

not merely a question of downright blunders, from which none can hope to be wholly exempt. Omissions were frequent; hard passages were willfully distorted or slurred over. Such offenses are less pardonable. They would not be tolerated in any edition of a Latin or Greek classic, and a similar standard of honesty ought to be insisted upon in translations from Chinese." In 1908 a new edition of Capt. Calthrop's translation was published in London. It was an improvement on the first — omissions filled up and numerous mistakes corrected — but new errors were created in the process. Dr. Giles, in justifying his translation, wrote: "It was not undertaken out of any inflated estimate of my own powers; but I could not help feeling that Sun Tzu deserved a better fate than had befallen him, and I knew that, at any rate, I could hardly fail to improve on the work of my predecessors." Clearly, Dr. Giles' work established much of the groundwork for the work of later translators who published their own editions. Of the later editions of the ART OF WAR I have examined; two feature Giles' edited translation and notes, the other two present the same basic information from the ancient Chinese commentators found in the Giles edition. Of these four, Giles' 1910 edition is the most scholarly and presents the reader an incredible amount of information concerning Sun Tzu's text, much more than any other translation. The Giles' edition of the ART OF WAR, as stated above, was a scholarly work. Dr. Giles was a leading sinologue at the time and an assistant in the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts in the British Museum. Apparently he wanted to produce a definitive edition, superior to anything else that existed and perhaps something that would become a standard translation. It was the best translation available for 50 years. But apparently there was not much interest in Sun Tzu in English-speaking countries since it took the start of the Second World War to renew interest in his work. Several people published unsatisfactory English translations of Sun Tzu. In 1944, Dr. Giles' translation was edited and published in the United States in a series of military science books. But it wasn't until 1963 that a good English translation (by Samuel B. Griffith and still in print) was published that was an equal to Giles' translation. While this translation is more lucid than Dr. Giles' translation, it lacks his copious notes that make his so interesting. Dr. Giles produced a work primarily intended for scholars of the Chinese civilization and language. It contains the Chinese text of Sun Tzu, the English translation, and voluminous notes along with numerous footnotes.

Unfortunately, some of his notes and footnotes contain Chinese characters; some are completely Chinese. Thus, a conversion to a Latin alphabet etext was difficult. I did the conversion in complete ignorance of Chinese (except for what I learned while doing the conversion). Thus, I faced the difficult task of paraphrasing it while retaining as much of the important text as I could. Every paraphrase represents a loss; thus I did what I could to retain as much of the text as possible. Because the 1910 text contains a Chinese concordance, I was able to transliterate proper names, books, and the like at the risk of making the text more obscure. However, the text, on the whole, is quite satisfactory for the casual reader, a transformation made possible by conversion to an etext. However, I come away from this task with the feeling of loss because I know that someone with a background in Chinese can do a better job than I did; any such attempt would be welcomed.

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——- INTRODUCTION

Sun Wu and his Book —————

Ssu-ma Ch`ien gives the following biography of Sun Tzu: [1] —

Sun Tzu Wu was a native of the Ch`i State. His ART OF WAR brought him to the notice of Ho Lu, [2] King of Wu. Ho Lu said to him: "I have carefully perused your 13 chapters. May I submit your theory of managing soldiers to a slight test?" Sun Tzu replied: "You may." Ho Lu asked: "May the test be applied to women?" The answer was again in the affirmative, so arrangements were made to bring 180 ladies out of the Palace. Sun Tzu divided them into two companies, and placed one of the King's favorite concubines at the head of each. He then bade them all take spears in their hands, and addressed them thus: "I presume you know the difference between front and back, right hand and left hand?" The girls replied: Yes. Sun Tzu went on: "When I say "Eyes front," you must look straight ahead. When I say "Left turn," you must face towards your left hand. When I say "Right turn," you must face towards your right hand. When I say "About turn," you must face right round towards your back." Again the

