun-tzu said:

"As for deploying the army and fathoming the enemy:

"To cross mountains follow the valleys, search out tenable ground,[116] and occupy the heights. If the enemy holds the heights, do not climb up to engage them in battle. This is the way to deploy an army in the mountains.

"After crossing rivers[117] you must distance yourself from them. If the enemy is forging a river to advance, do not confront them in the water. When half their forces have crossed, it will be advantageous to strike them. If you want to engage the enemy in battle, do not array your forces near the river to confront the invader but look for tenable ground and occupy the heights. Do not confront the current's flow.[118] This is the way to deploy the army where there are rivers.

"When you cross salt marshes and wetlands, concentrate on quickly getting away from them; do not remain. If you engage in battle in marshes or wetlands, you must stay in areas with marsh grass and keep groves of trees at your back. This is the way to deploy the army in marshes and wetlands.

"On level plains deploy on easy[119] terrain with the right flank positioned with high ground to the rear, fatal terrain to the fore, and tenable terrain to the rear. This is the way to deploy on the plains.

"These four [deployments], advantageous to the army, are the means by which the Yellow Emperor conquered the four emperors.[120]

* * *

"Now the army likes heights and abhors low areas, esteems the sunny [yang] and disdains the shady [yin]. It nourishes life and occupies the substantial.[121] An army that avoids the hundred illnesses is said to be certain of victory.[122]

* * *

"Where there are hills and embankments you must occupy the yang side, keeping them to the right rear. This is to the army's advantage and [exploits the natural] assistance of the terrain.

* * *

"When it rains upstream, foam appears.[123] If you want to cross over, wait until it settles.

* * *

"You must quickly get away from deadly configurations of terrain such as precipitous gorges with mountain torrents, Heaven's Well,[124] Heaven's Jail,[125] Heaven's Net,[126] Heaven's Pit,[127] and Heaven's Fissure.[128] Do not approach them. When we keep them at a distance, the enemy [is forced to] approach them. When we face them, the enemy [is compelled to] have them at their rear.

* * *

"When on the flanks the army encounters ravines and defiles, wetlands with reeds and tall grass, mountain forests,[129] or areas with heavy, entangled undergrowth, you must thoroughly search them because they are places where an ambush or spies would be concealed.[130]

* * *

"If [an enemy] in close proximity remains quiet, they are relying on their tactical occupation of ravines.[131] If while far off they challenge you to battle, they want you to advance [because] they occupy easy terrain to their advantage.

"If large numbers of trees move, they are approaching. If there are many [visible] obstacles in the heavy grass, it is to make us suspicious.[132] If the birds take flight, there is an ambush. If the animals are afraid, [enemy] forces are mounting a sudden attack.

"If dust rises high up in a sharply defined column, chariots are coming. If it is low and broad, the infantry is advancing. If it is dispersed in thin shafts, they are gathering firewood. If it is sparse, coming and going, they are encamping.

"One who speaks deferentially but increases his preparations will advance. One who speaks belligerently and advances hastily will retreat.

"One whose light chariots first fan out to the sides is deploying [for battle].[133]

"One who seeks peace without setting any prior conditions is [executing] a stratagem.

"One whose troops race off but [who] deploys his army into formation is implementing a predetermined schedule.

"One [whose troops] half advance and half retreat is enticing you.

"Those who stand about leaning on their weapons are hungry. If those who draw water drink first, they are thirsty. When they see potential gain but do not know whether to advance, they are tired.

"Where birds congregate it is empty. If the enemy cries out at night, they are afraid. If the army is turbulent,[134] the general lacks severity. If their flags and pennants move about, they are in chaos. If the officers are angry, they are exhausted.

"If they kill their horses and eat the meat, the army lacks grain.[135] If they hang up their cooking utensils and do not return to camp, they are an exhausted invader.[136]

"One whose troops repeatedly congregate in small groups here and there, whispering together, has lost the masses. One who frequently grants rewards is in deep distress. One who frequently imposes punishments is in great difficulty. One who is at first excessively brutal and then fears the masses is the pinnacle of stupidity.[137]

"One who has emissaries come forth with offerings wants to rest for a while.

"If their troops are aroused and approach our forces, only to maintain their positions without engaging in battle or breaking off the confrontation, you must carefully investigate it.

"The army does not esteem the number of troops being more numerous for it only means one cannot aggressively advance.[138] It is sufficient for you to muster your own strength, analyze the enemy, and take them. Only someone who lacks strategic planning and slights an enemy will inevitably be captured by others.

"If you impose punishments on the troops before they have become attached, they will not be submissive. If they are not submissive, they will be difficult to employ. If you do not impose punishments after the troops have become attached, they cannot be used.

"Thus if you command them with the civil[139] and unify them through the martial, this is what is referred to as 'being certain to take them.'[140]

"If orders are consistently implemented to instruct the people, then the people will submit. If orders are not consistently implemented to instruct the people, then the people will not submit. One whose orders are consistently carried out has established a mutual relationship with the people."

10. Configurations of Terrain[141]

Sun-tzu said:

"The major configurations [*hsing*] of terrain are accessible, suspended, stalemated, constricted, precipitous, and expansive.

"If we can go forth and the enemy can also advance, it is termed 'accessible.' In an accessible configuration, first occupy the heights and yang [side], and improve the routes for transporting provisions. Then when we engage in battle, it will be advantageous.

"If we can go forth but it will be difficult to return, it is termed 'suspended.'[142] In a suspended configuration, if they are unprepared go forth and conquer them. If the enemy is prepared and we sally forth without being victorious, it will be difficult to turn back and [is] not advantageous.

"If it is not advantageous for us to go forth nor advantageous for the enemy to come forward, it is termed 'stalemated.'[143] In a stalemated configuration, even though the enemy tries to entice us with profit, we do not go forth. Withdraw [our forces] and depart.[144] If we strike them when half the enemy has come forth, it will be advantageous.

"As for constricted configurations, if we occupy them first we must fully deploy throughout them in order to await the enemy.[145] If the enemy occupies them first and fully deploys in them, do not follow them in. If they do not fully deploy in them, then follow them in.

"As for precipitous configurations,[146] if we occupy them we must hold the heights and yang sides to await the enemy. If the enemy occupies them first, withdraw [our forces] and depart. Do not follow them.

"As for expansive configurations, if our strategic power [*shih*] is equal,[147] it will be difficult to provoke [them to] combat. Engaging in combat will not be advantageous.

"Now these six are the Tao of terrain. Any general who undertakes responsibility for command cannot but investigate them.

* * *

"Thus there are [six types of ill-fated] armies: running, lax, sinking, crumbling, chaotic, and routed. Now these six are not disasters brought about by Heaven and Earth but by the general's errors.

"Now if, when their strategic power [*shih*] is equal, one attacks ten, this is called 'running [off].'[148]

"If the troops are strong but the officers are weak, it is termed 'lax.'

"If the officers are strong but the troops weak, it is termed 'sinking.'

"If the higher officers are angry and insubordinate, engaging the enemy themselves out of unrestrained anger while the general does not yet know their capability, it is termed 'crumbling.'

"If the general is weak and not strict, unenlightened in his instructions and leadership; the officers and troops lack constant [duties]; and their deployment of troops into formation is askew, it is termed 'chaotic.'

"If the general, unable to fathom the enemy, engages a large number with a small number, attacks the strong with the weak while the army lacks a properly selected vanguard, it is termed 'routed.'

"Now these six are the Tao of defeat. Any general who undertakes responsibility for command cannot but investigate them.

* * *

"Configuration of terrain is an aid to the army. Analyzing the enemy, taking control of victory, estimating ravines and defiles, the distant and near, is the Tao of the superior general.[149] One who knows these and employs them in combat will certainly be victorious. One who does not know these nor employ them in combat will certainly be defeated.

* * *

"If the Tao of Warfare [indicates] certain victory, even though the ruler has instructed that combat should be avoided, if you must engage in battle it is permissible. If the Tao of Warfare indicates you will not be victorious, even though the ruler instructs you to engage in battle, not fighting is permissible.

"Thus [a general] who does not advance to seek fame, nor [fail to retreat] to avoid [being charged with the capital] offense of retreating, but seeks only to preserve the people and gain advantage for the ruler is the state's treasure.

* * *

"When the general regards his troops as young children, they will advance into the deepest valleys with him. When he regards the troops as his beloved children, they will be willing to die with him.[150]

"If they are well treated but cannot be employed, if they are loved but cannot be commanded, or when in chaos they cannot be governed, they may be compared to arrogant children and cannot be used.

* * *

"If I know our troops can attack, but do not know the enemy cannot be attacked, it is only halfway to victory. If I know the enemy can be attacked, but do not realize our troops cannot attack, it is only halfway to victory.

"Knowing that the enemy can be attacked, and knowing that our army can effect the attack, but not knowing the terrain is not suitable for combat, is only halfway to victory. Thus one who truly knows the army will never be deluded when he moves, never be impoverished when initiating an action.

"Thus it is said if you know them and know yourself, your victory will not be imperiled. If you know Heaven and know Earth, your victory can be complete."[151]

11. Nine Terrains

Sun-tzu said:

"The strategy for employing the military is [this]: There is dispersive terrain, light terrain, contentious terrain, traversable terrain, focal terrain, heavy terrain, entrapping terrain, encircled terrain, and fatal terrain.[152]

"When the feudal lords fight in their own territory, it is 'dispersive terrain.'[153]

"When they enter someone else's territory, but not deeply, it is 'light terrain.'[154]

"If when we occupy it, it will be advantageous to us while if they occupy it, it will be advantageous to them, it is 'contentious terrain.'[155]

"When we can go and they can also come, it is 'traversable terrain.'[156]

"Land of the feudal lords surrounded on three sides such that whoever arrives first will gain the masses of All under Heaven is 'focal terrain.'[157]

"When one penetrates deeply into enemy territory, bypassing numerous cities, it is 'heavy terrain.'[158]

"Where there are mountains and forests, ravines and defiles, wetlands and marshes, wherever the road is difficult to negotiate, it is 'entrapping terrain.'[159]

"Where the entrance is constricted,[160] the return is circuitous, and with a small number they can strike our masses, it is 'encircled terrain.'[161]

"Where if one fights with intensity he will survive but if he does not fight with intensity he will perish, it is 'fatal terrain.'[162]

* * *

"For this reason on dispersive terrain do not engage the enemy.
"On light terrain do not stop.
"On contentious terrain do not attack.[163]
"On traversable terrain do not allow your forces to become isolated.
"On focal terrain unite and form alliances [with nearby feudal lords.][164]
"On heavy terrain plunder for provisions.
"On entrapping terrain move [through quickly].[165]
"On encircled terrain use strategy.[166]
"On fatal terrain engage in battle.

* * *

"In antiquity those who were referred to as excelling in the employment of the army were able to keep the enemy's forward and rear forces from connecting; the many and few from relying on each other; the noble and lowly from coming to each other's rescue; the upper and lower ranks from trusting each other; the troops to be separated, unable to reassemble, or when assembled, not to be well-ordered.[167] They moved when it was advantageous, halted when it was not advantageous.

* * *

"If I dare ask, if the enemy is numerous, disciplined, and about to advance, how should we respond to them? I would say, first seize something that they love for then they will listen to you.

* * *

"It is the nature of the army to stress speed; to take advantage of the enemy's absence; to travel unanticipated roads; and to attack when they are not alert.

* * *

"In general, the Tao of an invader is that when one has penetrated deeply [into enemy territory], the army will be unified, and the defenders will not be able to conquer you.

* * *

"If one forages in the fertile countryside, then the Three Armies will have enough to eat. If you carefully nurture them and do not [over-]labor them, their *ch'i* will be united and their strength will be at maximum.

* * *

"When you mobilize the army and form strategic plans, you must be unfathomable.

* * *

"Cast them into positions from which there is nowhere to go and they will die without retreating. If there is no escape from death, the officers and soldiers will fully exhaust their strength.

* * *

"When the soldiers and officers have penetrated deeply into [enemy territory], they will cling together. When there is no alternative, they will fight.

"For this reason even though the soldiers are not instructed, they are prepared; without seeking it, their cooperation is obtained;[168] without covenants they are close together; without issuing orders they are reliable. Prohibit omens, eliminate doubt so that they will die without other thoughts.

" " "

"If our soldiers do not have excessive wealth, it is not because they detest material goods. If they do not live long lives,[169] it is not because they abhor longevity. On the day that the orders are issued the tears of the soldiers who are sitting will soak their sleeves, while the tears of those lying down will roll down their cheeks. However, if you throw them into a hopeless situation, they will have the courage of Chu or Kuei.

" " "

"Thus one who excels at employing the army may be compared to the *shuaijan* [snake]. The *shuaijan* is found on Mt. Ch'ang. If you strike its head the tail will respond; if you strike its tail the head will respond. If you strike the middle [of the body][170] both the head and tail will react. If I dare ask, can we make the army like the *shuaijan*, I would say we can. For example, the people of Wu and Yüeh hate each other; but if, when fording a river in the same boat they encounter severe wind, their efforts to rescue each other will be like the left and right hands.

" " "

"For this reason fettering the horses[171] and burying the chariot wheels are inadequate to rely on [to prevent the soldiers from fleeing]. Unify their courage to be as one through the Tao of administration. Realize the appropriate employment of the hard and soft[172] through the patterns of terrain.

" " "

"Thus one who excels at employing the army leads them by the hand as if they were only one man, so they cannot avoid it.

" " "

"It is essential for a general to be tranquil and obscure, upright and self-disciplined, and able to stupefy the eyes and ears of the officers and troops, keeping them ignorant.[173] He alters his management of affairs and changes his strategies to keep other people[174] from recognizing them. He shifts his position and traverses indirect routes to keep other people from being able to anticipate him.

" " "

"At the moment the general has designated with them, it will be as if they ascended a height and abandoned their ladders. The general advances with them deep into the territory of the feudal lords and then releases the trigger.[175] He commands them as if racing a herd of sheep—they are driven away, driven back, but no one knows where they are going.

" " "

"Assembling the masses of the Three Armies, casting them into danger, is the responsibility of the general.

" " "

"The nine transformations of terrain—the advantages deriving from contraction and expansion, the patterns of human emotions—must be investigated.

" " "

"In general, the Tao of the invader is [this]:[176]

"When the troops have penetrated deeply, they will be unified, but where only shallowly, they will [be inclined to] scatter.
"When [the army] has left the state, crossed the [enemy's] border, and is on campaign, it is 'isolated terrain.'
"When the four sides are open [to others], this is 'focal terrain.'
"When you have advanced deeply, it is 'heavy terrain.'
"If you have penetrated only shallowly, it is 'light terrain.'
"If you have strongholds behind you and constrictions before you, it is 'encircled terrain.'
"If there is no place to go, it is 'fatal terrain.'[177]

"For this reason on dispersive terrain I unify their will.
"On light terrain I have them group together.
"On contentious terrain I race our rear elements forward.[178]
"On traversable terrain I focus on defense.[179]
"On focal terrain I solidify our alliances.[180]
"On heavy terrain I ensure a continuous supply of provisions.[181]
"On entrapping terrain I [speedily] advance along the roads.
"On encircled terrain I obstruct any openings.[182]
"On fatal terrain I show them that we will not live.

" " "

"Thus it is the nature of the army to defend when encircled;[183] to fight fervently when unavoidable; and to follow orders when compelled [by circumstances].

* * *

"For this reason one who does not know the plans of the feudal lords cannot forge preparatory alliances. One who does not know the topography of mountains and forests, ravines and defiles, wetlands and marshes cannot maneuver the army. One who does not employ local guides will not secure advantages of terrain. One who does not know one of these four or five cannot [command] the army of a hegemon or a true king.[184]

* * *

"Now when the army of a hegemon or true king attacks a great state, their masses are unable to assemble. When it applies its awesomeness to the enemy, their alliances cannot be sustained. For this reason it does not contend with any alliances under Heaven.[185] It does not nurture the authority [*ch'üan*] of others under Heaven. Have faith in yourself, apply your awesomeness to the enemy. Then his cities can be taken, his state can be subjugated.

