run down gradients, and in its flow go around what is solid and move into empty places. An army of men is like water, as each drop of a river shapes its course according to the terrain through which it flows, so each man of an army works out his individual actions in relation to the foe whom he sees immediately before him. Flowing water doesn’t have a constant shape; likewise in a battle everything is always changing. The man who is able to take this into account and modify his tactics while facing an opponent to gain victory, is a naturally gifted fighter. Each of the general’s five considerations of military tactics is as changeable as the heavens; hot or cold, dry or wet, still or windy, the days long or short and the moon full lit or dark.

CHAPTER 7 Maneuvering In a war, the general receives his privilege of command from his people’s government; then he collects men and trains them to be soldiers. The army is blended and harmonized into the different elements before marching from camp, for then tactical maneuvering begins and this is extremely difficult. The difficulty consists in turning the long route into the quickest one and the unanticipated happenings.