girls assented. The words of command having been thus explained, he set up the halberds and battle-axes in order to begin the drill. Then, to the sound of drums, he gave the order "Right turn." But the girls only burst out laughing. Sun Tzu said: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame." So he started drilling them again, and this time gave the order "Left turn," whereupon the girls once more burst into fits of laughter. Sun Tzu: "If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, the general is to blame. But if his orders ARE clear, and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers." So saying, he ordered the leaders of the two companies to be beheaded. Now the king of Wu was watching the scene from the top of a raised pavilion; and when he saw that his favorite concubines were about to be executed, he was greatly alarmed and hurriedly sent down the following message: "We are now quite satisfied as to our general's ability to handle troops. If we are bereft of these two concubines, our meat and drink will lose their savor. It is our wish that they shall not be beheaded." Sun Tzu replied: "Having once received His Majesty's commission to be the general of his forces, there are certain commands of His Majesty which, acting in that capacity, I am unable to accept." Accordingly, he had the two leaders beheaded, and straightway installed the pair next in order as leaders in their place. When this had been done, the drum was sounded for the drill once more; and the girls went through all the evolutions, turning to the right or to the left, marching ahead or wheeling back, kneeling or standing, with perfect accuracy and precision, not venturing to utter a sound. Then Sun Tzu sent a messenger to the King saying: "Your soldiers, Sire, are now properly drilled and disciplined, and ready for your majesty's inspection. They can be put to any use that their sovereign may desire; bid them go through fire and water, and they will not disobey." But the King replied: "Let our general cease drilling and return to camp. As for us, we have no wish to come down and inspect the troops." Thereupon Sun Tzu said: "The King is only fond of words, and cannot translate them into deeds." After that, Ho Lu saw that Sun Tzu was one who knew how to handle an army, and finally appointed him general. In the west, he defeated the Ch`u State and forced his way into Ying, the capital; to the north he put fear into the States of Ch`i and Chin, and spread his fame abroad amongst the feudal princes. And Sun Tzu shared in the might of the King.

About Sun Tzu himself this is all that Ssu-ma Ch`ien has to tell us in this chapter. But he proceeds to give a biography of his descendant, Sun Pin, born about a hundred years after his famous ancestor's death, and also the outstanding military genius of his time. The historian speaks of him too as Sun Tzu, and in his preface we read: "Sun Tzu had his feet cut off and yet continued to discuss the art of war." [3] It seems likely, then, that "Pin" was a nickname bestowed on him after his mutilation, unless the story was invented in order to account for the name. The crowning incident of his career, the crushing defeat of his treacherous rival P`ang Chuan, will be found briefly related in Chapter V. ss. 19, note. To return to the elder Sun Tzu. He is mentioned in two other passages of the SHIH CHI: —

In the third year of his reign [512 B.C.] Ho Lu, king of Wu, took the field with Tzu-hsu [i.e. Wu Yuan] and Po P`ei, and attacked Ch`u. He captured the town of Shu and slew the two prince's sons who had formerly been generals of Wu. He was then meditating a descent on Ying [the capital]; but the general Sun Wu said: "The army is exhausted. It is not yet possible. We must wait".... [After further successful fighting,] "in the ninth year [506 B.C.], King Ho Lu addressed Wu Tzu-hsu and Sun Wu, saying: "Formerly, you declared that it was not yet possible for us to enter Ying. Is the time ripe now?" The two men replied: "Ch`u's general Tzu-ch`ang, [4] is grasping and covetous, and the princes of T`ang and Ts`ai both have a grudge against him. If Your Majesty has resolved to make a grand attack, you must win over T`ang and Ts`ai, and then you may succeed." Ho Lu followed this advice, [beat Ch`u in five pitched battles and marched into Ying.] [5]

This is the latest date at which anything is recorded of Sun Wu. He does not appear to have survived his patron, who died from the effects of a wound in 496. In another chapter there occurs this passage: [6]

From this time onward, a number of famous soldiers arose, one after the other: Kao-fan, [7] who was employed by the Chin State; Wang-tzu, [8] in the service of Ch`i; and Sun Wu, in the service of Wu. These men developed and threw light upon the principles of war.

