

Internal Structure of Sunzi's *Bingfa*

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March 14, 2008

Following D. C. Lau,¹ this is a parsing of Sunzi's *Bingfa* into conceptually distinct subsections; chapter titles and pages ranges are from Minford.² I created the section titles, using phrases from Sunzi whenever possible. This analysis was carried out as part of my larger project, *The Tao of Strategy*.

1. MAKING OF PLANS

- a. The Five Fundamentals (pp. 3–4)
- b. The Calculus of Deliberation (p. 5)
- c. The Dynamic of Competition (pp. 6–8)

2. WAGING OF WAR

- a. The Economy of Competition (pp. 9–11)
- b. The Prudent Commander (pp. 11–13)

3. STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE

- a. Preserving the Whole (pp. 14–16)
- b. The Five Essentials (pp. 16–19)

4. FORMS AND DISPOSITIONS

- a. Heaven and Earth (pp. 20–21)
- b. The Way of Victory (pp. 21–23)
- c. The Five Steps (pp. 23–24)

¹D. C. Lau. Some notes on “Sun tzu”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 28(2):319–335, 1965

²John Minford. *Sun-tzu: The art of war*. Penguin Books, New York, 2002

5. POTENTIAL ENERGY
 - a. Direct and Indirect (pp. 25–27)
 - b. Potential Energy (pp. 27–30)
6. EMPTY AND FULL
 - a. Empty and Full (pp. 31–36)
 - b. Formlessness (pp. 37–38)
7. THE FRAY
 - a. The Art of the Fray (pp. 39–43)
 - b. The Military Primer (pp. 43–46)
8. THE NINE CHANGES
 - a. The Nine Changes (pp. 47–49)
 - b. The Five Pitfalls (p. 50)
9. ON THE MARCH
 - a. Position (pp. 51–54)
 - b. Signs (pp. 54–59)
 - c. Mutual Trust (pp. 59–60)
10. FORMS OF TERRAIN
 - a. The Way of Terrain (pp. 61–63)
 - b. The Way of Defeat (pp. 63–65)
 - c. The Way of the Superior General (pp. 65–68)
11. THE NINE KINDS OF GROUND
 - a. The Nine Kinds of Ground (pp. 69–72)
 - b. Flexible Maneuver (pp. 72–73)
 - c. Human Nature (pp. 73–78)
 - d. The Way of Invasion (pp. 78–83)
12. ATTACK BY FIRE
 - a. Attack by Fire (pp. 84–87)
 - b. The Way of Peace (pp. 87–88)
13. ESPIONAGE
 - a. Prior Information (pp. 89–90)
 - b. The Way of Espionage (pp. 91–95)