* * *

"Bestow rewards not required by law, impose exceptional governmental orders. Direct the masses of the Three Armies as though commanding one man. Press affairs upon them, do not explain the purpose to them. Compel them with [prospects for] profit, but do not inform them about the [potential] harm.

* * *

"Cast them into hopeless situations and they will be preserved; have them penetrate fatal terrain and they will live. Only after the masses have penetrated dangerous [terrain] will they be able to craft victory out of defeat.

* * *

"The prosecution of military affairs lies in according with and [learning] in detail the enemy's intentions.[186] If one then focuses [his strength] toward the enemy, strikes a thousand *li* away, and kills their general, it is termed 'being skillful and capable in completing military affairs.'

* * *

"For this reason on the day the government mobilizes the army, close the passes, destroy all tallies, and do not allow their emissaries to pass through. Hold intense strategic discussions[187] in the upper hall of the temple in order to bring about the execution of affairs.

* * *

"If the enemy opens the door, you must race in.

* * *

"[Attack] what they love first. Do not fix any time for battle; assess and react to the enemy in order to determine the strategy for battle.

* * *

"For this reason at first be like a virgin [at home]; later—when the enemy opens the door—be like a fleeing rabbit. The enemy will be unable to withstand you."

12. Incendiary Attacks

Sun-tzu said:

"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.[188]

* * *

"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.

* * *

"In general, in incendiary warfare you must respond to the five changes of fire:

"If fires are started within [their camp], then you should immediately respond [with an attack] from outside.

"If fires are ignited but their army remains quiet, then wait; do not attack.

"When they flare into a conflagration, if you can follow up, then do so; if you cannot, then desist.

"If the attack can be launched from outside without relying on inside [assistance], initiate it at an appropriate time.

"If fires are ignited upwind, do not attack downwind.

* * *

"Winds that arise in the daytime will persist; those that arise at night will stop.

* * *

"Now the army must know the five changes of fire in order to defend against them at the astrologically appropriate times. Thus using fire to aid an attack is enlightened, using water to assist an attack is powerful. Water can be used to sever, but cannot be employed to seize.

* * *

"Now if someone is victorious in battle and succeeds in attack but does not exploit the achievement, it is disastrous, and his fate should be termed 'wasteful and tarrying.' Thus it is said the wise general ponders it, the good general cultivates it.

* * *

"If it is not advantageous, do not move. If objectives cannot be attained, do not employ the army. Unless endangered do not engage in warfare. The ruler cannot mobilize the army out of personal anger. The general cannot engage in battle because of personal frustration. When it is advantageous, move; when not advantageous, stop. Anger can revert to happiness, annoyance can revert to joy, but a vanquished state cannot be revived, the dead cannot be brought back to life.

"Thus the enlightened ruler is cautious about it, the good general respectful of it. This is the Tao for bringing security to the state and preserving the army intact."

13. Employing Spies

Sun-tzu said:

"When you send forth an army of a hundred thousand on a campaign, marching them out a thousand *li*, the expenditures of the common people

and the contributions of the feudal house will be one thousand pieces of gold per day. Those inconvenienced and troubled both within and without the border, who are exhausted on the road or unable to pursue their agricultural work, will be seven hundred thousand families.

"Armies remain locked in a standoff for years to fight for victory on a single day, yet [generals] begrudge bestowing ranks and emoluments of one hundred pieces of gold and therefore do not know the enemy's situation. This is the ultimate inhumanity. Such a person is not a general for the people, an assistant for a ruler, or the arbiter of victory.

* * *

"The means by which enlightened rulers and sagacious generals moved and conquered others, that their achievements surpassed the masses, was advance knowledge.

"Advance knowledge cannot be gained from ghosts and spirits, inferred from phenomena, or projected from the measures of Heaven, but must be gained from men for it is the knowledge of the enemy's true situation.

* * *

"Thus there are five types of spies to be employed: local spy, internal spy, turned spy [double agent], dead [expendable] spy, and the living spy. When all five are employed together and no one knows their Tao, this is termed "spiritual methodology." They are a ruler's treasures.

"Local spies—employ people from the local district.

"Internal spies—employ their people who hold government positions.

"Double agents—employ the enemy's spies.

"Expendable spies—are employed to spread disinformation outside the state. Provide our [expendable] spies [with false information] and have them leak it to enemy agents.[189]

"Living spies—return with their reports.

"Thus of all the Three Armies' affairs,[190] no relationship is closer than with spies; no rewards are more generous than those given to spies; no affairs are more secret than those pertaining to spies.

* * *

"Unless someone has the wisdom of a Sage, he cannot use spies; unless he is benevolent and righteous, he cannot employ spies; unless he is subtle and perspicacious, he cannot perceive the substance in intelligence reports. It is subtle, subtle! There are no areas in which one does not employ spies.

* * *

"If before the mission has begun it has already been exposed, the spy and those he informed should all be put to death.

* * *

"In general, as for the armies you want to strike, the cities you want to attack, and the men you want to assassinate, you must first know the names of the defensive commander, his assistants, staff, door guards, and attendants. You must have our spies search out and learn them all.

* * *

"You must search for enemy agents who have come to spy on us. Tempt them with profits, instruct and retain them. Thus double agents can be obtained and employed. Through knowledge gained from them, you can recruit both local and internal spies. Through knowledge gained from them, the expendable spy can spread his falsehoods, can be used to misinform the enemy. Through knowledge gained from them, our living spies can be employed as times require.

"The ruler must know these five aspects of espionage work. This knowledge inevitably depends on turned spies; therefore, you must be generous to double agents.

* * *

"In antiquity, when the Yin arose, they had I Chih in the Hsia. When the Chou arose, they had Lü Ya [the T'ai Kung] in the Yin.[191] Thus enlightened rulers and sagacious generals who are able to get intelligent spies will invariably attain great achievements. This is the essence of the military, what the Three Armies rely on to move."

[redacted]

Sun-tzu's Art of War

Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Books

SS AS	Amano Shizuo, *Sonshi, Goshi,* Meiji shoin, Tokyo, 1972.
SS AY	Asano Yuichi, *Sonshi,* Kodansha, Tokyo, 1986.
SS HT	Hosokawa Toshikazu, *Sonshi, Goshi,* Gakken kenkyūsha, Tokyo, 1982.
SS MM	Murayama Makoto, *Sonshi, Goshi,* 3d ed., Tokuma shoten, Tokyo, 1986.
SS NT	Nakatani Takao, *Sonshi,* Kyōikusha, Tokyo, 1987.
SS TY	Tadokoro Yoshiyuki, *Sonshi,* Meitoku shuppansha, Tokyo, 1970.
ST CCCY	Wei Ju-lin, *Sun-tzu chin-chu chin-i,* Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, Taipei, 1972.
STPF CS	Wu Ju-sung, *Sun-tzu ping-fa ch'ien-shuo,* Chieh-fang-chün ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1983.
STPF HC	Chün-k'o-yüan chan-cheng li-cheng-pu, ed., *Sun-tzu ping-fa hsin-chu,* Chung-hua shu-chü, Peking, 1981.
STPF SY	Chu Chün, *Sun-tzu ping-fa shih-i,* Hai-ch'ao ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1990.
STPF TC	Wei Ju-lin, *Sun-tzu ping-fa ta-ch'uan,* Li-ming, Taipei, 1970.
STPF WC	Wang Chien-tung, *Sun-tzu ping-fa,* Chih-yang ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1989.
ST SCC	*Sun-tzu shih-chia-chu,* Shih-chieh shu-chü, Taipei, 1984.
ST WCHC	*Sun-tzu,* in *Ch'ung-k'an Wu-ching hui-chieh,* Chung-chou Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, Cheng-chou, 1989.
SWTCC WCCS	*Sun Wu-tzu chih-chieh,* in *Ming-pen Wu-ching Ch'i-shu chih-chieh,* Vol. 1, Shih-ti chiao-yü ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1972.

Notes to the Translator's Introduction

1. For a basic history of the text, including its influence in Japan, see the introduction and appendixes to Samuel B. Griffith's translation (cited in note 3, below). Over the centuries there have been numerous Japanese translations of varying quality, including both scholarly renditions and extremely simplified popular editions—even comic book versions—in this century. Although several have been consulted for our translation, they will be noted only where they differ significantly from the traditional Chinese texts.

2. Lionel Giles, tr., *Sun-tzu on the Art of War,* Luzac and Co., London, 1910.

3. Samuel B. Griffith, *The Art of War,* Oxford University Press, London, 1963. Griffith also supplements the translated text with selected materials from the most important commentaries.

4. For example, Thomas Cleary's *The Art of War,* Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boston, 1988. The introduction contains a discussion of the *Art of War* as a Taoist book, and the translation incorporates extensive quotations from the commentaries.

5. For example, see Ch'i Ssu-ho, in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* 3 vols., (Cheng Liang-shu, ed.), Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, Taipei, 1984, pp. 1599, 1602–1603. Subsequent historical events and later concepts are both noted within the *Art of War.* The former include references to Su Ch'in, and the development of the five phase theory (as now explicated by the Lin-i text entitled "The Yellow Emperor Conquers the Red Emperor")—which is necessary to understand one passage—should be counted among the latter. (See Li Ling in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1606–1607. Also see Ch'ü Wan-li, *Hsien-Ch'in wen-shih tzu-liao k'ao-pien,* Lien-ching, Taipei, 1983, pp. 433–435; and Chang Hsin-ch'eng, ed., *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* 2 vols., Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, Taipei, 1970 [reprint of 1939 edition], Vol. 2, pp. 797–801.) Other examples are cited in the notes to the translation.

6. For example, see Li Ling in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1614–1617; Ch'i Ssu-ho in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1598–1599; and Chang Hsin-ch'eng, *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* Vol. 2, pp. 797–800. The absence of Sun Wu's name and accomplishments from the *Tso chuan,* which is well noted for portraying Wu's events in comparative detail, is considered fatal to any claim of historicity. However, a few scholars argue that many persons and events pivotal to the history of various minor states went unrecorded, so the absence of Sun-tzu's name should not be considered remarkable.

7. For example, see Li Ling (*Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1608–1613) and Ch'i Ssu-ho (*Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1599–1602.) Ch'i asserts that the scope of warfare described in the *Art of War,* such as mobilizing one hundred thousand men and one thousand chariots for a single battle, did not occur until the middle of the Warring States period; protracted sieges were not known in the Spring and Autumn because cities were small and had little fortification, whereas in the Warring States they had become important, strongly fortified economic and strategic centers. It was not until the Warring States period that military offices became distinct from the normal hierarchy of nobility and personal command was relinquished by the ruler. Li Ling also avers (p. 1612) that deceit and the use of *ch'i* (unorthodox) tactics never characterized Spring and Autumn conflicts. Others have also pointed out that the forms of organization and the extensive emphasis on speed and mobility characterize infantry rather than chariot warfare and therefore reflect another transition that did not occur until the Warring States period. (Also see Chang Hsin-ch'eng, *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* Vol. 2, pp. 797–801; and Ch'ü Wan-li, *Hsien-Ch'in wen-shih tzu-liao k'ao-pien,* pp. 424–425.)

The contrary view is also held—namely, that this specialization, the growing use of infantry, and a new emphasis on speed all mark evolutions found in the last years of the Spring and Autumn period. (See, for example, Wu Ju-sung, STPF CS, pp. 8–12.) Tsun

Hsin interprets these factors similarly: He feels speed is indicative of the growing use of infantry; assaults on cities were neither desirable nor sustainable because even in the developing economy of the late Spring and Autumn period, cities were not yet significantly profitable targets; and the bronze weapons of the era were designed for close combat and thus were inadequate to undertake sustained assaults against cities. Furthermore, state economies of that era could not sustain protracted campaigns; therefore, Sun-tzu emphasized speed, not duration. In contrast, the increased value of cities—which grew rapidly into major economic and strategic centers in the Warring States period—is witnessed in Sun Pin's treatise, which analyzes the types of cities and provides rudimentary tactics for both defending and besieging them. (See Tsun Hsin, "*Sun-tzu ping-fa* te tso-che chi ch'i shih-tai," *WW* 1974, No. 12, pp. 20–24. The *Six Secret Teachings* and the *Wei Liao-tzu* also consider the tactics of siege warfare, as does the *Mo-tzu*.)

8. See, for example, Cheng Liang-shu's analysis of the terms, concepts, and passages borrowed from Sun-tzu in two relatively early works, Sun Pin's *Military Methods* and the *Wei Liao-tzu*, in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, pp. 1617–1625.

9. Wu Ju-sung, in the introduction to his *Ch'ien-shuo*, briefly notes some important military events that historically predate Sun-tzu (see STPF CS p. 14). In the *Art of War* Sun-tzu also quotes from preexisting military works.

10. The question of the *Art of War*'s placement within a fairly continuous evolution of written styles is also the subject of debate. For example, Li Ling (*Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, pp. 1613–14) and Robin D.S. Yates ("New Light on Ancient Chinese Military Texts: Notes on Their Nature and Evolution, and the Development of Military Specialization in Warring States China," *TP* 74 [1988], pp. 218–219) view the text as somewhat advanced over the basic verbatim, summary format of the *Analects*, with some conjoined passages and a logical division of topics but less so than Sun Pin and far less than Hsün-tzu and other late Warring States–period philosophers. They note its similarities with the *Mo-tzu*'s style, and Yates believes many of the connectives are later additions that were provided in an attempt to integrate the text. Yates suggests a date of approximately 453–403 B.C., with later additions, whereas Li Ling ascribes the book to a somewhat later date—roughly the middle of the Warring States period. (Yates also advances the thought that the military works were perhaps the first private books to appear in China.) However, Ch'i Ssu-ho and others—concurring with the general view that private books did not really appear until the Warring States period—observe that Sun Wu should have been approximately contemporaneous with Confucius, but the language and presentation are more sophisticated than is apparently characteristic of this early period. Ch'i believes Lord Shang and Wu Ch'i initiated the first books, followed by Sun Pin and others, and that the *Art of War* represents the confluence of Confucius's theory of kingship, Lao-tzu's concepts of nonaction and unorthodox/orthodox, and Mo-tzu's defensive strategies. He therefore concludes that it is not the work of a single person but that it evolved over a considerable period and was composed in the middle to late Warring States period (see Ch'i Ssu-ho in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, pp. 1604–1605).

11. Skeptics abound from the Sung dynasty onward. Some, based on Tu Fu, accused Ts'ao Ts'ao (the first commentator) of butchering the text; others doubted Sun-tzu's existence or felt the work must be a later forgery (see citations in note 6, above). Their skepticism was based in part on the *Han shu* bibliographical notation of a *Sun-tzu* in

eighty-two *pien* (sections, or chapters), despite the *Shih chi* reference to thirteen sections, which gave rise to the charges against Ts'ao Ts'ao. The discovery of the bamboo slip edition in the tomb at Lin-i in 1972, although it comprises only a third of the present edition, at least proves conclusively that the book existed in roughly its current form early in the Han dynasty. Ch'ü Wan-li and others therefore suggest that the thirteen-section work had to be complete before Sun-tzu's interview with the king of Wu because the king mentions this number; the additional sections—if thirteen is not an outright error—probably consisted of materials such as those found at Lin-i, including further dialogues between the king and Sun-tzu (see Ch'ü Wan-li, *Hsien-Ch'in wen-shih tzu-liao k'ao-pien*, pp. 433–434). For further fragmentary materials, including possible evidence for a sixteen-section version of the text, see "Ta-t'ung Shang-sun-chia chai Han-chien shih-wen," *WW* 1981, No. 2.) Later notations describe the Sun-tzu in three *chüan*, or rolls, indicating the difficulty of reconstructing textual lineages with such obscure materials.