It is obvious enough that Ssu-ma Ch`ien at least had no doubt about

the reality of Sun Wu as an historical personage; and with one exception, to be noticed presently, he is by far the most important authority on the period in question. It will not be necessary, therefore, to say much of such a work as the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU, which is supposed to have been written by Chao Yeh of the 1st century A.D. The attribution is somewhat doubtful; but even if it were otherwise, his account would be of little value, based as it is on the SHIH CHI and expanded with romantic details. The story of Sun Tzu will be found, for what it is worth, in chapter 2. The only new points in it worth noting are: (1) Sun Tzu was first recommended to Ho Lu by Wu Tzu-hsu. (2) He is called a native of Wu. (3) He had previously lived a retired life, and his contemporaries were unaware of his ability. The following passage occurs in the Huai-nan Tzu: "When sovereign and ministers show perversity of mind, it is impossible even for a Sun Tzu to encounter the foe." Assuming that this work is genuine (and hitherto no doubt has been cast upon it), we have here the earliest direct reference for Sun Tzu, for Huai-nan Tzu died in 122 B.C., many years before the SHIH CHI was given to the world. Liu Hsiang (80-9 B.C.) says: "The reason why Sun Tzu at the head of 30,000 men beat Ch`u with 200,000 is that the latter were undisciplined." Teng Ming-shih informs us that the surname "Sun" was bestowed on Sun Wu's grandfather by Duke Ching of Ch`i [547-490 B.C.]. Sun Wu's father Sun P`ing, rose to be a Minister of State in Ch`i, and Sun Wu himself, whose style was Ch`ang-ch`ing, fled to Wu on account of the rebellion which was being fomented by the kindred of T`ien Pao. He had three sons, of whom the second, named Ming, was the father of Sun Pin. According to this account then, Pin was the grandson of Wu, which, considering that Sun Pin's victory over Wei was gained in 341 B.C., may be dismissed as chronological impossible. Whence these data were obtained by Teng Ming-shih I do not know, but of course no reliance whatever can be placed in them. An interesting document which has survived from the close of the Han period is the short preface written by the Great Ts`ao Ts`ao, or Wei Wu Ti, for his edition of Sun Tzu. I shall give it in full: —

I have heard that the ancients used bows and arrows to their advantage. [10] The SHU CHU mentions "the army" among the "eight objects of government." The I CHING says: "'army' indicates firmness and justice; the experienced leader will have good fortune." The SHIH CHING says: "The King rose majestic in his wrath, and he marshaled

his troops." The Yellow Emperor, T`ang the Completer and Wu Wang all used spears and battle-axes in order to succor their generation. The SSU-MA FA says: "If one man slay another of set purpose, he himself may rightfully be slain." He who relies solely on warlike measures shall be exterminated; he who relies solely on peaceful measures shall perish. Instances of this are Fu Ch`ai [11] on the one hand and Yen Wang on the other. [12] In military matters, the Sage's rule is normally to keep the peace, and to move his forces only when occasion requires. He will not use armed force unless driven to it by necessity. Many books have I read on the subject of war and fighting; but the work composed by Sun Wu is the profoundest of them all. [Sun Tzu was a native of the Ch`i state, his personal name was Wu. He wrote the ART OF WAR in 13 chapters for Ho Lu, King of Wu. Its principles were tested on women, and he was subsequently made a general. He led an army westwards, crushed the Ch`u state and entered Ying the capital. In the north, he kept Ch`i and Chin in awe. A hundred years and more after his time, Sun Pin lived. He was a descendant of Wu.] [13] In his treatment of deliberation and planning, the importance of rapidity in taking the field, [14] clearness of conception, and depth of design, Sun Tzu stands beyond the reach of carping criticism. My contemporaries, however, have failed to grasp the full meaning of his instructions, and while putting into practice the smaller details in which his work abounds, they have overlooked its essential purport. That is the motive which has led me to outline a rough explanation of the whole.

One thing to be noticed in the above is the explicit statement that the 13 chapters were specially composed for King Ho Lu. This is supported by the internal evidence of I. ss. 15, in which it seems clear that some ruler is addressed. In the bibliographic section of the HAN SHU, there is an entry which has given rise to much discussion: "The works of Sun Tzu of Wu in 82 P`IEN (or chapters), with diagrams in 9 CHUAN." It is evident that this cannot be merely the 13 chapters known to Ssu-ma Ch`ien, or those we possess today. Chang Shou-chieh refers to an edition of Sun Tzu's ART OF WAR of which the "13 chapters" formed the first CHUAN, adding that there were two other CHUAN besides. This has brought forth a theory, that the bulk of these 82 chapters consisted of other writings of Sun Tzu — we should call them apocryphal — similar to the WEN TA, of which a specimen dealing with the Nine Situations [15] is preserved in the

