

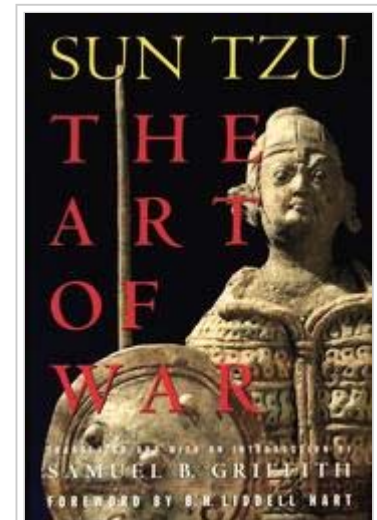
The Art of War

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The Art of War (Chinese: 孫子兵法 ; Pinyin: Sūnzǐ Bīngfǎ; literally: "Sun Tzu's Military Strategy") is a Chinese military treatise written during the 6th century BC by Sun Tzu. Composed of 13 chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of warfare, it has long been praised as the definitive work on military strategies and tactics of its time.

The Art of War is one of the oldest and most famous studies of strategy and has had a huge influence on both military planning and beyond. First translated into a European language in 1782 by French Jesuit Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, it had been credited with influencing Napoleon, the German General Staff, and even the planning of Operation Desert Storm. Leaders as diverse as Mao Zedong, Vo Nguyen Giap, and General Douglas MacArthur have claimed to have drawn inspiration from the work.

Since the late 20th century, *The Art of War* has also been applied, with much success, to business and managerial strategies.



A modern edition of *The Art of War* translated into English by Samuel B. Griffith.

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History

Based on the content, the book was finished between Zhuan Zhu's assassination of King Liao of Wu (515 BC) and Wu Zixu's recommendation to King He Lu of Wu (512 BC) in China.

It was believed by some that the long-lost **Sun Bin Bing Fa**, or **Sun Bin's The Art of War** cited in the Book of Han, was actually Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, but in April of 1972, archaeologists discovered a tomb in Linyi County, Shandong Province, that contained several fragments of important scrolls buried during the Han Dynasty. Among the scrolls were a copy of the Sun Bin Bing Fa and a copy of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, thus removing any doubt.

The 13 chapters

Chapter titles from Lionel Giles' 1910 translation

- I. Laying Plans
- II. Waging War
- III. Attack by Stratagem
- IV. Tactical Dispositions
- V. Energy
- VI. Weak Points and Strong
- VII. Maneuvering
- VIII. Variation in Tactics
- IX. The Army On The March
- X. Terrain
- XI. The Nine Situations
- XII. The Attack By Fire
- XIII. The Use of Spies

Annotations

Before the bamboo scroll version was discovered by archaeologists in April 1972, the most cited version of **The Art of War** was the Annotation of Sun Tzu's Strategies by Cao Cao, the founder of Cao Wei Kingdom. In the preface, he wrote that previous annotations were not focused on the essential ideas. Other annotations cited in official history books include Shen You (176-204)'s **Sun Tzu's Military Strategy**, Jia Xu's **Copy of Sun Tzu's Military Strategy**, Cao Cao and Wang Ling (a nephew of Wang Yun)'s **Sun Tzu's Military Strategy**.

The Book of Sui documented seven books named after Sun Tzu. An annotation by Du Mu also includes Cao Cao' annotation. Li Jing's The Art of War is said to be a revision of Sun Tzu's strategies. Annotations by Cao Cao, Du Mu and Li Quan were translated into Tangut language before 1040 AD.

After the movable type printer was invented, The Art of War (with Cao Cao's annotations) was published as a military text book, known as **Seven Military Classics** with six other strategy books. A book named **Ten Schools of The Art of War Annotations** was published before 1161 AD.

As a required reading military textbook since the Song Dynasty, Seven Military Classics (武经七书) has many annotations. More than 30 differently annotated versions of this book exist today.

Vernacular Chinese became increasingly popular in the late 1920s. Annotations in Vernacular Chinese began to appear after this time. Some of these works were translated from other languages, such as Japanese.

Quotations

Verses from the book occur in modern daily Chinese idioms and phrases, such as the last verse of Chapter 3:

故曰：知彼知己，百戰不殆；不知彼而知己，一勝一負；不知彼，不知己，每戰必敗

So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperiled in every single battle.