Because of its realistic approach (employing spies and deception) designed to ensure the state's survival, the *Art of War* was also vehemently condemned by Confucian literati throughout late Chinese history (and by numerous Westerners early in this century who unfortunately displayed the same attitude as that of Secretary of State Stimson in his unimaginable quashing of code-breaking activities in a hostile world). Sun Wu's existence and role as well as the book itself accordingly were viewed as late fabrications, unworthy of consideration except by the morally reprehensible.

12. After studying both traditional and newly recovered materials, Cheng Liang-shu concludes that the *Shih chi* account is basically accurate and that the *Art of War* was probably composed between 496 and 453 B.C. (see *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, pp. 1617–1626).

13. See, for example, Ch'i Ssu-ho, who consigns it to the late Warring States period (*Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, pp. 1598–1605).

14. Yates, for example, accepts the view (which is based on internal evidence in comparison with historical events) that the text was composed between 453 and 403 B.C. (see "New Light," pp. 216–219).

15. Sun Pin, a descendant of Sun-tzu, was a brilliant strategist whose achievements have been dramatically preserved in the *Shih chi* and essentially corroborated by the Lin-i texts. His work, entitled *Ping-fa*, is best translated as *Military Methods* to distinguish it from Sun-tzu's work by the same name. Although early bibliographical data indicated the existence of these two distinct works, Sun Pin's book was apparently lost by the end of the Han, and confusion arose as to which Sun actually penned the traditionally transmitted text of the *Art of War*. (A separate, otherwise unknown chapter on cavalry has been preserved in the *T'ung-tien*.) Numerous modern Chinese and Japanese translations have already appeared; primary reports of the find appeared in *Wen wu* in 1974 and are largely contained in the articles cited in note 26, below.

16. Sun Wu and Sun Pin's connected biographies in the *Shih chi, chüan* 65, are translated by Griffith in his introduction (*The Art of War*, pp. 57–62).

17. Wu Tzu-hsü, who is largely credited with playing the major role in Wu's ascendancy, became the subject of a popular cult and numerous stories because of his achievements and perverse execution. (See David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsü *Pien-wen* and Its Sources," Part I, *HJAS* 40.1 [June 1980], pp. 93–156, and Part II, *HJAS* 40.2 [December 1980], pp. 465–505.) The fact that Sun-tzu is not mentioned in the

Tso chuan is sometimes justified by pointing out that Wu Tzu-hsü was such a dominant figure as well as Sun-tzu's direct superior—he simply eclipsed Sun-tzu when credit for Wu's military success was apportioned (cf. Wei Ju-lin, ST CCCY, p. 5).

18. According to most other writings, Sun Wu was actually a native of Ch'i, as is discussed below.

19. Ch'i Ssu-ho, among others, does not believe Sun-tzu would ever have been allowed to commandeer palace women to illustrate his theories of military discipline nor that the execution of the two captains would have been understood as having proved anything. He therefore views the entire episode as an exaggeration (see *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* p. 1598). Wu Ju-sung believes that rather than being a lesson about discipline, the incident illustrates Sun-tzu's fundamental teaching that a general—once he is in command of the army—does not accept orders from the ruler; this is in accord with his particular understanding of Sun-tzu's major contribution as having been the isolation and characterization of the professional general (STPF CS, p. 3).

20. This and similarly worded phrases appear frequently in the *Seven Military Classics* as well as in the *Art of War.* Essentially a quotation from the *Tao Te Ching,* it is generally taken as evidence of Taoist influence on military thought. However, perhaps this single saying was simply adopted by various military strategists because of their sobering experience in actual warfare, without reference to or acceptance of any other aspects of philosophical Taoism.

21. Yang Chia-lo, ed., *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu, chüan* 4, "Ho-lü nei-chuan." The translation follows the 1967 SPKY edition reprinted as *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu,* 2 vols., Shih-chieh shu-chü, Taipei, 1980, Vol. 1, pp. 91–95. The biography continues with Sun-tzu advising the king not to press the attack against Ch'u because the people are already exhausted. Although his name is mentioned several more times in the chapter, except in a single case where he briefly offers tactical advice, it is always coupled with that of Wu Tzu-hsü. Insofar as the *Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu* is attributed to the first century A.D., nearly two centuries after the *Shih chi,* it is not considered reliable evidence for Sun-tzu's activities. However, recent PRC popular military histories frequently contain biographies of Sun-tzu that are based on such remote material (including many writings from the late Warring States and Ch'in periods) reconstructed in some detail. For example, see Ch'en Wu-t'ung and Su Shuang-pi, eds., *Chung-kuo li-tai ming-chiang,* 2 vols., Honan jen-min ch'u-pan-she, Honan, 1987, Vol. 1, pp. 13–18. Virtually every modern edition and translation cites the *Shih chi* biography and assumes Sun-tzu's authenticity, although the *Chung-kuo ku-tai chang-cheng t'ung-lan* (Chang Shao-sheng and Liu Wen-ch'an, eds., Ch'ang-cheng ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1988, Vol. 1, pp. 74–81) nevers even mentions his name in its account of the war between Wu and Yüeh.

22. Based on the *Shih chi* account, Wu Ju-sung believes—despite intrigues and treachery—the historical Sun-tzu was active in Wu for roughly thirty years, from 512 to 482 B.C. (see STPF CS, p. 4). Chan Li-po suggests a more limited period, 512 to 496 ("Lüeh-t'an Lin-i Han-mu chu-chien *Sun-tzu ping-fa,*" *WW* 1974, No. 12, p. 15).

23. Later reconstructions of Sun-tzu's life trace his lineage back to the T'ien clan, which had risen to power in Ch'i after the period of Duke Huan, the first hegemon. Sun Wu's grandfather, as a reward for military achievement in a campaign against Lü, was granted the surname *Sun.* Although the T'ien lineage was among the four major ones contending energetically for power in Ch'i, they were largely successful, and skeptics

thus question why Sun-tzu would have ventured into Wu and then remained unknown for some period—during which he befriended Wu Tzu-hsü. Clearly, his family background in military studies would have provided him with expertise that would have been equally useful to his lineage, which was immersed in Ch'i's turmoil.

24. The monumental issue of the relationship between Taoist and military thought in antiquity—including questions of origins, modification of concepts, and direction of influence—obviously requires a voluminous study in itself. Many secondary works in Chinese contain at least brief ruminations on the subject, but almost all of them tend to treat it simplistically and ineffectually. (Hsü Wen-chu's chapter "Sun-tzu ho Lao-tzu ssu-hsiang pi-chiao," found in his book *Sun-tzu yen-chiu* [Kuang-tung ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1980, pp. 192–208] is an exception.) In the West, Christopher C. Rand has initiated the analytical effort with an intriguing, if complex, article that provides a conceptual framework for dissecting the various approaches to certain felt problems. (See "Chinese Military Thought and Philosophical Taoism," *MS* 34 [1979–1980], pp. 171–218, and "Li Ch'üan and Chinese Military Thought," *HJAS,* Vol. 39, No. 1 [June 1979], pp. 107–137.) Insofar as it is impossible to compress a meaningful, comparative presentation of Taoist ideas and military thought into a few pages of closely packed notes, we have opted to introduce appropriate comments at relevant points in the translations and other introductory material. (Ch'en Ch'i-t'ien's *Sun-tzu ping-fa chiao-shih* [Chung-hua shu-chü, Taipei, 1955 (reprint of 1944 edition)] contains a succinct analysis of the major philosophical schools' attitudes toward warfare that corrects some general misimpressions found throughout Chinese history [see pp. 231–251]. Kagakuraoka Masatoshi's article "Sonsi to Roshi" [*Tōhō shukyō* 37 (April 1971), pp. 39–50] also initiates specialist studies of this nature.)

25. The *Art of War* is classified by the *Han shu* under the subcategory "*ping ch'üan mou,*" roughly "military (imbalance of) power and planning." (See notes 39 and 37 for further discussion of *ch'üan* and concepts of *shih,* to which it is closely related.) *Ch'üan* is frequently identified with expediency, with military measures that stress volatile tactics, swiftness, and indirection to achieve their aims. Books in this category are aptly described as follows: "(Experts in) *ch'üan* and *mou* preserve the state with the orthodox (*cheng,* the upright) and employ the army with the unorthodox (*ch'i*). Only after first estimating (the prospects for victory) do they engage in warfare. They unite the disposition of troops (*hsing*) and strategic power (*shih*), embrace yin and yang, and utilize (those skilled in) technology and the crafts." (A similar partial statement is found in Verse 57 of the *Tao Te Ching:* "Govern the state with the orthodox, employ the army with the unorthodox.") Other works found in this section are Sun Pin's *Military Methods* and the *Wu-tzu;* books by Lord Shang and the T'ai Kung were deleted from the original *Ch'i lüeh* listing (cf. Yates, "New Light," pp. 214–224).

26. The bamboo slip edition discovered at Lin-i constitutes slightly more than one-third of the present *Art of War* arranged in thirteen sections with many chapter headings identical to those in the current text. Although some discrepancies in extant versions (such as those found in the *Ten Commentaries* edition and the *Seven Military Classics* edition) have long been noted, they are essentially the same as—although more extensive than—the Lin-i reconstructed text. Additional material uncovered in the tomb, including a brief conversation recorded between the king of Wu and Sun-tzu (which is generally felt to be a reasonably authentic record of their initial interview), sustains the opinion that the original form of the *Art of War* was in thirteen sections, as

recorded in the *Shih chi,* and suggests that Ssu-ma Ch'ien drew on materials now lost when writing the Suns's biography. (The bamboo slip edition, of course, only proves that this particular version existed prior to—or at least early in—the Han dynasty. Scholars continue to argue about the further implications, including whether the section now entitled "Interview with the King of Wu" provides evidence for Sun Wu's existence and the early origin of the text. See, for example, Li Ling, *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1606–8.) For a brief English overview, see Yates, "New Light," pp. 211–220.

Among the most important original reports are the following: Shantung Sheng Po-wu-kuan Lin-i Wen-wu-tsu, "Shantung Lin-i Hsi-Han-mu fa-hsien *Sun-tzu ping-fa* ho *Sun Pin ping-fa* teng chu-chien te chien-pao," *WW* 1974, No. 2, pp. 15–21; Hsü Ti, "Lüeh-t'an Lin-i Yin-chüeh-shan Han-mu ch'u-t'u te ku-tai ping-shu ts'an-chien," *WW* 1974, No. 2, pp. 27–31; Lo Fu-i, "Lin-i Han-chien kai-shu," *WW* 1974, No. 2, pp. 32–35; and Chan Li-po, "Lüeh-t'an Lin-i Han-mu chu-chien *Sun-tzu ping-fa,*" *WW* 1974, No. 12, pp. 13–19. (Chan Li-po points out several instances in which the bamboo slip edition's reading is completely opposite that of the present text. In some sentences this radically alters the meaning, resolving otherwise contorted and opaque constructions. These and other views, such as those of Chu Chün, are cited in the notes to the translation.) Also see Li Ling's summary reprinted in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* pp. 1605–1608. (Li concludes that the discovery is not adequate evidence to revise a much later dating that has been derived from internal evidence.)

27. D. C. Lau, in a rather critical review of Griffith's translation, has discussed several of the main ideas and problems of the text. See "Some Notes on the *Sun Tzu,*" *BSOAS* 28 (1965), pp. 317–335. (Lau's views, although preliminary, are important to understanding the text and are taken into account in the translation.)

28. Wu Ju-sung emphasizes Sun-tzu's dictum that warfare is the greatest affair of state, as distinguished from the Shang-Chou tradition, which identifies both sacrifice and warfare as equally important matters. Wu feels that Sun-tzu's view reflects the new reality emerging late in the Spring and Autumn period and the clash of economic interests between the newly landed class and the old nobility, which had monopolized military power and authority (see STPF CS, pp. 9–12).

29. The *Art of War,* although expressing the basic view found throughout the *Seven Military Classics* that the state must always be prepared for warfare and must nurture adequate material welfare, advocates keeping the people essentially ignorant and manipulating them in battle as though they were sheep. Accordingly, PRC scholars in particular have concluded that the author lived after the rise of early Legalist thought because such measures were characteristic of that approach, and they even termed him a Legalist strategist. See, for example, Tsun Hsin, "*Sun-tzu ping-fa* te tso-che chi ch'i shih-tai," pp. 22–24; Ch'i Ssu-ho in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* p. 1603;,Li Ling in *Hsü Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao,* p. 1613; and Chan Li-po, "Lüeh-t'an Lin-i Han-mu chu-chien *Sun-tzu ping-fa,*" pp. 14–15. (Keeping the people simple and ignorant is also a pronounced doctrine in the *Tao Te Ching.* However, also see note 173 of the translation.)

30. Extensive, detailed calculations were performed in the ancestral temple prior to mobilizing for a campaign, and presumably similar, although more limited, calculations were performed by the commander before individual engagements in the field. These calculations apparently were based on quantified estimates that assigned numerical values to the strength of systematically examined aspects (as discussed in note 32 below and listed especially in the first chapter of the book itself) for both the enemy and oneself. (Cf. Lau, "Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu,*" pp. 331–332; and Hsü Wen-chu, *Sun-tzu yen-chiu,* pp. 168–169.)

31. Sun-tzu's discussion of the critical qualities that should mark a general is viewed as evidence that professional commanders had already appeared on the historical stage, displacing personal field command by hereditary rulers (see note 19 above; and STPF SY, p. 12). Further confirmation is provided by his insistence that the ruler should not interfere with the commander once the latter has assumed the mantle of authority and ventured forth, as is illustrated by the famous incident from his biography.

32. Sun-tzu's descriptive method for analyzing the tactical aspects of battle is founded on around forty paired, mutually defined, interrelated categories. (This may reflect Taoist thinking about names and their mutual, interrelated definitions, as is sometimes claimed, or simply be the product of his own analytical reflection.) Among these are Heaven-Earth, offense-defense, advance-retreat, and unorthodox-orthodox. (Cf. T'ang Ching-wu, *Sun-tzu ping-fa tsui-hsin-chieh,* self-published, Taipei, 1981 [rev. ed.], pp. 25–27 for an extensive list.)

33. The military concepts and applications of the unorthodox (*ch'i*) and orthodox (*cheng*) probably originated with Sun-tzu, although the *Art of War* does not discuss them extensively. (Note that the text always orders them as *ch'i/cheng,* unorthodox/orthodox, rather than as prioritized in the West—orthodox/unorthodox. The implications, if any, remain to be explored, although against a background of correctness and uprightness, the choice seems deliberate. The military was generally regarded as *ch'i,* in accord with Lao-tzu's dictum: "With the orthodox govern the state; with the unorthodox employ the army.") The later military classics—such as the *Wei Liao-tzu, Six Secret Teachings,* and especially *Questions and Replies*—devote considerable energy to discussing *ch'i* and *cheng* and their employment.

Although the subject clearly requires a separate article or book, in essence "orthodox" tactics include employing troops in the normal, conventional, "by-the-book," expected ways—such as massive frontal assaults—while stressing order and deliberate movement. "Unorthodox" tactics are realized primarily through employing forces—especially flexible ones—in imaginative, unconventional, unexpected ways. Therefore, instead of direct chariot attacks, unorthodox tactics would mount circular or flanking thrusts. Instead of frontal assaults, they would follow indirect routes to stage unexpected, behind-the-lines forays. Their definition, of course, is dependent on normal expectation within a particular battlefield context as well as on the enemy's actual anticipations; therefore, they are mutually defining, mutually transforming, and circular in essence. Thus, as discussed in the other military classics, the orthodox may be used in unorthodox ways, and an orthodox attack may be unorthodox when it is unexpected precisely because it is orthodox—whereas a flanking or indirect assault would thereby be considered normal and therefore orthodox. A frontal feint by a large force, designed to distract or lure an enemy, would be unorthodox.