T`UNG TIEN, and another in Ho Shin's commentary. It is suggested that before his interview with Ho Lu, Sun Tzu had only written the 13 chapters, but afterwards composed a sort of exegesis in the form of question and answer between himself and the King. Pi I-hsun, the author of the SUN TZU HSU LU, backs this up with a quotation from the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU: "The King of Wu summoned Sun Tzu, and asked him questions about the art of war. Each time he set forth a chapter of his work, the King could not find words enough to praise him." As he points out, if the whole work was expounded on the same scale as in the above- mentioned fragments, the total number of chapters could not fail to be considerable. Then the numerous other treatises attributed to Sun Tzu might be included. The fact that the HAN CHIH mentions no work of Sun Tzu except the 82 P`IEN, whereas the Sui and T`ang bibliographies give the titles of others in addition to the "13 chapters," is good proof, Pi I-hsun thinks, that all of these were contained in the 82 P`IEN. Without pinning our faith to the accuracy of details supplied by the WU YUEH CH`UN CH`IU, or admitting the genuineness of any of the treatises cited by Pi I-hsun, we may see in this theory a probable solution of the mystery.

Between Ssu-ma Ch`ien and Pan Ku there was plenty of time for a luxuriant crop of forgeries to have grown up under the magic name of Sun Tzu, and the 82 P`IEN may very well represent a collected edition of these lumped together with the original work. It is also possible, though less likely, that some of them existed in the time of the earlier historian and were purposely ignored by him. [16] Tu Mu's conjecture seems to be based on a passage which states: "Wei Wu Ti strung together Sun Wu's Art of War," which in turn may have resulted from a misunderstanding of the final words of Ts`ao King's preface. This, as Sun Hsing-yen points out, is only a modest way of saying that he made an explanatory paraphrase, or in other words, wrote a commentary on it. On the whole, this theory has met with very little acceptance. Thus, the SSU K`U CH`UAN SHU says: "The mention of the 13 chapters in the SHIH CHI shows that they were in existence before the HAN CHIH, and that latter accretions are not to be considered part of the original work. Tu Mu's assertion can certainly not be taken as proof." There is every reason to suppose, then, that the 13 chapters existed in the time of Ssu-ma Ch`ien practically as we have them now. That the work was then well known he tells us in so many words. "Sun Tzu's 13 Chapters and Wu Ch`i's Art of War are the two books that people commonly refer to on the

subject of military matters. Both of them are widely distributed, so I will not discuss them here." But as we go further back, serious difficulties begin to arise. The salient fact which has to be faced is that the TSO CHUAN, the greatest contemporary record, makes no mention whatsoever of Sun Wu, either as a general or as a writer. It is natural, in view of this awkward circumstance, that many scholars should not only cast doubt on the story of Sun Wu as given in the SHIH CHI, but even show themselves frankly skeptical as to the existence of the man at all. The most powerful presentment of this side of the case is to be found in the following disposition by Yeh Shui-hsin: [17] —

It is stated in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history that Sun Wu was a native of the Ch`i State, and employed by Wu; and that in the reign of Ho Lu he crushed Ch`u, entered Ying, and was a great general. But in Tso's Commentary no Sun Wu appears at all. It is true that Tso's Commentary need not contain absolutely everything that other histories contain. But Tso has not omitted to mention vulgar plebeians and hireling ruffians such as Ying K`ao-shu, [18] Ts`ao Kuei, [19], Chu Chih-wu and Chuan She-chu [20]. In the case of Sun Wu, whose fame and achievements were so brilliant, the omission is much more glaring. Again, details are given, in their due order, about his contemporaries Wu Yuan and the Minister P`ei. [21] Is it credible that Sun Wu alone should have been passed over? In point of literary style, Sun Tzu's work belongs to the same school as KUAN TZU, [22] LIU T`AO, [23] and the YUEH YU [24] and may have been the production of some private scholar living towards the end of the "Spring and Autumn" or the beginning of the "Warring States" period. [25] The story that his precepts were actually applied by the Wu State, is merely the outcome of big talk on the part of his followers. From the flourishing period of the Chou dynasty [26] down to the time of the "Spring and Autumn," all military commanders were statesmen as well, and the class of professional generals, for conducting external campaigns, did not then exist. It was not until the period of the "Six States" [27] that this custom changed. Now although Wu was an uncivilized State, it is conceivable that Tso should have left unrecorded the fact that Sun Wu was a great general and yet held no civil office? What we are told, therefore, about Jang-chu [28]

and Sun Wu, is not authentic matter, but the reckless fabrication of theorizing pundits. The story of Ho Lu's experiment on the women, in particular, is utterly preposterous and incredible.