This has been more tersely interpreted and condensed into the modern proverb:

知己知彼，百戰百勝

If you know both yourself and your enemy, you will come out of one hundred battles with one hundred victories.

Similar verses have also been borrowed -- in a manner construing skillfulness as victory "without fighting" --

for example:

百戰百勝，非善之善也；不戰而屈人之兵，善之善者也

One hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the most skillful. Seizing the enemy without fighting is the most skillful.

Military applications

In many East Asian countries, *The Art of War* was part of the syllabus for potential candidates of military service examinations. Various translations are available and were used by some European military institutions, for instance, in Germany before World War I. In the United States Marine Corps, it is reportedly required reading for intelligence personnel and recommended for all Marines.

During Sengoku Jidai in Japan, a Samurai named Takeda Shingen (1521-1573) is said to have become almost invincible in all battles without relying on guns, because he studied *The Art of War*. The book even gave him the inspiration for his famous battle standard "Furinkazan" (Wind, Forest, Fire and Mountain), meaning fast as wind, silent as forest, ferocious as fire and immovable as mountain. Some say that had Shingen not died from illness, he would have become the Shogun of Japan.

During the Vietnam War, many Vietcong officers studied *The Art of War*, and reportedly could recite entire passages from memory.

Applicability outside the military

Since at least the 1980's, *The Art of War* has been applied to fields well outside the military one. Much of the text is about how to fight wars without actually having to do battle: it gives tips on how to outsmart one's opponent so that physical battle is not necessary. As such, it has found application as a training guide for many competitive endeavors that do not involve actual combat.

Most notably the book has gained popularity in corporate life; there have been a variety of business books written that apply its lessons to "office politics" and corporate strategy. Many Japanese companies make the book required reading for their key executives. The book is also popular among Western business management, who have turned to it for inspiration and advice on how to succeed in competitive business situations.

It has also crept its way into sport: Australian cricket coach John Buchanan handed out excerpts from the book to his players before a match against England in 2001, and the book is allegedly a favorite of University of South Carolina football head coach Steve Spurrier

Former Brazillian football coach, and current coach of the Portuguese national football team Luiz Felipe Scolari uses the book to plot his Football strategy. In the 2002 FIFA World Cup he gave each of his players copies of the Book. In the recent 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany he was using the book to plan his team's win against England. [1] (<http://wc2006.telegraph.co.uk/Document.aspx?id=57D9E1B8-59BD-45CA-A8D4-9D07F2C0C0FC>)

It has found use in political campaigning as well; Republican election strategist Lee Atwater claimed he travelled everywhere with the book. [2] (http://www.jan-collins.com/Library/atwater_profile.pdf)

Some have also interpreted *The Art of War* as providing methods for developing social strategies, such as developing social relationships, maintaining romantic relationships, and seduction. The book stresses subtlety and always making it appear like one is trying to achieve something other than one's actual intention.

The use of individual quotations from the book has been criticized by many scholars of Chinese history as

using *The Art of War* as a source of fortune cookie-like proverbs and not seeing the general coherence of the text.

Related material

Sun Tzu is attributed with having a grandson Sun Bin who wrote another treatise on military strategy often called "The Lost Art of War" or "The Art of Warfare". Sun Bin or Sun Pin as he is sometimes called is also known as Sun Tzu II. The following are some published texts in this area:

- Sun Tzu II translated by Thomas Cleary (1996). *The Lost Art of War*. Harper Collins Publisher (Under HarperSanFrancisco. ISBN 0-06-251361-3. This book by Thomas Cleary is a translation of the sequel to Sun Tzu's classic strategic manual.
- Sun Pin translated by Ralph D. Sawyer (1995). *Military Methods of the Art of War*. Barnes & Noble. ISBN 0-76070-650-6. This book by Ralph Sawyer is a translation of work written by the purported great-grandson of Sun Tzu in the 4th Century.