The concept lends itself to extreme complexities of thought and has often been misunderstood throughout Chinese history or dismissed as simplistic, when in fact it is quite the opposite. However, in essence it remains a descriptive tool for tactical conceptualization, for characterizing and manipulating forces within and exploiting an enemy's matrix of expectations, rather than a transformational mode to be actualized in the concrete reality of men and weapons the way a military formation is deployed. (There is nothing mysterious or mystical about *ch'i* and *cheng* and their mutually pro-

ductive realtionship, yet later commentators and strategists have sometimes become seriously confused. Under such circumstances, a useful tactical conceptualization becomes an unnecessary obstacle to clear, strategic thinking.)

The concept's origins remain unclear, although speculation tends to identify it with the conflation of thought that crystalized as Taoism or as originating in divinatory practices. The interrelationship of *ch'i* and *cheng* mirrors that of yin and yang, and at least one writer attributes the concept's roots to the yin-yang principles found in the *I Ching*. The orthodox is identified with the firm or hard, whereas the unorthodox correlates with the soft or yielding. (See Hsiao T'ien-shih, *Sun-tzu chan-cheng-lun,* Tzu-yu ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1983 [reprint; original, 1942], pp. 197–199.) The observation that reversal characterizes the natural world figures prominently in the *Tao Te Ching,* which is traditionally ascribed to Lao-tzu. *Cheng* turns into *ch'i,* things revert to their opposites (in complementary, dynamic tension) after reaching their pinnacle, as do yin and yang. (Cf. Hsü Wen-chu, *Sun-tzu yen-chiu,* Kuang-tung ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1980, pp. 206–208. Hsü observes that although Sun-tzu speaks about the mutually productive relationship of *ch'i* and *cheng,* he emphasizes the unorthodox. Also see Kagakuraoka, "Sonsi to Roshi," especially pp. 44–46.)

In the introduction to his translation, General Griffith states that *cheng* forces engage or engage and fix the enemy, whereas *ch'i* forces defeat him, often through flanking and rear attacks (see *The Art of War,* pp. 34–35). He also characterizes *cheng* forces as the normal or direct and *ch'i* forces as extraordinary or indirect; similarly, as fixing and flanking (or encircling) or again as "the force(s) of distraction and the force(s) of decision" (see p. 42). He goes on to stress that *ch'i* operations are always strange, unexpected, and unorthodox and also notes the reciprocal relationship between *ch'i* and *cheng.* Finally, Griffith adds that the realization of *ch'i* and *cheng* is not confined to tactical levels but may also be implemented on strategic ones (p. 43).

D. C. Lau's criticism of Griffith's translation emphasizes the abstract nature of these two terms, as opposed to invariably identifying them with forces, and suggests that they might best be translated as "straightforward" and "crafty" (see "Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu,*" pp. 330–331).

Benjamin E. Wallacker—in a brief, often-cited etymological article—concludes that *cheng* refers to military operations that pin down or "spike" an enemy, whereas *ch'i* operations are maneuvers that force the enemy off balance and thus bring about his defeat. (He further speculates that Sun-tzu's "formulations" seem likely to have been derived from experience with cavalry forces. This would require revising the date of composition to roughly the dawn of the third century B.C.) See "Two Concepts in Early Chinese Military Thought," *Language,* Vol. 42, No. 2 (1966), pp. 295–299.

Roger T. Ames conceptually translates the terms as "irregular deployments" and "regular deployments" (*The Art of Rulership,* University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1983, p. 68). "Irregular" is perhaps an unfortunate choice because it is inherently burdened with adverse military connotations. Extreme order and control are necessary to employ forces in *ch'i* maneuvers. Thus Rand's choice of "extraordinary" and "normal" seems to be better phraseology (see "Chinese Military Thought," p. 118).

The Chinese secondary literature on Sun-tzu is overwhelming; however, for *ch'i/cheng* most analysts essentially repeat the definitions found in the *Art of War* and later military classics, emphasizing the realization of these abstract concepts in concrete forces. Flexibility, maneuverability, and swiftness are stressed especially when discussing *ch'i* forces, although in Sun-tzu's view they should equally characterize all military units. (For example, see the anonymous Ming dynasty work, *Ts'ao-lu ching-lüeh,* reprinted as *Chung-kuo ping-hsüeh t'ung-lun,* Li-ming, Taipei, 1986, pp. 107–110; and Hsiao T'ien-shih, *Sun-tzu chan-cheng lun,* pp. 197–199. In the Ming dynasty Chao Pen-hsüeh noted that very few generals excelled at employing the unorthodox [*Sun-tzu-shu chiao-chieh yin-lei,* Chung-hua shu-chü, Taipei, 1970 (reprint), p. 79]).

34. Note that Wu Ju-sung believes it is not generally recognized that the *Art of War,* as with some Taoist writings, discusses means and methods for wresting victory with a small force and fewer numbers (see STPF CS, p. 17).

35. The concept of *ch'i* is both integral and fundamental to many aspects of Chinese thought, ranging from metaphysics to medicine and science through religion. One popular view holds that the character originally represented the vapors rising from cooking rice and is thus symbolic of nourishment in every sense. Unfortunately, this critical concept lacks any comprehensive or systematic Western language study. However, two extensive works (cited in note 59 of the translation of the *Six Secret Teachings*) have appeared in Japanese.

36. Sun-tzu's materialistic concept of Heaven and his opposition to consulting omens are seen by Wu Ju-sung as evidence of a new attitude and approach, in contradistinction with the old concepts held by the Chou nobility and the earlier Shang (see STPF CS, p. 18). However, yin-yang and such other concepts as five phase theory, which also appear in the *Art of War,* thereafter developed into an influential school of thought—apparently affecting military theory and even command practices although they were condemned in such other *Seven Military Classics* as the *Six Secret Teachings* and the *Wei Liao-tzu.*

37. The concept of *shih* figures prominently in both ancient military and Legalist thought, perhaps originating with the former. Although many contemporary monographs on the Legalist thinkers attribute its origin to Shen Tao and then trace its appropriation and integration in Han Fei-tzu's systematized thought, studies of *shih* in the military works are just beginning to emerge. (Among the best of the former are Wang Pang-hsiung, *Han Fei-tzu te che-hsüeh,* Tung-ta t'u-shu, Taipei, 1977, pp. 165–179; Hsieh Yün-fei, *Han Fei-tzu hsih-lun,* Tung-ta t'u-shu, Taipei, 1980, pp. 95–100; and Wu Hsiu-ying, *Han Fei-tzu chiu-i,* Wen-shih-che ch'u-pan-she, Taipei, 1979, pp. 86–91. Roger Ames essentially initiated the study of *shih* as a primary, discrete concept with a lengthy chapter in *The Art of Rulership* [University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1983], entitled "*SHIH* [Strategic Advantage/Political Purchase]," pp. 65–107, which is discussed below.)

Unfortunately, *shih* is another topic whose complexities require a book-length study to resolve a number of fundamental questions, including: (1) the concept's definition and character in individual works, such as the *Art of War* (where it is used in several apparently distinct ways); (2) the evolution of the concept in the military works, especially the military classics (presuming the present tentative dating scheme is valid); (3) whether it and other, related concepts are as technically distinct as is frequently assumed, or whether the earlier stages reflect a rather generalized interchangeability of terms and concepts (such as *hsing*—form—and *shih*—power); and (4) the concept's interrelationship with developments in Legalist thought, and whether the later military classics—such as the *Three Strategies*—reflect new dimensions or orientations im-

posed on essentially tactical military vocabulary under the influence of newly formulated Legalist views.

A complicating factor is the cryptic nature of many of the texts. Statements and even complete sections are generally brief and often enigmatic and apparently represent only notes or cursive summaries of extensive, complex, systematized thought—most of which has either been lost or was never cohesively formulated in writing. (The development of private books may have largely coincided with the rise of specialist military studies. See note 10 above and for general background—although military books are not discussed—Burton Watson's early study, *Early Chinese Literature,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1962; Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962; and Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China, Chemistry and Chemical Technology,* Vol. 5, Part 1: *Paper and Printing,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.) Moreover, the assumption that concepts are used in a consistent and precise way in these early books, although necessary for analytical studies, is not invariably valid and also needs to be sustained.

The scope of these issues precludes incorporating an intensive examination of the nature and function of *shih* in an already massive book directed to presenting translations of the *Seven Military Classics.* However, a brief characterization of the dimensions of the concept, a short review of previous studies, and an assessment of various translation possibilities remain unavoidable. Although we must defer any systematic justification of the terms chosen to translate *shih* and its related concepts, some indication of our reasoning is warranted. (Additional notes that briefly explicate the concept within concrete contexts, drawing selectively on the extensive classical commentaries, are appended to the translations.)

Giles (see note 2 above) tends to be criticized severely for his mistranslation and misunderstanding of the *Art of War,* although not always justifiably. His English equivalents for *shih* include "circumstances," "energy," "latent energy," "combined energy," "shape" (where the usage is synonymous with *hsing*—"shape," or "form"), and "strength"; he also simply elides the term by not translating it. None of these seems particularly appropriate, although "latent energy" characterizes situational potential most accurately in several contexts.

General Griffith—an experienced military officer with expert knowledge of strategy and tactics as well as their conceptions and precise vocabulary—also uses a number of distinct, context-dependent terms. (Note that he is generally criticized by D. C. Lau for a lack of consistency in his terminology, as mentioned in note 33 above, but the sense of this term definitely varies within the *Art of War.*) These terms include "circumstances," "situation" (including at least one instance in which it seems highly inappropriate), "momentum," "strength," and "tactical power" (which merits serious consideration as an equivalent for *shih*). He also offers a valuable note to the title of the fifth chapter: "*Shih,* the title of this chapter, means 'force,' 'influence,' 'authority,' 'energy.' The commentators take it to mean 'energy' or 'potential' in some contexts and 'situation' in others" (Griffith, *Art of War,* p. 90). In contrast, for his 1988 translation (see note 4), Cleary selected "force of momentum," "formation," "conditions," and "forces."

The concept appears in the *Book of Lord Shang* and the *Kuan-tzu,* both of which probably (for the most part) date to somewhat after the *Art of War.* For the former, J.J.L. Duyvendak (*The Book of Lord Shang,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963 [reprint of 1928 edition]) translates the term as "condition," "power," and "condition of power," with the following note: "Power would really express better the sense of what is meant. Power, that is, which relies on the general condition and trend of things, as an abstract idea, and well distinguished from brute force" (p. 98; also see his general discussion, pp. 97–100). W. Allyn Rickett, in his new translation of the *Kuan-tzu* (Guanzi, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1985, Vol. 1) uses "circumstances," "situation," "force of circumstances," and "'authority' derived from a specific position or situation." (See pp. 45, 58–59. He also notes that *ch'üan,* which is discussed separately, refers to "whatever is expedient under varying circumstances" [p. 45] and cites a passage from the *Han chi* that defines the temporal nature of *shih* [pp. 81–82].)

Other translations (with reference to *Han Fei-tzu*) include A. C. Graham's "power-base" and sometimes just "power." He expands on it as "a situation of strength, or on occasion weakness, in relation to circumstances, for example, strategic position on the battlefield" (*Disputers of the Tao,* Open Court, LaSalle, 1989, p. 278). Others include Christopher Rand's "circumstantial power" ("Chinese Military Thought and Philosophical Taoism," p. 174); Yates's "positional advantage" ("New Light," p. 224); and Burton Watson's "advantageous circumstances" (*Hsun-tzu: Basic Writings,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1963, p. 57 and others). D. C. Lau, despite his incisive criticism, does not offer either a definition or a translation for the term in his review article.

Roger Ames's chapter devoted to *shih* traces the concept's evolution from the military thinkers (Sun-tzu and Sun Pin) through its adoption by the Legalists and into later, eclectic texts—such as the *Huai-nan tzu*—and provides extensive material and careful analysis. After noting the various meanings (and close relationship with the term for form, *hsing*), he summarizes his findings as follows: "In the *Sun Tzu,* then, the term *shih* has at least three dimensions of meaning: (1) 'circumstances' or 'conditions'; (2) 'physical disposition' in connection with the deployment of troops; and (3) occupation of a superior position and access to the potential advantages it confers" (Ames, *The Art of Rulership,* p. 68). Because of the apparently close connection between the concept and the strategic advantage derived from occupation of superior positions, Ames elects to use the interesting, if perhaps somewhat unknown, term "purchase." His analysis and arguments are well documented and readily available, so it is only necessary to note that he consciously discards "power" and "force" as being too vague; he believes that "*shih* usually refers to something quite different from the actual strength required to accomplish something" (note 11, p. 222).

From the foregoing it seems clear that the concept of *shih* is generally thought to entail the idea of advantage resulting from superior position. However, this aspect of positional advantage has perhaps been overemphasized, thus overlooking the essential role the element of mass (the army's forces) fulfills in creating impact. The paradigm example is Sun-tzu's analogy of a log or stone perched atop a hill, which, although temporarily stabilized, has great potential energy. According to the concepts of modern physics, the momentum that can be developed and thus the amount of force that can be transferred when a rolling stone collides with an object in its path depend on the original height; the final speed at the moment of impact (which will have been reduced from the theoretical maximum as it passes over objects and encounters resistance); and its

weight. Clearly, a stone will transfer less energy at the moment of impact than a much larger boulder, and the total destructive potential is inherently related to the mass of the object.

Accordingly, after studying the nature of the concept in the *Seven Military Classics,* especially in the *Art of War,* two equally important factors appear to be integrated within this concept and should be expressed by any translation: first, the strategic advantage conveyed by superior position, and second, the power of the forces involved. ("Power" refers to the army's overall capability in all aspects—including endurance, spirit, discipline, equipment, command, and physical condition—rather than strength of numbers alone.) Obviously, as the commentator Chiang Pai-li has noted, strategic advantage has a pronounced temporal character; therefore, it should not be confined to exploiting the advantages of terrain, as it is usually characterized.

Strategic advantage *in essence* is a comparative term, not an absolute one, although a vast force will naturally possess great power. (In an extreme case the advantages of terrain perhaps become negligible. A minimal force, such as a platoon or company, represents one extreme, a vast army the other.) Accordingly, we have chosen to translate the term *shih* as "strategic configuration of power" and will use this meaning throughout except where a different sense, such as shape or circumstances, seems to have been intended. Although "strategic power" is basically an acceptable abridgement and perhaps is adequate in itself, "configuration" will generally be added as a reminder that the power results from configuring the military's armed might in accord with and to the exploitation of the terrain in order to gain a strategic advantage. However, when the term is conjoined with others—such as "military" or "army"—or the text would read awkwardly, "strategic power" will be used by itself, with "configuration" understood. Finally, in the context of confined battlefield situations, where "strategic" is inappropriate in scope, *shih* is translated as "tactical configuration of power" or "tactical power."

Insofar as two military forces may be described comparatively, there are some difficulties, and the question might be posed: Does *shih* exist in the absence of an enemy? Is it inappropriate to refer to the *shih* of an army if the two forces are equally matched and poised across a valley, with both—in their static positions—enjoying equal positional advantage relative to a potential battlefield between them and each other? Because Sun-tzu refers to *shih chün,* "strategic power that is equal," the term would seem to refer to a general evaluation versus terrain—and thus configuration of power—rather than specifically confined to being defined relative to an enemy's position and deployment. ("*Ch'üan,*" which is discussed below, refers to this relative imbalance of forces.) To facilitate such inquiry, which we intend to address in a separate article, "*shih*" will generally be added parenthetically whenever the term is translated.