Yeh Shui-hsin represents Ssu-ma Ch`ien as having said that Sun Wu crushed Ch`u and entered Ying. This is not quite correct. No doubt the impression left on the reader's mind is that he at least shared in these exploits. The fact may or may not be significant; but it is nowhere explicitly stated in the SHIH CHI either that Sun Tzu was general on the occasion of the taking of Ying, or that he even went there at all. Moreover, as we know that Wu Yuan and Po P`ei both took part in the expedition, and also that its success was largely due to the dash and enterprise of Fu Kai, Ho Lu's younger brother, it is not easy to see how yet another general could have played a very prominent part in the same campaign. Ch`en Chen-sun of the Sung dynasty has the note: —

Military writers look upon Sun Wu as the father of their art. But the fact that he does not appear in the TSO CHUAN, although he is said to have served under Ho Lu King of Wu, makes it uncertain what period he really belonged to.

He also says: —

The works of Sun Wu and Wu Ch`i may be of genuine antiquity.

It is noticeable that both Yeh Shui-hsin and Ch`en Chen-sun, while rejecting the personality of Sun Wu as he figures in Ssu-ma Ch`ien's history, are inclined to accept the date traditionally assigned to the work which passes under his name. The author of the HSU LU fails to appreciate this distinction, and consequently his bitter attack on Ch`en Chen-sun really misses its mark. He makes one of two points, however, which certainly tell in favor of the high antiquity of our "13 chapters." "Sun Tzu," he says, "must have lived in the age of Ching Wang [519-476], because he is frequently plagiarized in subsequent works of the Chou, Ch`in and Han dynasties." The two most shameless offenders in this respect are Wu Ch`i and Huai-nan Tzu, both of them important historical personages in their day. The former lived only a century after the alleged date of Sun Tzu, and his death is known to have taken place in 381 B.C. It was to him, according to

Liu Hsiang, that Tseng Shen delivered the TSO CHUAN, which had been entrusted to him by its author. [29] Now the fact that quotations from the ART OF WAR, acknowledged or otherwise, are to be found in so many authors of different epochs, establishes a very strong anterior to them all, — in other words, that Sun Tzu's treatise was already in existence towards the end of the 5th century B.C. Further proof of Sun Tzu's antiquity is furnished by the archaic or wholly obsolete meanings attaching to a number of the words he uses. A list of these, which might perhaps be extended, is given in the HSU LU; and though some of the interpretations are doubtful, the main argument is hardly affected thereby. Again, it must not be forgotten that Yeh Shui-hsin, a scholar and critic of the first rank, deliberately pronounces the style of the 13 chapters to belong to the early part of the fifth century. Seeing that he is actually engaged in an attempt to disprove the existence of Sun Wu himself, we may be sure that he would not have hesitated to assign the work to a later date had he not honestly believed the contrary. And it is precisely on such a point that the judgment of an educated Chinaman will carry most weight. Other internal evidence is not far to seek. Thus in XIII. ss. 1, there is an unmistakable allusion to the ancient system of land-tenure which had already passed away by the time of Mencius, who was anxious to see it revived in a modified form. [30] The only warfare Sun Tzu knows is that carried on between the various feudal princes, in which armored chariots play a large part. Their use seems to have entirely died out before the end of the Chou dynasty. He speaks as a man of Wu, a state which ceased to exist as early as 473 B.C. On this I shall touch presently.

