

Pang Juan will die under this tree

Peter van Emde Boas, ILLC-FNWI-UvA and
Bronstee.com Software & Services B.V.



Lorentz Center, Leiden

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Topic

- What is required to make a sentence self validating ?
- Can this be done without invoking epistemic or performative elements:
 - It rains outside and now you know it
 - I appoint you to be a fellow of the Lorentz Center



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“Pang Juan will Die under this tree”

- This is a historical, self validating sentence
- The final act in the fight between Sun Bin and Pang Juan
- A curious side observation in my research on the connections between Logic, Game Theory and Ancient Chinese Strategic Theory
- Part of the project for the preparation of the Handbook on the history of Logical Thought in China



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The two masters Sun

Sun Tzu
Sun Bin

The Art of War
The Art of War

around 500 BC
around 360 BC

Sun Tzu is the better known author, highly popular in business

Only in 1972 it was confirmed by an excavation that these two master Sun's were actually two different authors living 140 years apart.



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The Authors



Portrait of Sun Wu
孙武画像



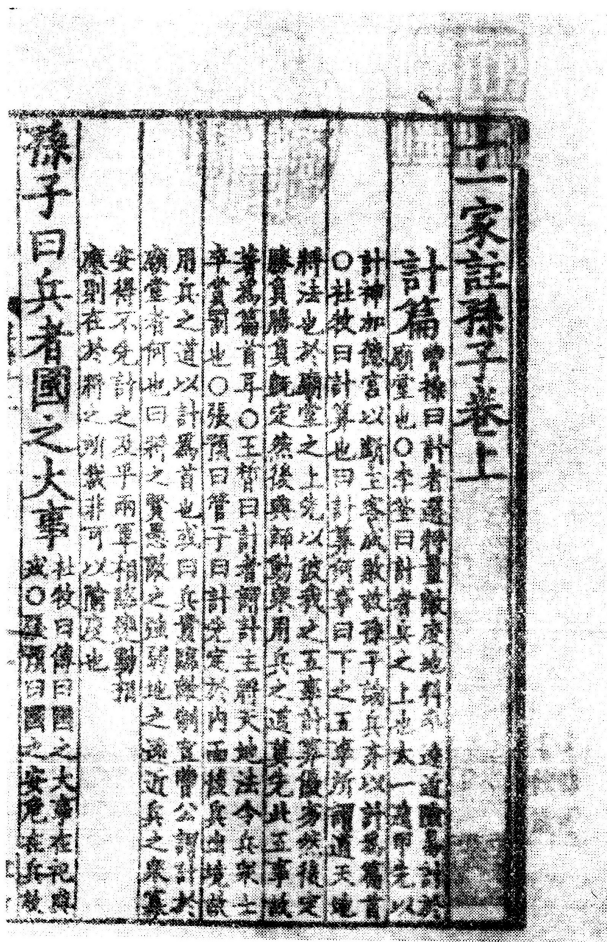
Portrait of Sun Bin
孙臏画像



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The Sources



宋刊《十一家注孙子》书影

Facsimile of a page from the famous Song Dynasty annotated edition of Sunzi's *The Art of War*



《孙膑兵法》部分竹筒照片及摹本

Restored bamboo-strip texts of Sun Bin's *The Art of War*



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Sun Bin and Pang Juan



Pang Juan and Sun Bin were fellow students in military strategy. Both served for the state Wei, but Pang Juan became envious of Sun Bin, and almost had him executed by the King of Wei. Sun Bin escaped by feigning madness and escaped to the state Qi, where he became the main advisor of the Qi general Tian Ji.



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Stratagems used by Sun Bin for Qi against Wei and Pang Juan

- **Beseige Wei to rescue Zhao (2)**
 - Rather than sending troops supporting your ally, feign an attack on the captial of your joint enemy; next ambush the enemy when he retreats to save his capital.
- **Lure your enemy onto the roof, then take away the ladder (28)**
 - Sun Bin, serving for Qi, invades Wei. He knows that Pang Juan, the general of Wei has a low opinion on the Qi troops.
 - By reducing the numbers of fires lighted for several nights, Sun Bin creates the impression that his army is dissolving due to defections. Pang Juan sees an opportunity to rout the Qi camp, but is caught in an ambush and defeated.
- **The numbers refer to the traditional list of thirty six strategies from Ancient China**



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Details of the final ambush (342 BC)

- Sun Bin has the message “**Pang Juan will die under this tree**” carved in a tree at the site where he stages the final ambush
- Pang Juan, while passing this tree at night observes that something is written on the tree, but it is too dark to read it.
- Pang Juan asks for a torch to see what is written; but this light springs the ambush
- Seeing that he is defeated, Pang Juan commits suicide under the tree.
- **The sentence has neither epistemic, nor performative features.**





The end

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