

The Art of War

孫

Sun-tzu

(Sunzi)

子

EDITED, TRANSLATED, AND WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY

John Minford

PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street,
New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.
Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)
Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England
Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland
(a division of Penguin Books Ltd)
Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell,
Victoria 3124, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)
Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre,
Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110 017, India
Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632,
New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)
Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue,
Rosebank, Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

First published in the United States of America by Viking Penguin,
a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 2002
Published in Penguin Books 2003
This edition published 2009

7 9 10 8

Translation, introduction, and commentary copyright © John Minford, 2002
All rights reserved

A portion of this work first appeared in *The New England Review*.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS HAS CATALOGED THE HARDCOVER EDITION AS FOLLOWS:

Sunzi, 6th cent. B.C.
[Sunzi bing fa. English]
Art of war / Sun-tzu (Sunzi) ; translated with an introduction
and commentary by John Minford.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-670-03156-9 (hc.)

ISBN 978-0-14-310575-6 (pbk.)

I. Military art and science. I. Minford, John. II. Title.

U101.S93213 2002

355.02—dc21 2002069192

Printed in the United States of America

Set in Guardi and Fairfield Light

Designed by Nancy Resnick

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

The scanning, uploading and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law.

Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

In memory of my father,

Leslie Minford

Be ready
For the unexpected;

Have a capable general,
Unhampered by his sovereign.

Du You: A Skillful General, well versed in military strategy, should be given full rein by his sovereign. As Master Wang said, "The sovereign gives broad instructions, the general makes battle decisions."

Giles: Napoleon undoubtedly owed much of his extraordinary success to the fact that he was not hampered by any central authority—that he was, in fact, general and sovereign in one.

These five
Point the way to
Victory.

Hence the saying
"Know the enemy,
Know yourself,
And victory
Is never in doubt,
Not in a hundred battles."

Zhang Yu: These words refer to both attack and defense. Knowing the enemy, you can take the appropriate offensive; knowing yourself, you can adopt the appropriate defensive strategy. Attack is the secret of defense; defense is the planning of attack. Know this, and you will never fail, not in a hundred battles.

The Way and Its Power, Chapter 33: To know others is wisdom; to understand oneself is enlightenment. To conquer others requires force; to conquer oneself shows strength.

Translator: The Greek historian Polybius said of Hannibal, "It is mere blind ignorance to believe that there can be anything of more vital impor-

tance to a general than the knowledge of the character and disposition of one's opponent" (*Histories*, quoted by Chaliand, p. 113).

This, one of Master Sun's most famous maxims, was endorsed by Mao Zedong: "This saying of the great Chinese military thinker of ancient times, Master Sun, includes [under knowledge] the stages of both theoretical knowledge and practice; it includes the observation of the laws of development of objective practice, and the process of determining one's own actions in accordance with those laws, so as to overcome the present enemy. We must not underestimate [the wisdom of] this saying" (*Selected Works*, p. 166).

He who knows self
But not the enemy
Will suffer one defeat
For every victory.

Li Quan: If one is aware of one's own strength and yet one has not estimated the enemy properly, victory is not assured. The prince of Qin, Fu Jian, in A.D. 383 led an army of a million soldiers south against the forces of Jin. Someone commented that the Jin had men of the caliber of Xie An and Huan Chong and that he should not underestimate them. To which Fu Jian replied, "I have the assembled forces of eight provinces in my army, a million horses and men. They could dam the Yangtze River itself by merely throwing their whips into it. What have I to fear?" He was subsequently heavily defeated.

He who knows
Neither self
Nor enemy
Will fail
In every battle.