the enemy will unknowingly give them false information, because of certain fabrications we have let them see. Returning spies personally carry information gathered from the enemy. A leader must maintain more intimate relations with spies than with any other person in the generously world. No other person should be more rewarded and no other activity should be more thoroughly hidden. One must have a natural understanding of men's character to use spies effectively. They must be dealt with in a straightforward and benevolent manner.

Use your greatest subtlety to sift out the useful truths in their reports. A spy with a leather face and a crafty disposition is more dangerous than a broken ladder. Never be totally dependent on a single spy. Pay him well and keep your knife near something dear to him. Employ the wise man where he can show his prudence, the brave man where he can display in action, the covetous man where profit can be had by the quick seizure of an advantage and a stupid man where there are real risks of death. If a spy reveals secret information before the proper time, he and the man who pried loose these private affairs of state must be executed. If the object is to shatter an army or abduct an individual, our spies must first determine the names and characters of the general, his frequent visitors, staff and bodyguards. When the