The Art Of War: An Instructional Manual For The Military

Sun Tzu was a Chinese military strategist, general, and philosopher who wrote an instructional manual for the military called The Art of War. The purpose of this book was to guide and prepare the military to be successful in war. In the Chinese tradition, warfare was very important because it determined whether an empire would rise or fall. In Sun Tzu's manual, war was managed by five crucial factors: moral law, heaven, earth, the commander, and method/discipline. Moral law was deemed law of the land because the people would follow their rulers no matter if their lives were at stake. Heaven signified the external environment of a conflict regards of its internal nature. Earth signified distance, size, various levels of danger, grounds for battle, and levels that determine life and death. The Commander signified wisdom, authority, courage, and order. Finally, method-discipline signified dividing armies into proper divisions, ranks, performing road maintenance in order to get supplies where they need to go, and control of military funding. Generals would use Sun Tzu's manual as a model in order to assess military conditions and whether their armies met the requirements.

In the manual, Sun Tzu said, "All warfare is based on deception", and that was as true then and it is today. In today's world, drones, espionage, cyber ware, and other such technology are utilized to deceive our enemies into providing information as well as allowing information to be gathered... Warfare was based on deception in other historical time periods such as medieval times, the American Revolution, Cold War, and WWII. Deception brings disorder and disorder brings victory if done the correct way. To do it right, Sun Tzu said we have to fake weakness which in return, the enemy will become arrogant and at ease. At such time, attack the enemy with force. In addition, the leader of the armies determine the people's fate as provisions are lost, along with their spirit, and armies have to raid homes to replenish and take, in total, four-tenths of revenue. This would drain all of the people's resources so instead, the army decided, according to the manual, to plunder the provisions of their enemies to replace their drained revenue.

Sun Tzu also thought it would be more beneficial to take an enemy's country, army, or regiment by the whole rather than destroy it. Breaking the army's resistance and overthrowing kingdoms internally was the way to victory; this was called attacking by stratagem. The general had four different ways to fight and conquer an enemy: undertake an enemy's plan, prevent enemy forces from joining collectively, attack in the field, and the worst one of them all, siege city walls. Sieging city walls was considered the worst due to long preparations, high casualties, and that the town was still untaken at the end of the siege. Furthermore, Sun Tzu noted the five essentials for victory were to know when to fight and when not to, know how to deal with both larger and lesser forces, have an army animated with spirit, be prepared himself and ready to take on an unprepared opponent, and finally, have military knowledge and not be hindered by the king.

Also noted in the manual was the fact that knowing the opponent's weak and strong points could help the army overcome their enemy. For example, identifying when the enemy starts to show weakness and exhaustion would be the prime opportunity for the army to make a strong offensive move and claim victory. Being on defensive showed the army's lack of strength and agility. Anyone can conquer territories, towns, and people if they are willing to master their

military expertise and learn the art of deception. To be deceptive, the general must have tactical maneuvering, which means encircling the enemy and then trying to reach strategic goal secretively. Sun Tzu specified that armies had to be deceitful and direct when bringing misfortune and chaos, as they were bringing opportunities to themselves. In the field of battle, armies originally would use words to help the maneuvering however, it wasn't enough so the utilization of gongs and drums was introduced. Gongs and drums were also not enough because people could not see them very well so the use of flags and banners were implemented on the field. During night-time battles, signal fires and drums were only used.

The art of deception was critical to Sun Tzu's The Art of War because warfare cannot be done without receiving beforehand movements or information about the enemy. That was where the use of spies was employed. In Tzu's manual, the idea of foreknowledge was introduced by the king and his generals. Foreknowledge created networks of spies to gain backwater information about the enemies' whereabouts and movements. According to the manual, there are five different types of spies: local consisted of the district inhabitants; inward, who were enemy spies; converted, which described an enemy spy that had turned into one of the "good guys" for the empire's own purposes; doomed, "rogue spy" who gave false information to the enemy for the state; finally, surviving, those gave the state reliable news of the enemy. All of the spies depended on the army's ability to maneuver and evade enemy territory so as not to expose their cover.

The Art of War by Sun Tzu is still considered an instructional guidebook for many military organizations today because of its step-by-step descriptions and outlines of what not to do and what to do in order to be victorious in battle. However, the espionage and act of deception was the most important part of warfare during that time because historically, information was difficult to acquire; someone either had to steal the information, bribe someone to get it, or follow the person deemed to have the essential information. Spying was even more essential than the actual fighting because the information was considered to be of great value and provide intelligence that would enable the battle to be won. The information led to the conquering of cities, nations, people, and resources. Without Sun Tzu's The Art of War, the use of espionage in warfare probably would not be utilized or even acknowledged until later on.