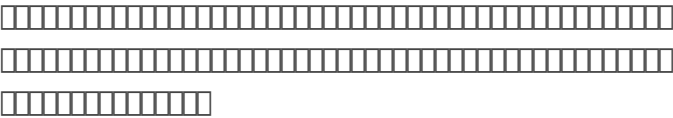


Chapter 54



Translation

What is skillfully established cannot be uprooted;
what is skillfully held cannot slip away.
Through this, descendants offer the rites without cease.

Cultivate it in oneself — De becomes true.
Cultivate it in the family — De becomes abundant.
Cultivate it in the village — De becomes enduring.
Cultivate it in the state — De becomes full.
Cultivate it in all under Heaven — De becomes universal.

Therefore, observe the person through the person,
observe the family through the family,
observe the village through the village,
observe the state through the state,
observe all under Heaven through all under Heaven.
How do I know all under Heaven is thus?
By this.

Word Notes

- 𠄎 — **"to uproot; to pull out"**: to wrench from the ground.
- 𠄎 — **"to slip away; to come loose"**: to fall away, to be lost.
- 𠄎 — **"to cease; to stop"**: to discontinue.
- 𠄎 — **"full; abundant"**: overflowing, replete.

Chapter Explanation

What is **skillfully established** is so firmly set that it **cannot be uprooted**. What is **skillfully held** is so securely kept that it can **never slip away**. Passed down to later generations, the **descendants offer the rites without ceasing** — for such a person possesses De.

If one truly **cultivates De in one's own person**, one's De becomes **genuine and true**. If one further **cultivates it in the family**, one's De **overflows to spare**. If one **cultivates it in the**

village, one's De **grows great and enduring**. If one **cultivates it in the state**, one's De becomes **full and replete**. If one **cultivates it in all under Heaven**, one's De becomes **universal and all-pervading**.

Therefore, **take my own person to observe another's person** — if I can cultivate myself, others too can cultivate themselves. **Take my own family to observe another's family** — if I can set my family in order, other families too can be set in order. **Take my own village to observe another's village** — if my village can be transformed, other villages too can be transformed. **Take my own state to observe another's state** — if my state can be well-governed, other states too can be well-governed. **Take my realm under Heaven to observe another's realm** — if my realm can be brought to peace, other realms too can be brought to peace. How do I know that all under Heaven can be brought to peace? By inference from my own person.

Discourse

The greatest thing one can establish is meritorious service to the state. The finest thing one can hold is a disc of precious jade. Yet when the rival state is destroyed, the meritorious minister perishes. A common person bears no guilt, but possessing a jade disc is itself a crime. Thus establishing merit and holding jade not only cannot endure — they even bring the danger of death.

Only one who holds Dao in his person and establishes De in the world can achieve what is described as "received in the ancestral temple, preserved by descendants through the generations." Through ten thousand ages, nothing will change this.

Establishing De in the world may appear extremely difficult, extremely grand. But in truth it is extremely near, extremely easy — it lies right in one's own person. Does not the *Doctrine of the Mean* say: "In hewing a handle from a handle, the model is not far off"? Does not the *Great Learning* say: "Everything, without exception, is rooted in cultivating the self"? Does not Mencius say: "Cultivate your own person, and all under Heaven will find peace"?

If one can truly cultivate De in one's own person, one can not only set the family in order, govern the state, and bring peace to all under Heaven — one can govern all worlds, all realms under Heaven, all of Heaven and Earth and the myriad beings. All of these are nurtured and sustained from one's own person.

Revision #2

Created 2026-03-10 22:36:52 UTC by Phil

Updated 2026-03-13 01:43:24 UTC by Phil