But once refer the work to the 5th century or earlier, and the chances of its being other than a bona fide production are sensibly diminished. The great age of forgeries did not come until long after. That it should have been forged in the period immediately following 473 is particularly unlikely, for no one, as a rule, hastens to identify himself with a lost cause. As for Yeh Shui-hsin's theory, that the author was a literary recluse, that seems to me quite untenable. If one thing is more apparent than another after reading the maxims of Sun Tzu, it is that their essence has been distilled from a large store of personal observation and experience. They reflect the mind not only of a born strategist, gifted with a rare faculty of generalization, but also of a practical soldier closely acquainted with the military conditions of his

time. To say nothing of the fact that these sayings have been accepted and endorsed by all the greatest captains of Chinese history, they offer a combination of freshness and sincerity, acuteness and common sense, which quite excludes the idea that they were artificially concocted in the study. If we admit, then, that the 13 chapters were the genuine production of a military man living towards the end of the "CH`UN CH`IU" period, are we not bound, in spite of the silence of the TSO CHUAN, to accept Ssu-ma Ch`ien's account in its entirety? In view of his high repute as a sober historian, must we not hesitate to assume that the records he drew upon for Sun Wu's biography were false and untrustworthy? The answer, I fear, must be in the negative. There is still one grave, if not fatal, objection to the chronology involved in the story as told in the SHIH CHI, which, so far as I am aware, nobody has yet pointed out. There are two passages in Sun Tzu in which he alludes to contemporary affairs. The first is in VI. ss. 21: —

Though according to my estimate the soldiers of Yueh exceed our own in number, that shall advantage them nothing in the matter of victory. I say then that victory can be achieved.

The other is in XI. ss. 30: —

Asked if an army can be made to imitate the SHUAI-JAN, I should answer, Yes. For the men of Wu and the men of Yueh are enemies; yet if they are crossing a river in the same boat and are caught by a storm, they will come to each other's assistance just as the left hand helps the right.

These two paragraphs are extremely valuable as evidence of the date of composition. They assign the work to the period of the struggle between Wu and Yueh. So much has been observed by Pi I-hsun. But what has hitherto escaped notice is that they also seriously impair the credibility of Ssu-ma Ch`ien's narrative. As we have seen above, the first positive date given in connection with Sun Wu is 512 B.C. He is then spoken of as a general, acting as confidential adviser to Ho Lu, so that his alleged introduction to that monarch had already taken place, and of course the 13 chapters must have been written earlier still. But at that time, and for several years after, down to the capture of Ying in 506, Ch`u and not Yueh, was the great hereditary

enemy of Wu. The two states, Ch`u and Wu, had been constantly at war for over half a century, [31] whereas the first war between Wu and Yueh was waged only in 510, [32] and even then was no more than a short interlude sandwiched in the midst of the fierce struggle with Ch`u. Now Ch`u is not mentioned in the 13 chapters at all. The natural inference is that they were written at a time when Yueh had become the prime antagonist of Wu, that is, after Ch`u had suffered the great humiliation of 506. At this point, a table of dates may be found useful.

B.C. | | 514 | Accession of Ho Lu. 512 | Ho Lu attacks Ch`u, but is dissuaded from entering Ying, | the capital. SHI CHI mentions Sun Wu as general. 511 | Another attack on Ch`u. 510 | Wu makes a successful attack on Yueh. This is the first | war between the two states. 509 | or | Ch`u invades Wu, but is signally defeated at Yu-chang. 508 | 506 | Ho Lu attacks Ch`u with the aid of T`ang and Ts`ai. | Decisive battle of Po-chu, and capture of Ying. Last | mention of Sun Wu in SHIH CHI. 505 | Yueh makes a raid on Wu in the absence of its army. Wu | is beaten by Ch`in and evacuates Ying. 504 | Ho Lu sends Fu Ch`ai to attack Ch`u. 497 | Kou Chien becomes King of Yueh. 496 | Wu attacks Yueh, but is defeated by Kou Chien at Tsui-li. | Ho Lu is killed. 494 | Fu Ch`ai defeats Kou Chien in the great battle of Fu- | chaio, and enters the capital of Yueh. 485 | or | Kou Chien renders homage to Wu. Death of Wu Tzu-hsu. 484 | 482 | Kou Chien invades Wu in the absence of Fu Ch`ai. 478 | to | Further attacks by Yueh on Wu. 476 | 475 | Kou Chien lays siege to the capital of Wu. 473 | Final defeat and extinction of Wu.