(It should also be noted that *shih* and *hsing*—central concepts in the *Art of War*—are also found in an important verse of the *Tao Te Ching,* which can be translated as follows: "The Tao gives them birth, *Te* [Virtue] nurtures them, things give them form [*hsing*], *shih* [power] completes them" [Verse 51].)

38. *Hsing* primarily means shape or form and thus should generally refer to the disposition of the troops or the configuration of forces. However, it also appears in other uses, such as situation or context, and may be nearly synonymous with *shih* at times. We will normally translate the term as "disposition of forces" when it appears alone to avoid confusion with "configuration of power." When in compound use, such as *hsing*

shih—translated by Yates as "form and positional advantage"—the meaning of the two terms probably melds more than previously acknowledged (except perhaps in the *Han shu* classification). In such cases we will normally translate as "configuration of forces and strategic power," with appropriate annotations at each appearance.

39. *Ch'üan* is another difficult term to isolate and define precisely, and the classical commentators assign a wide range of meanings to it. Virtually everyone agrees that in ancient times it referred to the "weight of a steelyard" and thus meant "to weigh" (cf. Kalgren, *GSR,* entry 158/0). With reference to its use in the Mohist classics, Graham, for example, defines it as the "'weighing' (of benefit and harm)," and "'positional advantage' used for leverage" (*Disputers of the Tao,* pp. 145, 157, 209, and 164). Duyvendak notes it implies the "deciding influence and authority" (*The Book of Lord Shang,* note 1, p. 260). Other translators assign a wide range of equivalents, such as "power," "authority," "circumstances," and "expediency." (See, for example, Rickett, *Guanzi,* p. 45, where he notes its closeness to *shih,* suggests that translation of "political power," and comments that it can also refer to whatever might be expedient.) The classical Chinese commentators tend to stress the sense of weighing, of balancing forces, as well as its meaning of "authority." However, *ch'üan* is also set off against *cheng*—that is, the "expedient" (associated with the exercise of power, particularly military power) compared with the "upright" or "correct," the measures of proper government and the civil. (See, for example, T'ao Hsi-sheng, *Ping-fa san-shu,* pp. 5–6.) In some usages, the simple equivalent of "authority" is clearly adequate; however, in others the term appears to refer to the strategic imbalance of power or the strategic advantage obtained from such an imbalance and will therefore be translated as "strategic (im)balance of power." Within limited battlefield contexts, in parallel with the translation for *shih, ch'üan* is rendered as "tactical balance of power."

Notes to the Text

Insofar as the *Art of War* has been the most studied of the *Seven Military Classics,* numerous editions and commentaries are readily available, with additional modern works appearing annually. Therefore, in contrast to the notes for the other translations, in general only a single reference or two—if any—is provided for the commentators' views. Scholars with expertise in the relevant languages can easily refer to the passages in such standard works as the *Shih-chia chu, Shih-i-chia chu,* or those listed in the abbreviations at the beginning of the notes to the *Art of War.*

The discovery of the Han dynasty bamboo slips (hereafter abbreviated BS) has occasioned close scrutiny of the traditionally transmitted texts, including the Sung/Ming *Seven Military Classics* edition. However, although many contemporary scholars uncritically accept the BS as preserving *the* original text of the *Art of War,* many questions remain. A more balanced view is provided by Chu Chün and is cited in the notes as appropriate. Variations in meaning caused by character differences are also noted, but not simple differences caused by the presence or absence of connectives or particles or minor inversions in textual order. Furthermore, given the fragmentary nature of the text, phrases and sentences missing in the BS are not cited unless they radically affect the meaning.

1. "Estimations" in the sense of objectively estimating the relative strength and weakness of oneself and the enemy for a series of factors. Although twelve such factors are discussed in this chapter, as noted in the translator's introduction there are several

tens of paired factors that could be employed equally well in making such determinations.

The character translated as "estimations"—*chi*—also has the meaning "plans," leading some to translate the title as "Initial Plans," or "First Plans."

2. It is frequently assumed that the factors to be compared are the seven enumerated several paragraphs below because the five that immediately follow are already subsumed under "structure it according to [the following] five factors" (cf. ST SCC, p. 2; and STPF CS, p. 30). However, it seems clear that the "five factors" define the domain for comparative calculations.

Historically, some commentators did not accept the addition of "affairs" following the world "five," the correctness of which has been sustained by the BS, which also lack "factors." (Cf. Ch'en Ch'i-t'ien, *Sun-tzu ping-fa chiao-shih,* Chung-hua shu-chü, Taipei, 1955, p. 65. Chu Chün [STPF SY, pp. 2–3] believes "factors" should not be excised, despite its absence in the BS.)

3. Not the metaphysical Tao of the Taoists but the Tao of government, understood as legal and administrative measures and policies. Liu Yin (SWTCC WCCS, I:2A) understands it in terms of the usual array of Confucian virtues. However, Kuan Feng has observed that the concept is never made explicit in the *Art of War.* See Kuan Feng, "Sun-tzu chün-shih che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang yen-chiu," *Che-hsüeh yen-chiu* 1957, No. 2, p. 72.

4. The character translated as "ruler"—*shang*—may also be understood as "superiors," and the commentators espouse both possibilities. Although Liu Yin is somewhat ambivalent (SWTCC WCCS, I:2A), the translation follows STPF CS, p. 30; and SS AS, p. 26.

5. "Thus" is added from the bamboo slips, although it is implied in any case. The BS conclude the sentence with the phrase "the people will not deceive/contravene him" rather than the traditional "not fear danger." However, Chu Chün believes the traditional reading is preferable (STPF SY, p. 3). Note that the term "deceive" also occurs in the famous sentence somewhat later: "Warfare is the Tao of deception."

Commentators who stress the Legalism in Sun-tzu's thought understand the sentence as "they will die for him, they will live for him." They especially cite Sun-tzu's directive to the commanding general to manipulate his troops in combat like sheep, keeping them ignorant (cf. STPF CS, pp. 30–34). Although Sun-tzu does not advocate positive measures directed to fostering the people's welfare—such as are found in the other *Military Classics*—he does discuss gaining the allegiance of the masses before they can be employed, not impoverishing them, and the importance of benevolence in a commander. Most scholars thus have understood the ideal as being exemplified historically by King Wu of the Chou, who had garnered the willing support of the people. (For further discussion, see Wu Shu-p'ing, "Ts'ung Lin-i Han-mu chu-chien *Wu-wen* k'an Sun Wu te Fa-chia ssu-hsiang," *WW* 1975, No. 4, pp. 6–13.)

6. The BS add: "according with and going contrary to, [the basis of] victory in warfare." Neither STPF CS nor STPF SY includes it. (STPF HC, p. 150.)

7. Terrain classification is one of the keystones of Sun-tzu's strategic analysis, as will become clear from the extensive materials in Chapters eight, ten, and eleven (where these terms are further defined).

The BS add "high or low" at the start of the classifications (STPF SY, p. 3).

8. These terms are variously understood by the commentators. "The Tao of command" may refer to the exercise of command or to the establishment of military hierarchy, the chain of command. "Management of logistics" probably encompasses everything from the types and nature of the army's equipment to the provision and management of that equipment in campaigns. (For summaries, see SS AS, p. 27; STPF SY, pp. 9–10; and ST SCC, p. 8.)

Wu Ju-sung also equates the "laws" with the last four items in the series of questions for comparative evaluation: the implementation of laws and orders, strong forces, well-trained officers and troops, and clear rewards and punishments (See STPF CS, pp. 37–38).

9. "Forces" could also be translated as "weapons and masses" rather than understood as "army masses" or "infantry and masses." However, "masses" emphasizes the contrast with the next criterion for evaluation, the trained "officers and troops" (cf. STPF SY, p. 11; STPF CS, p. 30).

10. Ch'en Hao early interpreted this passage as referring to Sun Wu himself staying or leaving, rather than retaining or dismissing a general. In addition, he identifies the "general" as the king of Wu, because he frequently commanded the army himself, and interprets Sun-tzu's statement as a barb to gain employment (SWT SCC, pp. 11–12. Cf. SS AS, p. 34. However, "retaining him" as a translation seems more reasonable than the sense of "remaining with him").

Liu Yin (SWTCC WCCS, I:6B) makes an odd distinction between the first "general" in the sentence, which he believes refers to the Grand General in his consultations with the ruler, and the second general, which he sees as referring to any subordinate general appointed to implement the chosen strategy (also see STPF SY, p. 12).

11. Liu Yin believes this should refer to the subordinate generals entrusted with field command, "listening to the estimations" and resulting plans (SWTCC WCCS, I:6), but others believe it refers to the king of Wu—the "you" in the translation (cf. SS AS, p. 35, ST SCC, p. 12). *Shih* is discussed in the introductory notes.

12. This is also understood as "outside the normal realm of tactics," using the unorthodox (cf. ST SCC, p. 12; SS AS, p. 36).

13. The imbalance of power should be created with the objective of facilitating and attaining the "gains to be realized." Merely creating an imbalance of power would be pointless, and such an imbalance is already inherently dependent on the advantages one possesses (cf. STPF SY, pp. 13–14, for a similar view and an example). *Ch'üan* is discussed in the introductory notes.

14. The term "deception" here inadequately conveys both the positive and negative aspects of the matter. We prefer to translate as "deception and artifice" because much craft is involved in not only concealing appearance, which is the simplest form of deception, but also in creating false impressions.

The fourteen sentences that follow should be understood as tactical principles flowing from this realization. They are also believed to reflect or to be a distillation of tactical experience gained through combat situations in the Spring and Autumn period (STPF CS, pp. 39–40).

15. Translators often take this as "when you are nearby make it appear as if you are distant," but this would clearly be contrary to reality. It would be impossible for the enemy not to know—through reconnaissance and observation—an army's actual position, although attempts were initiated routinely to diminish the accuracy of such per-

ceptions (such as by dragging brush and increasing or reducing the number of cook fires at night). More likely, the position to which the army is about to move, an objective that is about to be attacked, is intended as translated (following Liu Yin, SWTCC WCCS, I:9A. Compare ST SCC, p. 14). Chu Chün notes this might also be understood temporally, as immediate future and some distant time (STPF SY, p. 14).

16. Two readings of these laconic sentences are possible. The critical question is whether the first term in each of them and the several that follow below should be read in the light of the Tao of Warfare and thus as explications of craft and deception and ways to manipulate the enemy, as Sun-tzu discusses extensively, or simply as a series of individual items. In the latter case, it is possible that they were simply conjoined here—rather than being the product of Sun Wu's systematic analysis—from preexisting rubrics about military action. It is tempting to read them all in parallel, with the first term always describing an aspect of the enemy and the second an action to be applied, but in our opinion the imposition of such parallelism—which is frequently invalid even for two phrases within a single short sentence—is too artificial.

Accordingly, for the first sentence, one reading would be that "If the enemy [desires] profit, entice them"—understanding "with the prospect of profit," which is somewhat redundant. The translation emphasizes the active approach because we should assume that armies will generally move for tactical advantage. At the same time we must remember that a frequently discussed (and readily exploitable) flaw in some commanding generals is greed.

For the second sentence, two additional renderings are variously suggested: "If they are disordered, seize them," and "Show [apparent] disorder [in your own forces] and seize them." The commentators cite a number of historical examples in support of the latter, but the former has adherents as well, and decisive evidence for a definitive reading is lacking. (Measures such as enticing them with profits, sowing rumors, and fostering their licentiousness would all cause the sort of disorder that could easily be capitalized on.) The translation follows Liu Yin. (SWTCC WCCS, I:9B. Cf. ST SCC, p. 15. Also note the extensive analysis, with examples of these and the following sentences, in Tzu Yü-ch'iu, ed., *Mou-lüeh k'u,* Lan-t'ien ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1990, pp. 70–76.)

The term "take them" is said to indicate an easy victory rather than a difficult conflict (cf. ST SCC, p. 15).

17. The "substantial" and the "vacuous" (or empty) form a correlative pair that is closely identified with Sun-tzu's thought, although the terms may have predated him. One of his fundamental principles is exploiting voids, weaknesses, fissures, and vacuities. The opposite, the "substantial" (*shih*)—corresponding roughly to strong, well-organized, disciplined, expertly commanded, entrenched forces—is generally to be avoided rather than attacked with ineffectual and wasteful frontal assaults. (Wang Chien-tung, STPF WC, p. 31, notes the phrase can also be understood as "be substantial and prepare for them," although this appears less appropriate.) The theme of Chapter 6 is "Vacuity and Substance."

18. The military thinkers generally advocate fostering and exploiting anger because it blinds the general to the realities of the battlefield and takes away the troops' judgment. Consequently, suggestions that *jao* means "avoid them" are probably not accurate, even though Sun-tzu does recommend avoiding an army when it is at the peak of its fervor. (An alternative translation would be "anger and perturb them.")

19. Again, two readings are possible, the alternative being "if they are humble/lowly, make them arrogant" (cf. Tau, ed., *Mou-lüeh k'u,* pp. 71–73; STPF SY, p. 15). The translation follows Liu Yin, SWTCC WCCS, I:10B–11A. Logically, if they are "humble" they already lack combative spirit, and it would be foolish to raise their anger to no purpose. (On the other hand, they may also simply be restrained and composed.)

20. The text appears to suggest the general cannot transmit or divulge his determinations with regard to these factors before the battle. However, it may also entail the idea that they cannot be rigidly or arbitrarily determined before the situation develops. Commentators embrace both views (cf. ST SCC, pp. 20–21; STPF CS, p. 31).

21. The procedure for strategic analysis in the ancestral temple apparently assigned relative values to the various factors, including those discussed in this chapter. D. C. Lau (see "Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu,*" pp. 331–332) suggests that counting sticks were used for each factor and then the totals taken. Some form of relative weighing was probably used because certain factors would be more significant than others, and a simple total is probably misleading. (The translation follows Liu Yin. Also compare STPF CS, p. 31; Ch'en's *Chiao-shih,* pp. 72–73; Kuan Feng's comments on the various factors in "Sun-tzu chün-shih che-hsüeh ssu-hsiang yen-chiu," pp. 71–75; and Yü Tse-min, "Shih-hsi Chung-kuo ku-tai te chan-lüeh kai-nien," in *Ping-chia shih-yüan* [ed. Chün-shih li-shih yen-chiu-hui], Chün-shih k'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1990, Vol. 2, pp. 221–226.) Giles errs in understanding "no points" as simply failing to perform any strategic calculations.

22. D. C. Lau ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu,*" pp. 321–325) has pointed out that initial phrases in Sun-tzu passages are often captions or summaries. The five-character phrase introducing this section appears to be one of these; however, others are less clear. Traditionally, such introductory captions have simply been made the subject of a sentence, understanding a term such as "requires" to bridge the subject and its expansion (cf. ST CCCY, p. 86; STPF WC, p. 52; and STPF CS, p. 42). Our translations generally adopt Lau's insight wherever captions apparently precede material of any length.

23. Griffith (*The Art of War,* p. 73) and some modern Chinese editions (such as STPF WC, p. 53) insert a character meaning "to value" or "esteem" in this sentence, citing (in Griffith's case) the *Seven Military Classics* edition, However, neither the latter nor the ST SCC edition contains it; Liu Yin merely uses it in his commentary explaining the passage (cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:15A; and ST SCC, p. 23).

24. This and similar sentences, as discussed in the translator's introduction, are cited as evidence for the undeveloped state of offensive and siege warfare and the relative economic unimportance of cities.

25. This sentence has various interpretations. Generally, it is agreed that the campaign should be won with only a single mobilization and conscription, which would be reasonably possible given the nature and still-limited scope of warfare in Sun-tzu's era (cf. STPF SY, pp. 27–28). Not transporting provisions a third time is understood in two distinct ways: The army is provisioned only once—when about to depart—and thereafter it must plunder and forage, securing provisions on the march and in the field. Moreover, when the troops return they are not reprovisioned (cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:16B). A second, more common, and more logical interpretation holds that they are provisioned at the commencement of the campaign and supplied again on returning

after recrossing the state's borders but must fend for themselves when in the field (cf. ST SCC, pp. 26–27; and SS AS, p. 54).