Depiction in media

Film

- In the 1987 film *Wall Street*, the main antagonist, Gordon Gekko (played by Michael Douglas), says: "I don't throw darts at a board. I bet on sure things. Read Sun-tzu, The Art of War. Every battle is won before it is ever fought." His protégé, Bud (played by Charlie Sheen), comes back after reading the text and says: "All warfare is based on deception. If your enemy is superior, evade him. If angry, irritate him. If equally matched, fight and if not: split and re-evaluate," to which Gekko smiles in approval.
- The 2000 Wesley Snipes film *The Art of War* was named after the book.
- Gustav Graves of the 2002 James Bond film *Die Another Day* quotes *The Art of War* on more than one occasion.

Television

- *The Art of War* was recently made into a Chinese television series of the same name.
- The text is mentioned in the *Star Trek: TNG* episode "The Last Outpost" as still being required reading at Starfleet Academy.
- In *The Sopranos*, Tony Soprano takes the advice of his therapist and reads *The Art of War* to aid him in managing his expanding empire of organized crime. Tony's associate in crime, Paulie Walnuts, often listens to an audiobook of *The Art of War* while driving, and in one instance quotes from it to his comrades but is mocked by Silvio Dante for pronouncing the "T" in Sun Tzu's name.
- In the *Family Guy* episode "A Hero Sits Next Door", Stewie Griffin appears reading Machiavelli's *The Prince*; he then throws down his book and says: "Machiavelli! You've told me nothing I don't already know. Ah—Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*!" before Lois takes it away.
- In the *Futurama* "Love's Labours Lost in Space", 25-Star General Zapp Brannigan comments on his adversary's tactics with the words: "A well-calculated move straight out of Sun Tzu's classic text *The Art of War*, or my own masterwork, *Zapp Brannigan's Big Book of War*."
- In an episode of *Smallville*, Lionel Luthor questions Lex's tactics over the course of several scenes, and at one point suggests that Lex polish up his reading. A copy of *The Art of War* is seen. Lionel quoted a line from the book which states, "Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into

the deepest valleys. Look on them as your own beloved sons and they will stand by you even unto death." Lex retorts that he had read it front-to-back several times, then jokes that he would've preferred a bicycle as a birthday gift.

- Television ads for the 2005-2006 season of the National Hockey League frequently quote *The Art of War*.

Games

- Broderbund software published two games based on Sun Tzu's "Art of War". The first entitled "The Ancient Art of War" and the second "The Ancient Art of War At Sea". The is was a strategy, geogaphy, and adventure simulation game. It ran on a number of computer platforms including Apple II, Macintosh, and DOS (For the second title only). The game was written by Ronald G. Helms.
- In the fictional BattleTech universe, *The Art of War* is mentioned several times throughout the novels, and the Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation, Sun Tzu Liao, is named for the author.
- It also makes a few brief appearances in "Deus Ex", in which the player is able to read a few chapters.
- In Sid Meier's "Civilization" computer game series, "Sun Tsu's Art of War" or "Military Academy" is one of the fictional World Wonders that can be created, giving the owner several temporary military advantages.
- In Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri, the completion of the Hunter-Seeker Algorithm is announced with a quotation from *The Art of War*. "If I determine the enemy's disposition of forces while I have no perceptible form, I can concentrate my forces while the enemy is fragmented. The pinnacle of military deployment approaches the formless: if it is formless, then even the deepest spy cannot discern it nor the wise make plans against it."
- Empress Lei-Qo of Battalion Wars uses proverbs from *The Art Of War* with wild abandon, changing the gender whenever she refers to herself.
- A book in The Elder Scrolls video game RPG series is "The Art of War Magic", written by Imperial Battlemage Zurin Arctus. The quotes in the book are derived heavily from Sun Tzu's original writing.