The sentence quoted above from VI. ss. 21 hardly strikes me as one that could have been written in the full flush of victory. It seems rather to imply that, for the moment at least, the tide had turned against Wu, and that she was getting the worst of the struggle. Hence we may conclude that our treatise was not in existence in 505, before which date Yueh does not appear to have scored any notable success against Wu. Ho Lu died in 496, so that if the book was written for him, it must have been during the period 505-496, when there was a lull in the hostilities, Wu having presumably exhausted by its supreme effort against Ch`u. On the other hand, if we choose to disregard the tradition connecting Sun Wu's name with Ho Lu, it might equally well have seen the light between 496 and 494, or possibly in the period

482-473, when Yueh was once again becoming a very serious menace. [33] We may feel fairly certain that the author, whoever he may have been, was not a man of any great eminence in his own day. On this point the negative testimony of the TSO CHUAN far outweighs any shred of authority still attaching to the SHIH CHI, if once its other facts are discredited. Sun Hsing-yen, however, makes a feeble attempt to explain the omission of his name from the great commentary. It was Wu Tzu-hsu, he says, who got all the credit of Sun Wu's exploits, because the latter (being an alien) was not rewarded with an office in the State. How then did the Sun Tzu legend originate? It may be that the growing celebrity of the book imparted by degrees a kind of factitious renown to its author. It was felt to be only right and proper that one so well versed in the science of war should have solid achievements to his credit as well. Now the capture of Ying was undoubtedly the greatest feat of arms in Ho Lu's reign; it made a deep and lasting impression on all the surrounding states, and raised Wu to the short-lived zenith of her power. Hence, what more natural, as time went on, than that the acknowledged master of strategy, Sun Wu, should be popularly identified with that campaign, at first perhaps only in the sense that his brain conceived and planned it; afterwards, that it was actually carried out by him in conjunction with Wu Yuan, [34] Po P`ei and Fu Kai? It is obvious that any attempt to reconstruct even the outline of Sun Tzu's life must be based almost wholly on conjecture. With this necessary proviso, I should say that he probably entered the service of Wu about the time of Ho Lu's accession, and gathered experience, though only in the capacity of a subordinate officer, during the intense military activity which marked the first half of the prince's reign. [35] If he rose to be a general at all, he certainly was never on an equal footing with the three above mentioned. He was doubtless present at the investment and occupation of Ying, and witnessed Wu's sudden collapse in the following year. Yueh's attack at this critical juncture, when her rival was embarrassed on every side, seems to have convinced him that this upstart kingdom was the great enemy against whom every effort would henceforth have to be directed. Sun Wu was thus a well-seasoned warrior when he sat down to write his famous book, which according to my reckoning must have appeared towards the end, rather than the beginning of Ho Lu's reign. The story of the women may possibly have grown out of some real incident occurring about the same time. As we hear no more of Sun Wu after this from any

source, he is hardly likely to have survived his patron or to have taken part in the death-struggle with Yueh, which began with the disaster at Tsui-li. If these inferences are approximately correct, there is a certain irony in the fate which decreed that China's most illustrious man of peace should be contemporary with her greatest writer on war.

The Text of Sun Tzu —————

I have found it difficult to glean much about the history of Sun Tzu's text. The quotations that occur in early authors go to show that the "13 chapters" of which Ssu-ma Ch`ien speaks were essentially the same as those now extant. We have his word for it that they were widely circulated in his day, and can only regret that he refrained from discussing them on that account. Sun Hsing-yen says in his preface:

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During the Ch`in and Han dynasties Sun Tzu's ART OF WAR was in general use amongst military commanders, but they seem to have treated it as a work of mysterious import, and were unwilling to expound it for the benefit of posterity. Thus it came about that Wei Wu was the first to write a commentary on it.

As we have already seen, there is no reasonable ground to suppose that Ts`ao Kung tampered with the text. But the text itself is often so obscure, and the number of editions which appeared from that time onward so great, especially during the T`ang and Sung dynasties, that it would be surprising if numerous corruptions had not managed to creep in. Towards the middle of the Sung period, by which time all the chief commentaries on Sun Tzu were in existence, a certain Chi T`ien-pao published a work in 15 CHUAN entitled "Sun Tzu with the collected commentaries of ten writers." There was another text, with variant readings put forward by Chu Fu of Ta-hsing, which also had supporters among the scholars of that period; but in the Ming editions, Sun Hsing-yen tells us, these readings were for some reason or other no longer put into circulation. Thus, until the end of the 18th century, the text in sole possession of the field was one derived from Chi T`ien-pao's edition, although no actual copy of that important work was known to have survived. That, therefore, is the text of Sun Tzu which appears in the War section of the great