26. As noted in the general introduction, in the Early Chou period the "hundred surnames" were essentially the members of the aristocracy, the free men. As time passed and their status declined, they lost their privileged status and became the common people. The usage of the term in Sun-tzu reflects a period when the earlier meaning was becoming eclipsed but the term was probably not yet simply equivalent to "common people." From the context it is apparent that the hundred surnames farm the land, have the material wealth to pay taxes, and have the leisure to fulfill military obligations. Because the *Art of War* specifically uses this term, it is distinguished from terms that mean "the people" or the "common people" in the translation.

27. The bamboo slips have "market" for "army," with the phrase reading "the market nearby" ("the army" then being understood).

28. Military expeditions thus impose heavy direct and indirect burdens on the populace. Under the military taxation system (imposed in varying degrees and different forms) in Sun-tzu's era, hamlets and villages—depending on their classification, acreage tilled, and population—had to provide men to serve in the military effort and furnish weapons, equipment, and draft animals. If they could not obtain the weapons and supplies from their own inventory or stock, they had to be purchased. Moreover, the cost of such items for the village's own use concurrently escalated, depleting everyone's financial resources. Thus wartime inflation would strike them especially hard. (For further commentary, see Liu Yin, SWTCC WCCS I:17B; Ch'en, *Chiao-shih*, pp. 78–79; and STPF WC, p. 64.)

29. The BS are somewhat different, reading "They will exhaust their strength on the central plains, while in the interior their houses will be empty" (cf. STPF SY, p. 30). The term for "empty" is actually the much stronger term "vacuous," or "void."

30. The BS have "six-tenths" rather than "seven-tenths."

31. The term translated as "large oxen" is literally "village oxen." The meaning seems to have originated with the reported practice of having each village of sixteen "well-fields" (with eight families to each of the latter) raise one ox, which presumably remained the ruler's property. It would be employed for military purposes when required. This might explain how such oxen were viewed as expenditures from the ruler's treasury rather than as a tax contribution from the people (cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:17B; and SS AS, p. 55).

32. "Profits," understood as profits for the state. However, the term also means "advantage," as in military advantage, and the sentence could equally well be understood as "What [stimulates them] to seize advantage from the enemy is material goods." Wang Hsi views this sentence as referring simply to the establishment of rewards as incentives because "If you cause the masses to covet profits and take them for themselves, then perhaps they will violate the constraints and [military] discipline" (ST SCC, p. 31).

33. The translation follows Liu Yin's commentary on the *Seven Military Classics* and expresses the traditional viewpoint—namely, that preserving the enemy's state is the primary objective; destroying it is only second best. This accords with Sun-tzu's overall emphasis on speedily wresting victory and subjugating one's enemies without engaging in battle if at all possible. (Modern Chinese commentators cite the example of Germany nourishing its rancor and hatred subsequent to World War I until militarily reasserting itself in World War II. See, for example, STPF WC, pp. 76–83.)

However, D. C. Lau ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," pp. 333–335) argues that the sentence should be translated as "It is best to preserve one's own state intact; to crush the enemy's state is only a second best." Although he advances a cogent argument, the traditional understanding appears more appropriate. Whether from a Confucian, Taoist, or Legalist perspective, the idea of gaining victory while inflicting the least amount of damage on the enemy is generally fundamental. Except perhaps when blindly exacting revenge, all commanders seek to minimize their own losses while maximizing the gains that can be realized. Occupying a thoroughly devastated state was never espoused by any ancient Chinese military thinker, although scorched earth policies were prominently exploited by "barbarian" tribes later in Chinese history, and mass slaughter accompanied by wartime rampages that resulted in the wholesale destruction of cities did characterize the late Warring States period.

34. Unit force levels are discussed in Appendix E.

35. These earthworks are variously identified as mounds for overlooking and assaulting the city and as protective walls that allow the besiegers shielded movement outside the city's walls, beneath potentially withering fire (cf. STPF SY, p. 44).

36. This continues the thought of the first passage because a ruler whose objectives include "preserving" others is more likely to be welcomed by the populace. (It also accords with the Confucian ideal of King Wu, previously noted.)

37. Following Liu Yin, SWTCC WCCS, I:24B–25A; and SS AS, p. 74. D. C. Lau ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," p. 320) believes this sentence refers to dividing the enemy, which is equally possible. However, with double strength, as Liu Yin (following Ts'ao Ts'ao) notes, one can mount a frontal assault with one part to fix them and then employ a flanking (i.e., unorthodox) attack to overwhelm them. This understanding also seems more congruent with the next sentence, which still allows for engaging the enemy if you are merely equal in strength. Forcing the enemy to divide his troops is a hallmark of Sun-tzu's thought. By dividing one's forces to launch a secondary front, the enemy would be forced to respond or face the loss of his other position. Thus he would also have to divide his forces, thereby accomplishing Sun-tzu's objective. (See Tu You's commentary and also the divergent views in ST SCC, p. 44, and Chu's analysis, STPF SY, pp. 47–49.)

38. Such as by assuming a desperate position to fight to the death or mounting a defense when flight would be appropriate.

39. As discussed in the translator's introduction, Sun-tzu is writing after the early rise of the professional commander and the increasing estrangement of many rulers from field command. The distinction between the forms of administration, discipline, and temperament appropriate to the civil and the martial is more pronounced in the other *Military Classics*, such as the *Ssu-ma Fa*. (For discussion, see the introductory section to the translation.) However, even here Sun-tzu is already warning of the dangers posed by inappropriately intermixing them.

Some editions have *ssu*—"direct" or "manage"—rather than *t'ung*—"the same as"—which resolves a somewhat awkward passage. However, both the Sung and Ming editions have *t'ung*, which can be understood as translated. (The next sentence also contains "same as [the civil]," which has been left untranslated because it can also be understood as the ruler uniting the authority for the joint command in his own

hands. Cf. STPF SY, pp. 51–52; and STPF CS, p. 47. Also note the explanations in SS AS, pp.79–80.)

40. The BS have *chih*, "to know" or "to understand," rather than "recognizes."

41. The BS read "Thus, in warfare, one who knows them (the enemy) and knows himself ..."

42. The BS contain two versions of this chapter, the second basically somewhat shorter than the first.

43. "Unconquerable" rather than "invincible" because the latter tends to connote a permanence inappropriate to fluctuating battlefield conditions. The invincible are never conquerable, whereas an army—due to its disposition, exploitation of terrain, and other factors—may be temporarily unconquerable.

44. The BS lack "in warfare."

45. Contrary to our usual practice, in this rare case the translation is based on the Han bamboo text rather than the traditional *Seven Military Classics*. The latter has perturbed commentators because of its apparent inconsistency with Sun-tzu's thought and the logical development of the paragraph. The traditional text simply reads: "If one defends then he is [or will be] insufficient; if he attacks then he will [have] a surplus." This is understood by commentators such as Liu Yin to mean that one defends *because* his strength is inadequate and attacks because his force is more than abundant (cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:30). However, this contorts the grammar because it requires that the term be reversed: "If insufficient one defends" (cf. ST SCC, p. 56; STPF CS, p. 59. Also note Chu Chün's balanced appraisal, STPF SY, pp. 58–59).

46. The phrase "One who excels at offense" does not appear in the BS. The sentences would then be elided to read: "One who excels at defense buries himself away below the lowest depths of Earth and moves from above the greatest heights of Heaven." There are also unimportant, minor variations in the BS versions (cf. STPF CS, pp. 60–61; STPF SY, p. 60).

47. The BS lack "the ancients."

48. From the two BS versions, the original sentence apparently read: "Thus the battles of those who excelled did not have unorthodox victories, nor fame for wisdom, nor courageous achievements of courage" (cf. STPF CS, pp. 58–59; STPF SY, p. 60).

49. The BS have "Thus one who excels cultivates the Tao."

50. "Tao" is variously explained by the commentators as referring to such Confucian virtues as benevolence and righteousness—implemented to attract the people—or the military principles essential to being unconquerable. Cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:32B; ST SCC, pp. 61–62.

51. The BS have *cheng*—"upright," "to rectify," "to regulate"—instead of *cheng*—"government." However, as Chu Chün notes, the former could have been a loan for the latter because the two were somewhat interchangeable at that time. He therefore rejects the emendation suggested by the bamboo slips. The translation reflects the traditional text, but with the character for government understood as "regulator," rather than following commentaries that read it as "government" and produce a translation that reads "Therefore he is able to conquer defeated governments" (cf. STPF CS, p. 59; STPF SY, pp. 60–61; and ST SCC, pp. 61–62).

52. The caption for this sentence, literally "military *fa*," is considered to be a book title by Tadokoro Yoshiyuki (SSTY, p. 118) and Ch'en Ch'i-t'ien (*Chiao-shih*, p. 105),

translatable as the "Art of Methods." This is the same title as the *Art of War* (which is best translated as "Military Methods," but we have adopted the traditional rendering). *Fa* encompasses the meanings of "laws" and "methods," with the latter more appropriate here. Rather than the title of a preexistent book or section of a work (which is also referred to in several other military classics), it should be understood as the fundamental methods for warfare, the measures that then follow (cf. STPF SY, p. 61; SS AS, p. 104). In the BS only the term *fa* appears, but Chu Chün retains "military methods" (STPF SY, p. 61).

53. "Measurement" is generally understood by the commentators as referring not only to the extent and dimensions of the terrain but also its classification according to the categories advanced in the various chapters that follow.

54. "Estimation" is variously described as referring to types of forces suitable for segments of the terrain, such as crossbowmen for the hills, or the quantities of materials required to sustain the battle. All these terms are not otherwise discussed in the *Art of War*, and their referents thus remain a matter of speculation.

55. The BS add "weighing" and "the people" to the traditional text, producing "weighing the victory of a combative people." Although this is accepted by Wu Jung-sung (STPF CS, p. 58), Chu Chün appears correct in opting for the traditional text (and thereby avoiding an awkward grammatical construction). Cf. STPF SY, p. 61.

56. As D. C. Lau has pointed out ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," pp. 332–333), the use of *hsing* (shape, configuration) here is nearly identical to *shih* (strategic power).

57. The BS merely have *Shih*, "Strategic Power," for the title.

58. The terms translated as "configuration" and "designation" are *hsing*—"form" or "shape"—and *ming*—"name." Within the context of Sun-tzu's thought, the first seems to indicate the form or configuration of forces, as in formations and standard deployments. The second appears to refer to naming the units, designating them in some fashion—such as by flags with specific symbols. However, the earliest commentary, which is by the great general Ts'ao Ts'ao, equated *hsing*/form with flags and *ming*/name with gongs and drums. Liu Yin and others extrapolate on this thought, but some scholars—such as Tu Mu—identify *hsing* with deployments and *ming* with flags (see SWTCC WCCS, I:35; ST SCC, pp. 66–67; STPF CS, pp. 67–68; and Wang Chien-tung's overview, STPF, WC, pp. 144–146). Robin D.S. Yates ("New Light," pp. 220–222), based on his extensive research on the *Mo-tzu*, believes both terms refer to flags and that the historically and philosophically significant term *hsing-ming* originates with the military thinkers. (For an early discussion of *hsing-ming*—often translated as "performance and title"—as well as the issue of which character is appropriate for the term *hsing*, see Herrlee G. Creel, "The Meaning of *Hsing-ming*," reprinted in *What is Taoism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970, pp. 79–91.)

59. For "invariably" the BS have "entirely/altogether." (Cf. STPF CS, p. 65; and STPF SY, p. 74. Chu Chün [STPF SY] does not accept the revision.)

Unorthodox (*ch'i*) and orthodox (*cheng*) are discussed in the notes to the translator's introduction. An intriguing view is also advanced by Kuan Feng, equating the orthodox with movements designed to realize advantage and the unorthodox with actions that turn disadvantageous situations into advantageous ones. See "Sun-tzu chün-shih che-hsüeh," pp. 81–82.

60. See note 17 for an explanation of the vacuous and substantial.

61. The BS have "Heaven and Earth" rather than just "Heaven."

62. The BS have "rivers and seas" or "Yellow River and the seas" rather than the "Yangtze and Yellow rivers."

63. The Sung and Ming editions have *keng* rather than *fu*. Although Sun-tzu does not continue the explicit comparison, all the commentators make it clear that the unorthodox and orthodox are mutually related just like these further examples of cyclic phenomena (SWTCC WCCS, I:36B; ST SCC, p. 69).

64. Although the character *pien*, "change," has generally been translated as "transformation," we have opted to preserve the (possibly artificial) distinction between *pien* ("change") and *hua* ("transformation") throughout our translation of the *Seven Military Classics*. As a tentative basis for employing "change" rather than "transformation," it might be observed that musical notes are not transformed in substance when producing new sounds, only changed in effect. Similarly, the composition of a military force is untransformed when its employment is changed from orthodox to unorthodox. However, this is a topic that requires further study, and an illuminating paper by Nathan Sivin should appear coincident with the publication of this book.

65. The BS version is slightly different; it lacks the character *shun* but adds another *huan*, so it would read: "The unorthodox and orthodox in circle [fashion] mutually produce each other, just like an endless circle" (cf. STPF CS, p. 65; and STPF SY, p. 75).

66. The BS lack "pent-up" (or "accumulated") water. Most translators use the term "torrent" to describe the flow, but the essential idea in the Sung/Ming edition is that water has been restrained and has accumulated and then—when suddenly released—flows violently, turbulently, carrying even stones along. (This is not to deny that some very swift currents can tumble stones, but the pent-up water image is more appropriate to the idea of potential power unleashed and is used in many other military writings—perhaps quoted from Sun-tzu—in this fashion.)

67. The term translated as "constraints" is *chieh*, commonly used to indicate constraints or measures imposed on troops. The term lacks a satisfactory English rendering because it encompasses the concepts of "control," "timing," and "measure." The commentators generally agree it refers to the modulation of both time and space. Sun-tzu apparently intends "constraints" to encompass the deliberate structuring of actions to ensure that the timing is precise and that the impulse of strategic power is imparted at the proper moment to the objective at a critical position. When the target is moving, such as a bird or an enemy, controlling action to attain this objective becomes more difficult. The final stage should be kept short so as to minimize the enemy's ability to avoid the onslaught or effect countermeasures, as Sun-tzu states below. Liu Yin notes it also refers to the control or measurement of strength so that the objective will be reached and not missed. (SWTCC WCCS, I:37B. Also see ST SCC, pp. 71–72; ST CCCY, p. 124; and SS AS, pp. 119–120.)

68. The same term as for the "onrush" of the water, although "to attack" is clearly assumed.

69. Literally, "short." Whether in a temporal or spatial dimension, briefness is synonymous with precision and effectiveness.

70. The meaning of the circular formation has stimulated voluminous commentaries. Essentially, the army seems to be involuntarily compressed into a circular formation and is therefore vulnerable. However, such a formation presents no exposed points or positions yet offers the possibility of numerous fixed deployments and the employment of both orthodox and unorthodox tactics through unfolding. Consequently, in some views it is chosen deliberately rather than forced on the army to allow flexibility while creating the similitude of difficulty and apparent defeat (cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:38A; ST SCC, pp. 72–75).

71. The translation follows Liu Yin's commentary, understanding the sentence as expressing some bases for practicing the art of deception (SWTCC WCCS, I:38A). However, there are other possible frames of reference for "Chaos is given birth from control," among them that one's own troops may become chaotic despite being well controlled. This might result from overcontrol, lack of flexibility, too fragile an organization, a shift in battlefield conditions, or laxity in maintaining discipline and organization (cf. ST SCC, pp. 74–76; STPF SY, p. 84; SS AS, pp. 122–123).

