The Art of War
The Art of War

Sun Tzu

Translated by Lionel Giles
Contents

The Art of War

Chapter 1. Laying Plans  3
Chapter 2. Waging War    9
Chapter 3. Attack by Stratagem  15
Chapter 4. Tactical Dispositions  21
Chapter 5. Energy         25
Chapter 6. Weak and Strong Points  31
Chapter 7. Manoeuvring    39
Chapter 8. Variation of Tactics  45
Chapter 9. The Army on the March  49
Chapter 10. Terrain       59
Chapter 11. The Nine Situations  67
Chapter 12. The Attack by Fire  81
Chapter 13. The Use of Spies  85

Note on the Text    91
Notes               93
Note on the Author  97
The Art of War
Chapter 1
LAYING PLANS

1. Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.

2. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

3. The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one’s deliberations when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field.

4. These are:
(1) The moral law.
(2) Heaven.
(3) Earth.
(4) The commander.
(5) Method and discipline.
5, 6. The moral law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.

7. Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.

8. Earth comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.

9. The commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.

10. By method and discipline are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army and the control of military expenditure.

11. These five heads should be familiar to every general: he who knows them will be victorious; he who knows them not will fail.
12. Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:

13.  (1) Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the moral law?
    (2) Which of the two generals has most ability?
    (3) With whom lie the advantages derived from heaven and earth?
    (4) On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?
    (5) Which army is stronger?
    (6) On which side are officers and men more highly trained?
    (7) In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

14. By means of these seven considerations I can forecast victory or defeat.

15. The general that hearkens to my counsel and acts upon it will conquer: let such a one be retained in command! The general that hearkens not to my counsel nor acts upon it will suffer defeat: let such a one be dismissed!
16. While heeding the profit of my counsel, avail yourself also of any helpful circumstances over and beyond the ordinary rules.

17. According as circumstances are favourable, one should modify one’s plans.

18. All warfare is based on deception.

19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.

20. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder – and crush him.

21. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.

22. If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant.

23. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them.
24. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.

25. These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.

26. Now, the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory and few calculations to defeat – how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose.
Chapter 2

WAGING WAR

1. Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, where there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers, with provisions enough to carry them a thousand *li*, the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of guests, small items such as glue and paint, and sums spent on chariots and armour will reach the total of a thousand ounces of silver per day. Such is the cost of raising an army of 100,000 men.

2. When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men’s weapons will grow dull, and their ardour will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.
3. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain.

4. Now, when your weapons are dulled, your ardour damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring up to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.

5. Thus, though we have heard of stupid haste in war, cleverness has never been seen associated with long delays.

6. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.

7. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.

8. The skilful soldier does not raise a second levy – neither are his supply wagons loaded more than twice.
9. Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy. Thus the army will have food enough for its needs.

10. Poverty of the Exchequer causes an army to be maintained by contributions from a distance. Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be impoverished.

11. On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up, and high prices cause the people’s substance to be drained away.

12. When their substance is drained away, the peasantry will be afflicted by heavy exactions.

13, 14. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and three tenths of their income will be dissipated, while government expenses for broken chariots, worn-out horses, breast-plates and helmets, bows and arrows, spears and shields, protective mantles, draught oxen and heavy wagons will amount to four tenths of its total revenue.
15. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One cartload of the enemy’s provisions is equivalent to twenty of one’s own, and likewise a single picul* of his provender is equivalent to twenty from one’s own store.

16. Now, in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantage from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

17. Therefore, in chariot-fighting, when ten or more chariots have been taken, those should be rewarded who took the first. Our own flags should be substituted for those of the enemy, and the chariots mingled and used in conjunction with ours. The captured soldiers should be kindly treated and kept.

18. This is called “using the conquered foe to augment one’s own strength”.

19. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.
Chapter 2

20. Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people’s fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril.
Alma Classics is committed to making available a wide range of literature from around the globe. Most of the titles are enriched by an extensive critical apparatus, notes and extra reading material, as well as a selection of photographs. The texts are based on the most authoritative editions and edited using a fresh, accessible editorial approach. With an emphasis on production, editorial and typographical values, Alma Classics aspires to revitalize the whole experience of reading classics.
GREAT POETS SERIES

Each volume is based on the most authoritative text, and reflects Alma’s commitment to provide affordable editions with valuable insight into the great poets’ works.

Selected Poems
Blake, William
ISBN: 9781847498212
£7.99 • PB • 288 pp

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor
ISBN: 9781847497529
£7.99 • PB • 256 pp

Paradise Lost
Milton, John
ISBN: 9781847498038
£7.99 • PB • 320 pp

Complete Poems
Keats, John
ISBN: 9781847497567
£9.99 • PB • 520 pp

Sonnets
Shakespeare, William
ISBN: 9781847496089
£4.99 • PB • 256 pp

Leaves of Grass
Whitman, Walt
ISBN: 9781847497550
£8.99 • PB • 288 pp

MORE POETRY TITLES


WWW.ALMABOOKS.COM/POETRY
ALMA CLASSICS

ALMA CLASSICS aims to publish mainstream and lesser-known European classics in an innovative and striking way, while employing the highest editorial and production standards. By way of a unique approach the range offers much more, both visually and textually, than readers have come to expect from contemporary classics publishing.

LATEST TITLES PUBLISHED BY ALMA CLASSICS

398  William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*
399  Jules Verne, *A Fantasy of Dr Ox*
400  Anonymous, *Beowulf*
401  Oscar Wilde, *Selected Plays*
402  Alexander Trocchi, *The Holy Man and Other Stories*
403  Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*
404  Cyrano de Bergerac, *A Voyage to the Moon*
405  Jack London, *White Fang*
406  Antonin Artaud, *Heliogabalus, or The Anarchist Crowned*
407  John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
408  James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*
409  Charles Dickens, *Mugby Junction*
410  Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*
411  Paul Éluard, *Selected Poems*
412  Alan Burns, *Dreamerika!*
413  Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*
414  Virginia Woolf, *Flush*
415  Abbé Prevost, *Manon Lescaut*
416  William Blake, *Selected Poems*
417  Alan Riddell, *Eclipse: Concrete Poems*
418  William Wordsworth, *The Prelude and Other Poems*
419  Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*
420  Pablo Picasso, *The Three Little Girls and Desire Caught by the Tail*
421  Nikolai Gogol, *The Government Inspector*
422  Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*
423  Jean-Paul Sartre, *Politics and Literature*
424  Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*
425  Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary*
426  Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*
427  Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*
428  Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*
429  Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindications*
430  Anonymous, *The Song of Roland*
431  Edward Lear, *The Owl and the Pussycat and Other Nonsense Poetry*
432  Anton Chekhov, *Three Years*
433  Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Uncle’s Dream*

www.almaclassics.com