Imperial encyclopedia printed in 1726, the KU CHIN T`U SHU CHI CH`ENG. Another copy at my disposal of what is practically the same text, with slight variations, is that contained in the "Eleven philosophers of the Chou and Ch`in dynasties" [1758]. And the Chinese printed in Capt. Calthrop's first edition is evidently a similar version which has filtered through Japanese channels. So things remained until Sun Hsing-yen [1752-1818], a distinguished antiquarian and classical scholar, who claimed to be an actual descendant of Sun Wu, [36] accidentally discovered a copy of Chi T`ien-pao's long-lost work, when on a visit to the library of the Hua-yin temple. [37] Appended to it was the I SHUO of Cheng Yu-Hsien, mentioned in the T`UNG CHIH, and also believed to have perished. This is what Sun Hsing-yen designates as the "original edition (or text)" — a rather misleading name, for it cannot by any means claim to set before us the text of Sun Tzu in its pristine purity. Chi T`ien-pao was a careless compiler, and appears to have been content to reproduce the somewhat debased version current in his day, without troubling to collate it with the earliest editions then available. Fortunately, two versions of Sun Tzu, even older than the newly discovered work, were still extant, one buried in the T`UNG TIEN, Tu Yu's great treatise on the Constitution, the other similarly enshrined in the T`AI P`ING YU LAN encyclopedia. In both the complete text is to be found, though split up into fragments, intermixed with other matter, and scattered piecemeal over a number of different sections. Considering that the YU LAN takes us back to the year 983, and the T`UNG TIEN about 200 years further still, to the middle of the T`ang dynasty, the value of these early transcripts of Sun Tzu can hardly be overestimated. Yet the idea of utilizing them does not seem to have occurred to anyone until Sun Hsing-yen, acting under Government instructions, undertook a thorough recension of the text. This is his own account: —

Because of the numerous mistakes in the text of Sun Tzu which his editors had handed down, the Government ordered that the ancient edition [of Chi T`ien-pao] should be used, and that the text should be revised and corrected throughout. It happened that Wu Nien-hu, the Governor Pi Kua, and Hsi, a graduate of the second degree, had all devoted themselves to this study, probably surpassing me therein. Accordingly, I have had the whole work cut on blocks as a textbook for military men.

The three individuals here referred to had evidently been occupied on the text of Sun Tzu prior to Sun Hsing-yen's commission, but we are left in doubt as to the work they really accomplished. At any rate, the new edition, when ultimately produced, appeared in the names of Sun Hsing-yen and only one co-editor Wu Jen-shi. They took the "original edition" as their basis, and by careful comparison with older versions, as well as the extant commentaries and other sources of information such as the I SHUO, succeeded in restoring a very large number of doubtful passages, and turned out, on the whole, what must be accepted as the closest approximation we are ever likely to get to Sun Tzu's original work. This is what will hereafter be denominated the "standard text." The copy which I have used belongs to a reissue dated 1877. It is in 6 PEN, forming part of a well-printed set of 23 early philosophical works in 83 PEN. [38] It opens with a preface by Sun Hsing-yen (largely quoted in this introduction), vindicating the traditional view of Sun Tzu's life and performances, and summing up in remarkably concise fashion the evidence in its favor. This is followed by Ts'ao Kung's preface to his edition, and the biography of Sun Tzu from the SHIH CHI, both translated above. Then come, firstly, Cheng Yu-hsien's I SHUO, [39] with author's preface, and next, a short miscellany of historical and bibliographical information entitled SUN TZU HSU LU, compiled by Pi I-hsun. As regards the body of the work, each separate sentence is followed by a note on the text, if required, and then by the various commentaries appertaining to it, arranged in chronological order. These we shall now proceed to discuss briefly, one by one.

The Commentators _____

Sun Tzu can boast an exceptionally long distinguished roll of commentators, which would do honor to any classic. Ou-yang Hsiu remarks on this fact, though he wrote before the tale was complete, and rather ingeniously explains it by saying that the artifices of war, being inexhaustible, must therefore be susceptible of treatment in a great variety of ways.

1. TS'AO TS'AO or Ts'ao Kung, afterwards known as Wei Wu Ti [A.D. 155-220]. There is hardly any room for doubt that the earliest commentary on Sun Tzu actually came from the pen of this extraordinary man, whose biography in the SAN KUO CHIH reads

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