Sun Tzu and the Rules of Victorious Warriors

Analyzing the Rules in Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"
Using Mind Maps

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Sun Tzu, the Art of War

- An ancient Chinese work on strategy and warfare.
- About 500 BC
- 13 chapters
- Translated into English by Lionel Giles in 1910
- The first 6 chapters are considered more theoretical:
- The last 7 chapters are more practical
- Especially in business circles Sun Tzu became popular, which resulted in books with frivolous titles such as:
  - Sun Tzu was a Sissy, Sun Tzu-The Art of War for Managers, Sun Tzu for Women.

In our work, we look primarily at the first 6 chapters.
What is a Mind Map?

- A **mind map** is a diagram used to visually organize information.
- A mind map is hierarchical and shows relationships among pieces of the whole.
- It is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the center of a blank page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added.
- Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those major ideas.
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map)
- Mind maps are made popular by Tony Buzan around 1970.

By http://mindmapping.bg [CC BY-SA 2.5 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5)], via Wikimedia Commons
When we are able to attack, we must seem unable.

It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles.

Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.

It is best to win without fighting.

Did you ever see the following text quoted?...
From Five Things …

- There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.
- There are not more than five primary colors, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.
- There are not more than five cardinal tastes, yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

… To Infinite Possibilities

Sun Tzu, the Art of War, chapter 5
How did we find this piece of poetic text?

Let us look at this backwards: first see the text rendered as Mind Map:

From Five to Infinity

- There are not more than five musical notes,
- There are not more than five primary colors,
- There are not more than five cardinal tastes,

Yet combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

Yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.

Yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.
Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Chapter 5, as Mind Map

- Look at the total mindmap for chapter 5 next.
- Our mind maps are hierarchical trees of text, one mind map per chapter.
- The Chinese versions look much better as mind map!

From five to infinity text

- 7. 音不相五，五聲之變，不可窮極也
- 8. 色不相五，五色之變，不可窮極也
- 9. 味不相五，五味之變，不可窮極也
- 10. 勢勢不論奇正，奇正之變，不可窮極之也

1. Sun Tzu said:
   - The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a small one: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.
   - Fighting with a large army under your command is wise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

2. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy’s attack and remain unshaken:
   - This is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.

3. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg:
   - This is effected by the science of weak points and strong.

4. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

5. There are not more than five primary colors, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.

6. There are not more than five cardinal tastes, yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

7. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

8. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

9. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

10. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow: decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

11. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?
V. ENERGY

1. Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.

2. Fighting with a large army under your command is nowise different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

3. To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken -- this is effected by maneuvers direct and indirect.

4. That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg -- this is effected by the science of weak points and strong.

5. In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order to secure victory.

6. Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.

7. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

8. There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen.

9. There are not more than five cardinal tastes (sour, acrid, salt, sweet, bitter), yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

10. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack -- the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

11. The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle -- you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

12. The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course.

13. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

14. Therefore the good fighter will be terrible in his onset, and prompt in his decision.

15. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

16. Amid the turmoil and tumult of battle, there may be seeming disorder and yet no real disorder at all; amid confusion and chaos, your array may be without head or tail, yet it will be proof against defeat.

17. Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

18. Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; concealing courage under a show of timidity presupposes a fund of latent energy; masking strength with weakness is to be effected by tactical dispositions.

19. Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it.

20. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him.

21. The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilize combined energy.

22. When he utilizes combined energy, his fighting men become as it were like unto rolling logs or stones. For it is the nature of a log or stone to remain motionless on level ground, and to move when on a slope; if four-cornered, to come to a standstill, but if round-shaped, to go rolling down.