72. "Foundation," following the Sung/Ming text. However, many other texts—including the BS and the SCC—have "troops," which most modern commentators feel is correct. "Foundation" presumably refers to the general's well-disciplined, well-organized army, so indirectly it means "forces." (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, I:39A; ST SCC, p. 78; STPF SY, p. 75. Wu Jung-sung retains *pen*, "foundation," and translates it as "heavy forces." STPF CS, p. 67.)

73. Liu Yin comments: "Thus one who excels at warfare seeks (victory) through the certain victory of the army's strategic power, not through reliance on untalented men. Thus he is able to select the talented among men and entrust them with strategic power" (SWTCC WCCS, I:39B). Although many others follow Liu Yin's thoughts, a second line of commentary observes that by relying on strategic power, men can be employed according to their talents in the quest for victory. Within the context of surpassing power, even the timid will become assertive and perform their roles—something rewards, punishments, and the laws may not be able to accomplish. Furthermore, men will not be forced to attempt actions they are unable to perform (cf. ST SCC, pp. 79–80; SS AS, p. 127; STPF SY, pp. 86–87).

74. The chapter is so named because key paragraphs advance the concept of striking and exploiting any voids or weaknesses in the enemy's deployment. The substantial should always be avoided rather than confronted. (In the BS, the title characters are reversed: "Substance and Vacuity.")

75. Controlling others, rather than being controlled by others, is one of Sun-tzu's fundamental principles, and many of his tactical measures are devoted to appropriately manipulating the enemy.

76. The *Seven Military Classics* edition reads "Go forth to places he will not race to," whereas the ST SCC edition emends the "not" to "must" (cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:2B–3A; ST SCC, p. 87). D. C. Lau also supplies a perceptive note on the error of this emendation ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," p. 321), but the recovered bamboo text indicates the original reading is "must," and collateral evidence appears in the "T'ai-p'ing yü-lan" (hereafter TPYL) quotation. (However, Chu Chün prefers the traditional text. See STPF SY, pp. 90–91, 96.) This coheres well with the preceding sentence, and the traditional text has been altered accordingly. Also note that some commentators and translators would understand the traditional sentence as "Go by way of places he will not race to."

77. Because this sentence does not appear in the bamboo text, some modern commentators view it as a later, inappropriate accretion (see STPF CS, p. 78). However, these coupled sentences are frequently quoted in other military works and have an inherent parallelism that tends to suggest their correctness (cf. SS AS, p. 134).

78. STPF CS, based on the BS, emends "will not attack" to "must attack" (STPF CS, p. 73). There is also collateral evidence for this reading in the TPYL. However, "will not attack" accords with the chapter's trend of thought, particularly in light of such sentences below as "When someone excels at defense the enemy does not know where to attack" and "If I do not want to engage in combat, even though I merely draw a line on the ground and defend it, they will not be able to engage me in battle because we thwart his movements." If the defense is impregnable, the enemy will be deterred from foolishly attacking and uselessly expending his forces. (Cf. STPF SY, p. 91; SS AS, pp. 137–138; and ST SCC, pp. 88–89.) Wu Ju-sung notes that tacticians of Sun-tzu's generation valued defense over offense, although his text accepts the BS version "must attack" (see STPF CS, pp.77–78).

79. Formless, "not *hsing*," having no form or discernible configuration.

80. The BS have "an advance which is unresponded to" rather than "unhampered" (or "not repulsed").

81. There are two differences in the BS: "stopped" for "pursued" and "distance" for "speed." Thus it would read "To effect a retreat that cannot be stopped, employ unreachable distance." These are variously accepted or rejected by modern commentators. (Cf. STPF CS, p. 73; STPF HC, pp. 91–92; and the traditional commentaries, ST SCC, pp. 90–91.)

82. This sentence has occasioned rather divergent views. Although the translation reflects the chapter's progression, another possibility is understanding the "*hsing chih*" at the beginning of the sentence in a causative sense, as causing them to betray their form (STPF SY, p. 99). A radically different view—expressed by Liu Yin, among others—suggests that through the employment of unorthodox and orthodox tactics, one creates and displays a deceptive form or disposition to the enemy while actually being formless (SWTCC WCCS, II:5B). Others simply interpret it as displaying a form to the enemy (see STPF CS, p. 75; ST SCC, p. 93; and SS AS, p. 144).

In the BS the sentence begins with "Thus those who excel at command ... "

83. Note that D. C. Lau also understands the sentence in this way, as do several commentators. Cf. "Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," pp. 329–330.

84. The BS invert the sequence of "field of battle" and "day of battle" and also lack the character for "Assemble."

85. The sequence of left/right and front/rear is reversed in the BS.

86. Presumably a comment directed to the king of Wu by Sun-tzu. However, Chang Yü comments that "I" is an error for Wu, the State's name (which seems unlikely). SWTCC WCCS, II:8A; ST SCC, p. 97.

87. The BS have "solely" or "monopolized" for "achieved." Accordingly, "Thus I say victory can be monopolized."

88. Predictability means having form; therefore, repeating previously successful tactical methods would completely contradict Sun-tzu's principle of being formless. Through flexibility and variation the configuration of response attains to the inexhaustible.

89. The BS have "move/moving" rather than "configuration." Because "configuration" is used consistently throughout the chapter, it seems preferable.

90. The BS have "victory" rather than "configuration."

91. Again the BS have "move" rather than "flow." (Chu Chün, among others, prefers the traditional text. See STPF SY, p. 93.)

92. The BS have "complete," so the phrase would be translated as "completed (fixed) configuration of power."

93. The BS lack "water," so the last part of the sentence would also describe the army.

94. The BS only have "transform" rather than "change and transform" and also lack "wrest victory."

95. The BS have two characters at the end, *shen yao*—perhaps an additional comment by an unknown hand with the meaning "Spiritual Essentials."

96. The title does not refer to actual combat but to achieving the conditions that make contention possible. The main themes are therefore the considerations of rapid versus measured advance; exploitation and avoidance of terrain and obstacles; and the critical element of *ch'i*, the army's spirit.

97. "Tactics" or "plans," but also the same character as "estimations" and therefore suggestive of comparatively valuing the effects of various routes.

98. The translation follows the *Military Classics* edition (SWTCC WCCS, II:14B). However, other editions (such as the ST SCC, p. 106; STPF CS, p. 81; STPF SY, p. 109) and the BS all have the character for "army" (*chün*) rather than "masses" (*chung*), so both parts read in parallel: "Thus combat between armies can be advantageous; combat between armies can be dangerous." Both readings are congruent with the chapter's content because fighting with an undisciplined mass is dangerous, whereas it is the nature of warfare to entail both gain and loss.

99. Following STPF WC, p. 215, and SS AS, p. 169. They literally "roll up their armor" and presumably leave it behind with the baggage train so as to allow greater foot speed. (Heavy equipment is implied from the sentences below, which all couple the baggage and heavy equipment.)

100. In the *Art of War* and the *Ssu-ma Fa*, the concept of plundering and then dividing the spoils among the troops remains evident. In contrast, the later *Military Classics* strongly advocate a policy of neither harming the general populace nor seizing their possessions.

101. Night battles did not commence until late in the Spring and Autumn period and were not common because the confusion wrought by the darkness made the results uncertain. The exact reason for multiplying the numbers of flags and fires is a subject of debate among the commentators: It was done either to ensure that their effect as tools for communication and signaling literally overwhelmed the soldiers or (and possibly as well as) to confuse the enemy by confronting it with a myriad stimuli (cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:19B–20; ST SCC, pp. 117–118).

In the BS, this passage immediately follows the quotation from the *Military Administration* (STPF CS, p. 81).

102. Following D. C. Lau's gloss on *kuei* ("Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," p. 320).

103. Or "majestic formations."

104. The BS have *ni*—"go against," "go contrary to"—rather than *ying*—"to meet," "to confront." This reading is also preferred by Chu Chün (STPF SY, p. 112).

105. The BS have "leave an outlet"; the Ming text has "must/outlet," the "leave" being understood. (Cf. STPF SY, p. 112, for Chu's rejection of the Ming edition.)

106. Liu Yin notes that this last paragraph is apparently repeated from the next chapter. However, only the Ming edition has the passage in the next chapter as well, where it is apparently an accidental accretion.

The BS have "masses/large numbers" for "military."

107. Chapter titles in the extant editions of the ancient classics have frequently been appended by later hands—whether compilers, subsequent authors adding material, or commentators. Many were simply drawn from the first few words of the chapter, others from a salient sentence within it; therefore, they may be largely unrelated to the chapter's overall subject matter. "Nine Changes" forces the commentators to somehow justify "changes" because the chapter's admonitions against certain courses of action on particular terrains do not constitute changes. For example, Chang Yü asserts that the chapter refers to employing the expedient—the "unusual" rather than the "normal"—in these situations, but his view lacks justification. Although the concept of flexible response is critical to Sun-tzu's tactics, it hardly seems to be the topic of this chapter. Others—including Liu Yin—suggest the chapter is badly mangled, and because the BS preserve only about forty words, they offer little help. In addition, the BS fragments lack a title. Finally, "nine" may simply be used here as a cognomem for "many" or "numerous," such as "Nine Heavens" (STPF SY, pp. 128–129). A minority view holds that "nine" might also be an error for "five" because five terrains are discussed (see SWTCC WCCS, II:24–25; ST SCC, p. 131; SS AS, pp. 194–195; and STPF CS, pp. 89–91).

108. This repeats the formula used previously to introduce the topic. Five classifications of terrain follow, all of which also appear in subsequent chapters in similar descriptive lists—frequently with definitions. Although some notes are provided below, also refer to Chapters 10 and 11 for further explication. (For additional discussion of the terms together with comments on previous translations and a full translation of the relevant lost material on terrain classification from the *Art of War* that is preserved in other texts, see Ralph D. Sawyer, "The Missing Chapter of Sun-tzu," *IKF* 6 [1987], pp. 77–98.)

109. "Entrapping terrain" is traditionally understood as low-lying ground, perhaps surrounded by hills or mountains and characterized by bodies of water such as marshes or swamps. It is thought to be land that can be inundated, possibly by heavy rains or by breaking restraining banks (as was done in China in World War II) and consequently involves heavy slogging for the chariots and men. However, there is considerable disagreement as to its defining characteristics (See STPF SY, pp. 125–126; ST CCCY, p. 165; ST SCC, p. 131). The *Six Secret Teachings*, among other works, discusses the dangers posed by similar terrain in Chapter 58. The BS have *fan*—"overflow" or "inundate"—rather than *p'i*, which means "subvert(ed)" or "defeated." Chu Chün prefers the original because the scope is wider and is capable of encompassing any terrain through which passage is difficult (STPF SY, pp. 125–126). There is another, nearly identical character *i*, which means "bridge" or "embankment"; its existence raises further, although unexplored, possibilities.

110. "Focal" terrain (following Griffith's apt term) is defined in Chapter 11 as "land of the feudal lords surrounded on three sides such that whoever arrives first will gain the masses of All under Heaven." The characters literally mean "terrain where highways intersect"; therefore, narrowly defined it would be land that is accessible from several directions over prepared roads.

111. Several sentences follow in the Ming edition of the *Seven Military Classics* that have been duplicated erroneously from other sections. Neither the Sung dynasty edition of the *Seven Military Classics* nor other editions—such as the SCC—contains them, and they are therefore omitted here.

112. Emending "can" to "not," following the Sung edition. Cf. ST SCC, pp. 132–133.

113. With this sentence there are already nine principles.

114. Wu Ju-sung notes that in the so-called "lost" fragments from the bamboo slips, the following sentences appear: "There are orders from the ruler which are not implemented. If the ruler orders anything contrary to these four, then do not implement it." "Four" refers to the last four in the series (see STPF CS, pp. 89–91). The "Nine Changes" would therefore be encompassed by the series listed prior to the strong statement about not accepting certain orders from the ruler, which is consonant with the view of commentators such as Wang Hsi, rather than being an arbitrary number (cf. STPF CS, pp. 89–91; ST SCC, p. 131; STPF WC, p. 254).

115. "Five advantages" is found in almost all editions, including the Sung and Ming, and is generally understood as referring to the advantages of the first terrains characterized at the start of this chapter. However, there may be errors in the characters because the "five" are not advantageous but rather are disadvantageous terrains, and much circumlocution is required to convert them to "advantage." One suggestion is that this should read "advantages of terrain"—the advantages and terrains, however, remaining unspecified. (See ST CCCY, p. 164; and SS AS, pp. 201–203. Compare ST SCC, pp. 136–137.)

116. Literally, "espy life"—generally understood as "look for tenable ground," terrain that can be fought on or defended. Some commentators identify it with the yang side, the side looking toward the sun (facing south or east). (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:35A; ST SCC, pp. 144–145; STPF WC, pp. 273–274.)

117. Sun-tzu rarely discusses the military problems posed by water—streams, rivers, lakes—no doubt reflecting an early heritage of plains warfare. As the scope of conflict expanded, the problems entailed in fording rivers, crossing wetlands, and negotiating lakes grew enormously, stimulating the development of naval forces in the southeast. Accordingly, the later military classics address these concerns somewhat extensively. (The character translated as "rivers"—*shui* rather than *ch'uan*—originally a graph of running water, can refer to rivers or to bodies of water in general. Because Sun-tzu speaks about the current's direction, rivers appear to be intended here.)

118. This is understood as meaning that armies should not assume positions downstream from an enemy because of such potential dangers as being inundated by suddenly released flood waters or felled by drinking water drawn from a poisoned river (see SWTCC WCCS, II:36A; ST SCC, p. 147).

119. Presumably, terrain easy for chariots to negotiate and for supply wagons to cross.

120. Fragments recovered from the Han tomb (as well as materials in the *Shih chi*) briefly summarize the Yellow Emperor's conquest over the other four (evil) emperors, striking each in turn in his associated quarter (that is, the Black Emperor in the north, the White Emperor in the west, and so on). This conflict, which is denied vigorously by the Confucians, was popularly understood as marking the (mythological) inception of military conflict and strategy in China. See "Lin-i Yin-ch'üeh-shan Han-mu ch'u-t'u *Sun-tzu ping-fa* ts'an-chien shih-wen," *WW* 1974, No. 12, p. 12.

121. Life-supporting terrain is obviously ground that has sunlight, grass for the animals, brush and trees for firewood, and especially potable water. Liu Yin and others equate the "substantial" with high ground (SWTCC WCCS, II:38A. Cf. ST SCC, p. 150, and STPF SY, pp. 142–143).

122. The BS lack "is said to be certain of victory," so the sentence is read as being linked with the start of the next passage (cf. STPF SY, p. 137).

123. Chu Chün points out that observing the presence of bubbles or foam on the river, which indicates rain upstream, exemplifies Sun-tzu's approach to analyzing and fathoming the enemy and battlefield situations. From the bubbles one can deduce that it has rained and can anticipate a surge in the river's flow and level. Such a surge could prove disastrous for an army encamped too close to the shore or caught suddenly in midstream (STPF SY, p. 137).

124. Although the commentators differ somewhat on the details of this and the following dangerous, natural configurations of terrain—several of which are concrete cases of Sun-tzu's more general classifications—their defining characteristics are clear (cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:38B–39A; ST SCC, pp. 151–153).

Heaven's Well is so named because it is a significant depression, such as a valley, surrounded on four sides by hills or mountains. It is dangerous because the runoff of rainwater from unexpected storms can inundate the lowlands.

125. Heaven's Jail is a valley with steep hills or mountains on three sides. Forces that carelessly enter it can be easily bottled up, unable to ascend the sides to escape.

