desperate situation. He has burned his boats, broken his cooking pots and like a boy herding a flock of sheep he has driven his men to and fro so that no one but he knows where he is going. When to enrage his army and hurl it into desperate ground is the supreme moment of the general’s profession. The distinctive methods fitting each of the nine grounds, the necessities of hidden versus obvious actions and the fundamental laws of human nature must be perfectly understood. The general principle is that penetrating deeply into hostile territory brings cohesion but penetration a short distance brings dispersion. Therefore, 1 On disbanding ground one should inspire his men with unifying idealism and move on. 2 On easy ground one should pull his units together and move on. 3 On contentious ground one should pull in the army’s rear. 4 On free ground one should keep his defenses in good order. 5 On joining ground one should consolidate his alliances. 6 On worrying ground one should gather in plenty of supplies. 7 On perplexing ground one should block every remaining possibility for flight of separate units. 8 On confining ground one should push his way through quickly. 9 On desperate to his soldiers that their lives are over. For it is the nature of men to become filled with obstinate resistance when trapped, to kill when they have no alternative and promptly obey when they have fallen into danger. One can’t form alliances with other