



# **The Essence Of War: Leadership And Strategy From The Chinese Military Classics**

*Ralph D. Sawyer*

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From antiquity, the history of China has been marked by invading tribes, warring states, and popular uprisings. This heritage of conflict produced a body of martial literature exploring the fundamental principles of warfare and their methods of employment. Fully aware of the tragic consequences of battle, the authors of these texts emphasized that bloodshed and war should be avoided whenever possible. But, they argued, this is possible only when the principles of leadership and strategy have been mastered and the dynamics of conflict thoroughly analyzed. Over the centuries, these texts have been studied throughout Asia, not only by generals on the battlefield but by leaders of all kinds concerned with the management of human conflict in all its forms. *The Essence of War* presents eight of these classics (written from 500 B.C.E. to 700 C.E.), including Sun-tzu's *Art of War* and Sun Pin's *Military Methods*. The book introduces the core principles of Chinese military science, grouping selected passages and key quotations into five thematic sections encompassing forty-one topical chapters: Fundamentals, Tao of Warfare, Tao of Command, Tactical Essentials, and Tactical Specifics. Translator Ralph D. Sawyer provides here a concise introduction to Chinese military thought and influential materials not only of traditional import, but also for contemporary study and enduring value in both business and military circles throughout the world.

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