126. Heaven's Net refers to any area of extensive, dense growth—including heavy forests or dense vegetation (including jungle-like growth of underbrush and vines) that will obstruct the passage of vehicles or entangle the men.

127. Heaven's Pit refers to an area characterized by soft, probably muddy terrain, perhaps marked by wetlands, that will mire both men and vehicles.

128. Heaven's Fissure refers to terrain that suggests a fissure in the earth. Therefore, it encompasses long, narrow passages constrained by hills or forests from which an enemy might advantageously dominate the passage.

129. The BS have "small forests," or woods.

130. The BS have "which could conceal hidden (forces)" right after "entangled undergrowth" and "places of evildoers" at the end of the sentence. (Neither the STPF CS nor the STPF SY takes note of these.)

131. The occupation of ravines was of particular interest to the classical strategists (as evidenced by material in both the *Six Secret Teachings* and *Wei Liao-tzu*); this is generally seen as indicating weakness and the need to avail oneself of advantages of terrain.

132. Easily visible obstacles have been made deliberately detectable in order to create the suspicion of ambush or the emplacement of entangling devices and thereby beguile the ordinary commander to divert his forces to the enemy's advantage.

133. Presumably, to define the field of battle and pre-position for the infantry advance.

134. They lack military discipline, grumble and move about, are noisy, and obey orders reluctantly.

135. The translation follows the *Seven Military Classics* edition. Other editions (cf. ST SCC, pp. 161–162) are somewhat different, combining this and the following sentence to read: "If they feed grain to the horses and eat meat while the army does not hang up its cooking utensils nor return to camp, they are an exhausted invader."

136. These are all signs that they are preparing to launch a desperate attack; otherwise, they would need the horses and draft animals as well as their cooking utensils. (In Chapter 11 Sun-tzu advises breaking the cooking utensils and similar measures to dramatically impress on the soldiers the hopelessness of their situation and increase their determination for a last-ditch engagement.)

137. The commander, through his ill-conceived measures, has lost control over them and fears they will revolt.

138. This sentence probably refers to one's own troops. That is, it is not important that you be more numerous than the enemy because if you are not, you merely have to conceive good tactical measures. The BS lack "esteem," which accordingly is understood. "Aggressively" or "in martial fashion" (*wu*) is thought here to refer to actions taken without basis, manifesting bravado without forethought (cf. ST SCC, pp. 164–165; STPF SY, p. 147).

139. Another dimension to the civil-martial relationship.

140. Generally translated as "certain victory" or "certain conquest," the characters do not contain "victory/conquer." Rather, this is the term encountered previously for easily seizing the enemy (see note 16 above).

141. Configurations (*hsing*) of terrain, with their tactical implications. Unfortunately, the configurations are named rather than defined; parts of the text have apparently been lost, and none are preserved in the BS. Each configuration correlates the topography with the basic maneuvers possible in the situation on the assumption that two armies are confronting each other.

142. "Suspended," or "hung up." Although the text seems simple enough, there is a hidden question of perspective that the commentators have not noticed. If the situational analysis refers to the army's present position, when it goes forth it will not be able to return. Accordingly, the terrain it initially occupied would best be termed "irrecoverable." From the perspective of the position to which it advances, it becomes "hung up." Presumably, the "suspended configuration" encompasses both the initial and final positions across the terrain. (Cf. ST SCC, pp. 169–170; STPF SY, p. 154; SS AS, p. 246; and STPF CS, p. 105.)

143. "Stalemated" describes the tactical situation, although the exact character is *chih*—"branch," or "to support." Both sides are supported, so they are in a stalemate. The commentators suggest a lengthy standoff (cf. ST SCC, p. 170).

144. This might also be understood as to "draw off (our forces) to make them (i.e., the enemy) depart." That is, by withdrawing one *compels* the enemy to depart from his entrenched, advantageous position. Withdrawing one's forces and departing is the means through which the enemy's departure is accomplished in either case, but the conclusion—of stimulating them to movement—is implicit in the text translation and is necessary for the next sentence—striking when the enemy is half out.

145. "Constricted" configurations are generally described as extensive mountain valleys. Others also identify them with river or lake crossings. (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:48B; STPF SY, p. 154; STPF CS, p. 106; and ST SCC, p. 171.) Furthermore, the commentators generally understand the sentence as referring to occupying the mouth; however, there is no textual reason to so restrict it because the sentence simply advises to "fully" occupy it. (By leaving the entrance unobstructed, enemy forces can be lured

into the killing zone created by deploying forces on both sides throughout the valley, as in several famous historical battles.)

146. "Precipitous," invoking the image of steep mountain gorges or ravines ("ravines" being the translation in other contexts). It is difficult terrain to traverse; therefore, occupying the heights is paramount. (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:48B, STPF SY, p. 154; ST SCC, pp. 171–172.)

147. Following Liu Yin, taking "strategic power being equal" as an additional condition. (See SWTCC WCCS, II: 49a. Cf. STPF CS, p. 106.)

148. The odds are so insurmountable that any sort of direct attack can only result in failure and the retreat of the forces so foolishly flung at the enemy (SWTCC WCCS, II:49B).

149. Following SWTCC WCCS and ST SCC. The *T'ung-tien* has "estimating the fullest extent of the difficult and easy, advantageous and harmful, distant and near" (cf. ST SCC, p. 176; and Lau, "Some Notes on the *Sun-tzu*," p. 328). "Ravines" is the same character translated previously as "precipitous" for the configurations of terrain.

150. Here—unlike the earlier passage, which is open to some interpretation—the text clearly means "with" rather than "for" him (refer to note *5* above).

151. Following the Sung, Ming, and SCC editions. However, some others have "inexhaustible" rather than "complete" (cf. STPF SY, p. 153; SS AS, pp. 261–262).

152. The nine terrains analyzed in this chapter appear in two sequences, with some variation. In addition, some of the terms appeared previously in Chapters 8 and 10; others are new but apparently overlap with earlier configurations. This suggests that essential materials have been lost, the text has been corrupted, or the concepts were in a state of flux and not yet rigidly defined.

153. Following Giles and Griffith, who use the appropriate term "dispersive." The commentators generally understand "dispersive" as referring to the tendency of the men, while fighting within their native state, to be thinking of their homes and families and to be inclined to return there. Consequently, they are neither unified nor aroused to a fighting spirit. (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:56A; ST SCC, p. 182; and STPF SY, p. 168.) Note that later in the chapter the commander must unify their will on dispersive terrain (before invading enemy territory), and Sun-tzu also advises against engaging the enemy on dispersive terrain. This was perhaps a strategy designed to vitiate an invader's strength before engaging him in battle.

154. Apparently, the soliders still do not regard the enterprise too seriously and continue to think about home and family. Because it remains relatively easy to withdraw but dangerous to forge ahead, it is termed "light" terrain. (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:56Aa; STPF SY, p. 168; and ST SCC, p. 183. Griffith uses "frontier," Giles "facile.")

155. This is ground for which one contends, therefore "contentious" terrain. (Giles also translates as "contentious," Griffith as "key ground," and it is unquestionably a strategic point.) The configurations of terrain previously warned against in the last chapter are probably prime objectives under this category because of their great tactical potential if they can be seized and exploited. (Cf. ST SCC, pp. 183–184; STPF SY, p. 169.)

156. In Chapter 10 this is termed "accessible" terrain. Army movement is unhampered.

157. Following Griffith's apt term, "focal." Presumably, this is territory in which major highways intersect and is accessible to major powers on various sides. Its occupation is the key to controlling vast territory. (See note 110 above, where the term first appears. Also compare ST SCC, p. 185; and STPF SY, p. 170.)

158. Griffith translates as "serious." This term contrasts with "light terrain," the severity of their situation now being clearly apparent to the soldiers. Their minds are unified, their courage united. (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:57A; and ST SCC, pp. 185–186.) Chu Chün sees the critical element as the cessation of food supplies, with the soldiers suddenly having to forage and plunder to sustain themselves, as stated slightly later in the chapter. This weighs heavily on them (STPF SY, pp. 170–171).

159. This seems to also encompass Heaven's Pit and Heaven's Net. The term is first discussed in Chapter 8.

160. "Constricted" is the same term as that used for one of the configurations in Chapter 10. (It can also mean a "gorge.")

161. The term for "encircled" can also be translated as "besieged" in other contexts and clearly carries such implications (see ST SCC, p. 186). The emphasis here is on the necessity to pass through a narrow opening or along a narrow passage, which constrains the flow of men and materials and thereby makes them vulnerable to being surrounded and attacked by even a small force.

162. Sun-tzu consistently advocates exploiting "ground of death" because when troops are deployed on it, the situation forces them to fight valiantly. The commentators think it would be terrain with solid obstacles to the front—such as mountains—and water to the rear, preventing a withdrawal. (Cf. ST SCC, pp. 187–188; and STPF SY, pp. 171–172.)

163. If you cannot occupy it first, do not attack an entrenched enemy. (SWTCC WCCS, II:58A; and ST SCC, p. 189.)

164. In Chapter 8 it states, "Unite with your allies on focal terrain."

165. In Chapter 8 it states, "Do not encamp on entrapping terrain."

166. Chapter 8: "Make strategic plans for encircled terrain."

167. Some commentators take this as referring to "uniting with the enemy in battle." However, the general import of the paragraph does not restrict the techniques stricly to combat measures.

168. There is disagreement over what is actually obtained without being sought (cf. ST SCC, p. 187).

169. The BS have "deaths" instead of "lives," but the difference is ignored by the STPF CS and STPF SY.

170. This phrase, which is implicit in any case, appears in the BS.

171. Following Chao Pen-hsüeh, *Sun-tzu-shu chiao-chieh yin-lei*, II:36B. Liu Yin (SWTCC WCCS, II:64B–65A) cites one commentator who emends the character translated as "fetter" to "release," understanding the sentence to refer to "releasing the horses."

172. Some commentators incorrectly equate "hard and soft" with "strong and weak." The two pairs are clearly distinguished in the *Military Classics*.

173. Literally, "keeping them stupid." Chu Chün believes this merely refers to preserving all plans in total secrecy rather than being a policy to keep the soldiers stupid (STPF SY, p. 176).

174. Especially the enemy.

175. Analogous with releasing the trigger of a cocked crossbow. In some editions, such as the ST SCC (p. 203), the following sentence appears: "They burn their boats and smash their cooking pots."

176. This paragraph again discusses the nine types of terrain, but from the perspective of acting as an invader. Some commentators believe it is redundant or erroneous, but others—such as the modern military historian General Wei Ju-lin—stress the difference between principles for general combat and those for invading another's territory (see ST CCCY, p. 222–224).

177. The BS are somewhat different: "If you have strongholds behind you and the enemy before you, it is 'fatal terrain.' If there is no place to go, it is 'exhausted terrain.'"

178. Some commentators take this as referring to the enemy's rear, but the context of the preceding statements indicates it should refer to actions taken with regard to one's own army. (Cf. STPF CS, p. 115; and STPF WC, p. 370.) The BS have "I will cause them not to remain."

179. The actions to be taken for four of the terrains are somewhat reversed in the BS. In this case the BS have the conclusion to the next sentence: "I solidify our alliances."

180. The BS have "I focus on what we rely on."

181. The BS have "I race our rear elements forward."

182. Liu Yin explains this as meaning that the general closes off any openings deliberately offered by the enemy to lure his forces out of their encirclement (SWTCC WCCS, II:69A). Leaving such an opening was a common way to keep the defenders from mounting a last-ditch, pitched defense. (Both the *Six Secret Teachings* and the *Wei Liao-tzu* discuss this technique.)

183. The BS preface the sentence with a fragment that apparently means "It is the nature of the feudal lords. ..."

184. Reading *pa wang* as two distinct terms rather than "hegemonic king" (cf. STPF CS, p. 115).

185. This is sometimes understood as not contending with others to form alliances, which would miss the main point of the passage.

186. This sentence is somewhat problematic. Most of the commentators interpret it in the light of Sun-tzu's policy of being deceptive, and in fact the character for "details" might also be an error for a similar character meaning "to deceive." Thus they understand it as "accord with and pretend to follow the enemy's intentions." (Cf. SWTCC WCCS, II:73A; ST SCC, p. 212.) The translation essentially follows STPF SY, p. 184. Wu Ju-sung (STPF CS, p. 115) understands it as simply finding out the details of the enemy's intentions.

187. Literally, "grind (it out)" in the temple, which presumably means somberly work out the plans and estimations. The SCC text has "incite" rather than "grind." (SWTCC WCCS, II: 73B–74A; ST SCC, p. 214. Compare STPF SY, p. 183.)

188. The fifth objective is variously interpreted as shooting flaming arrows into an encampment, burning their weapons, or attacking their formations, as translated (cf. ST SCC, p. 218).

189. When the deceit is discovered, they are murdered or executed.

190. The BS have "relationship" rather than "affairs."

191. The BS add "Shuai Shih-pi in the Hsing. When Yen arose, they had Su Ch'in in Ch'i." Because Su Ch'in was active in the second half of the fourth century B.C.—almost two centuries after Sun Wu presumably advanced his tactics—this is obviously a later accretion.

Wu-tzu

Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Books

HFTCC	*Han Fei-tzu chi-chieh*, Shih-chieh shu-chü, Taipei, 1969.
LSCC	*Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu* (SPKY ed.), 4 volumes, Shih-chieh shu-chü, Taipei, 1958.
TPYL	*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* (SPTK ed.), 7 volumes, Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, Taipei, 1975 reprint.
WT CCCY	Fu Shao-chieh, *Wu-tzu chin-chu chin-i*, Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, Taipei, 1976.
WT CS	Li Shou-chih and Wang Shih-chin, *Wu-tzu ch'ien-shuo*, Chieh-fang-chün ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1986.

Notes to the Translator's Introduction

1. Lord Shang reportedly studied in Wei and served as a household tutor around four decades after Wu Ch'i left. Accordingly, he may have been influenced by Wu Ch'i's thought and political heritage. See WT CCCY, p. 1; Kuo Mo-jo, *Kuo Mo-jo ch'üan-chi*, Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, Peking, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 506, 526 (the "Shu Wu Ch'i" chapter in the original 1943 work, *Ch'ing-t'ung shih-tai*).

2. Although the Harvard-Yenching Index Series contains references to Wu Ch'i in several works, the most important are found in the *Han Fei-tzu, Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, Chan-kuo ts'e, Huai-nan tzu*, and *Shuo yüan*. However, little material from the actual text is preserved in these or other books, and only a handful of passages are found in the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* (hereafter TPYL).

3. For example, see T'ao Chi-heng's comment as recorded in the *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao*, entry for the *Wu-tzu*, p. 802. Typical condemnatory remarks deprecating Wu Ch'i's lack of virtue and reliance on harsh realism are found in the *Huai-nan tzu*, 9:21A and 13:7A, and in his *Shih chi* biography (translated below). However, as Kuo Mo-jo has pointed out, most of these were probably fabricated by his detractors because he was committed to the values of Confucianism as well as to creating a well-ordered state. See "Shu Wu Ch'i," pp. 527–528.

4. The most systematic analysis of the *Wu-tzu*'s composition date and authorship is found in Li and Wang's WT CS, pp. 3–12. In brief, they attribute the book to Wu-tzu himself, with allowances for serious losses, revisions, and accretions across the years and the recognition that his disciples obviously penned the portions describing his activities. Justification for this view is claimed from both historical references and the book's content and (somewhat rearranged) can be summarized as follows:

First, the works of Sun-tzu and Wu-tzu were known to be in wide circulation in the late Warring States period, based on Han Fei-tzu's comment that "Within the borders everyone speaks about warfare, and everywhere households secretly store away the books of Sun and Wu." Furthermore, his book was obviously studied and discussed throughout the ages, including by Han dynasty writers and famous Three Kingdoms' generals. (Ssu-ma Ch'ien makes a comment similar to that of Han Fei-tzu [which is