23. Thus the energy developed by good fighting men is as the momentum of a round stone rolled down a mountain thousands of feet in height. So much on the subject of energy.
The Making of a Mind Map

- Import the text into Freemind, one chart for each chapter.
  - The chapter title becomes the root node in the mind map for that chapter.
  - Each paragraph becomes a sub-node.
- Find *thus*, *hence* and *therefore* (故 in Chinese) and use to make sub-nodes.
- Find the use of *if-then* conditions.
- Find the use of numbers and enumerations.
- Find descriptive categories for each chapter section.
Chapter 1, colored with patterns

For clarity, the text is collapsed at some places, indicated by a little circle.
The Patterns

- Pairs of Opposites
- Enumerations
- Conditional Sentences
- Preference Order
- Implications
Pairs of Opposites

- Opposite pairs are groups of two items which have meaning that is opposite. This is related to the yin-yang principle of ancient China.
- For example, in chapter 5:
  - weak and strong
  - direct and indirect
  - heaven and earth
  - sun and moon
  - strength and weakness
Enumerations

- In almost every chapter Sun Tzu used some form of enumeration of things or concepts, in several chapters even two. For example,
  - the seven military considerations in chapter 1,
  - the five essentials for victory in chapter 3,
  - the nine varieties of ground in chapter 11,
Conditional Sentences

15. The commander who listens to my counsel and acts upon it:

- He will conquer: let such a one be retained in command!
- Else, He will suffer defeat: let such a one be dismissed!

- Sun Tzu frequently employs reasoning in his text, like this:
  *If victory is long in coming, then men’s weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped.*

- This is an example of a conditional sentence. Basically, conditionals may be of two types:
  - the first one is a condition that describes a status or situation,
  - the second one is a condition that should lead to an action.
Preferences are conditional statements which assume a certain order in their execution.

Sun Tzu uses this construct at several occasions, indicating good and not-so-good ways of performing warfare.

Chapter 03, sentence 1.
Implications

Example from chapter 4:

- Security against defeat implies defensive tactics;
- ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive.
- Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength;
- attacking, a superabundance of strength.
- The general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth;
- he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven.

5. hence, therefore)
6. the general who is skilled in defense hides in the most secret recesses of the earth;
7. the one who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven.
8. Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete.

Sentences containing 故 (gù, therefore) could express steps towards a conclusion, where the gù marks the start of the description of the conclusion.
The website!  https://suntzu.squaringthecircles.com/

- Short overview text for each chapter.
- Mindmap in English and Chinese for each chapter.
- Interactive mindmap for the first six chapters.
- Text, the Chinese, the original and modified Giles translation.
- Description of the patterns.
- Complete overview of all patterns for the first six chapters.
- Agglomerated text, formatted as a paper-to-be.
- Pictures from the Long Corridor in Beijing.
Chinese Text Project

《兵勢 - Energy》
《兵勢 - Energy》

Original | Translation
---|---
孫子曰：凡治眾如治寡，分數是也。 | Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men; it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.

1. 兵勢 | Fighting with a large army under your command is no different from fighting with a small one; it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

2. 三軍之政，能使人致死，如使無畏。 | To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken—this is effected by manoeuvres direct and indirect.

3. 故善用者，無窮如天地。 | That the impact of your army may be like a grindstone dashed against an egg—this is effected by the science of weak points and strength.

4. 故善用者，務令和而無敗。 | In all fighting, the direct method may be used for joining battle, but indirect methods will be needed in order but to begin anew, like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more. There are not more than five (and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen. There are not more than five (and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen.

5. 七聲不過三，五聲之變，不可勝聽也。 | There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard.

6. 五聲之變，不可勝聽也。 | There are not more than five primary colors (blue, yellow, red, white, black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.

7. 故善用者，形無所著。 | There are not more than five (and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen.

8. 五聲之變，不可勝聽也。 | Yet combinations of them yield more flavors than can ever be tasted.

9. 色無所著。 | In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack—the direct and the indirect, yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of manoeuvres.

10. 故善用者，勝難窮也。 | The direct and the indirect lead on to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle—you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?

11. 故善用者，勝無窮也。 | The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will overhaul stones along its course. The quality of decision. Energy may be likened to the bending of a croswinder, decision to the releasing of a trigger.

12. 故善用者，勝不過五。 | There are not more than five (and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen.

13. 故善用者，勝窮也。 | There are not more than five (and black), yet in combination they produce more than can ever be seen.
Useful links

- Chinese Text Project
  - [https://ctext.org/art-of-war](https://ctext.org/art-of-war)
- Yellow Bridge
  - [https://www.yellowbridge.com/onlinelit/artofwar.php](https://www.yellowbridge.com/onlinelit/artofwar.php)
- Freemind
- My-Mind
  - [https://github.com/ondras/my-mind](https://github.com/ondras/my-mind)