Translations

- Sun Tzu translated by Dr Han Hiong Tan (2001). *Sun Zi's The Art of War*. H H Tan Medical P/L. ISBN 0-9580067-0-9.
- Sun Tzu translated by Filiquarian Publishing (2006). *The Art of War*. Filiquarian Publishing. ISBN 1-599-86977-2.
- Sun Tzu translated by the Denma translation group (2001). *The Art of War: the Denma translation*. Shambhala Classics. ISBN 1-570-62904-8.
- Sun Tzu translated by Lionel Giles (2002). *The Art of War*. Deodand Publishing. ISBN 0-957-88687-X. Text link (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/132>) (reprint; Giles translated the book in 1910)
- Sun-Tzu translated by Roger Ames (1993). *The Art of Warfare*. Random House. ISBN 0-345-36239-X., includes the Yin-ch'ueh-shan (Silver Sparrow Mountain) texts
- Sun Tzu translated by James Clavell (1983). *The Art of War*. Delacorte Press. ISBN 0-385-29216-3. This edition was published as a tie-in with Clavell's Asian Saga
- Sun Tzu translated by Ralph D. Sawyer (1994). *The Art of War*. Barnes & Noble. ISBN 1-566-19297-8. This translation tries to put The Art of War in its original context as a work of military strategy. It also includes a lengthy introduction and translations of some of the "bamboo strips" recovered from the



Running Press Miniature Edition™ of the 1994 Ralph D. Sawyer translation, printed in 2003

shrine.

- Sun Tzu translated by John Minford (2002). *The Art of War*. Viking. ISBN 0-670-03156-9. This translation contains two parts. The first part is a completely unadorned, “raw” version of the core text. The second part is that same text with Chinese commentators as well as others.
- Sun Tzu translated by Yuan Shibing (1987). *Sun Tzu's Art of War: The Modern Chinese Interpretation*. Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.. ISBN 0-8069-6638-6. This book is written by General Tao Hanzhang, a senior officer in the People's Liberation Army. He is a senior advisor at the Beijing Institute for International Strategic Studies.
- Sun Tzu translated by J.H. Huang (1993). *The Art of War: The New Translation*. Quill William Morrow. ISBN 0-688-12400-3. This text is not a new interpretation of same texts that other editions are based on. Mr. Huang writes a new text based on manuscripts recently discovered in Linyi, China that predates all previous texts by as much as 1000 years.
- Sun Tzu translated by Samuel B. Griffith (1963). *The Art of War*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-501476-6. This book is written by Samuel B. Griffith, Brigadier General, ret, U.S. Marine corps.
- Sun Tzu translated by Donald G. Krause (1995). *The Art of War For Executives*. Berkely Publishing Group (Under Perigee Books. ISBN 0-399-51902-5. This book written by Donald Krause is interpreted for today's business reader.
- Sun Tzu translated by Ralph D. Sawyer (1995). *100 Lessons In The Art of War*. Barnes & Noble. ISBN 0-7607-0998-X. This book by Ralph Sawyer is a culmination on various Chinese strategic texts.
- Sun Tzu translated by Stephen F. Kaufman (1996). *The Art of War: The Definitive Interpretation of Sun Tzu's Classic Book of Strategy*. Tuttle Publishing. ISBN 0-8048-3080-0. Aimed mainly (but not exclusively) at the martial artist, Kaufman's rendition of Sun Tzu's work was written from the perspective of a *Hanshi* ("teacher of teachers").

See also

- Sun Tzu
- List of famous military writers
- *Thirty-Six Strategies*, another Chinese strategy book (ISBN 0385237847)
- *The Ancient Art of War*, a computer strategy game based on Sun Tzu's book
- Philosophy of war

External links

- Sun Zi's The Art of War text translated by Dr Han Hiong Tan 2001 (<http://www.geocities.com/wangawanga7/aow.htm>)
- *The Art of War* translated by Lionel Giles (1910) (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/132>), available freely at Project Gutenberg
- *About Sun Tzu the Art of War* (<http://artofwar.thetao.info/china>), in Chinese and English
- *Sun Tzu The Art of War* (<http://www.sonshi.com/learn.html>) Translation by Sonshi with many readers' interpretations
- Sun Tzu the Art of War text (with recorded Mandarin speech), Denma translation (<http://www.victoryoverwar.com/>)
- *Sun Tzu and Hollywood* (<http://www.artofwarsuntzu.com/suntzuandhollywood.htm>) on how the appearance of the book in movies influenced the number of books sold
- *The Art of War*, audio edition (<http://thoughtaudio.com/titlelist/0003-artofwar/index.html>) Free mp3 downloads Narrated by Michael Scott of ThoughtAudio.com (<http://thoughtaudio.com/>)
- Chinese Art of War Forum (<http://www.chinahistoryforum.com/index.php?showforum=21>) - discussion on Sun Tzu's Art of War and its strategy



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