INTRODUCTION

A Riddle

The Person as the Way?

"Who are YOU?" said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation.
Alice replied, rather shyly, "I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—
at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but
I think I must have been changed several times since then."

"What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar sternly.
"Explain yourself!"

"I can't explain MYSELF, I'm afraid, sir" said Alice,
"because I'm not myself, you see."

"I don't see," said the Caterpillar.

"I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly," Alice replied very politely,
"for I can't understand it myself to begin with; and being
so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."

"It isn't," said the Caterpillar.

"Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet," said Alice;
"but when you have to turn into a chrysalis—you will some day,
you know—and then after that into a butterfly,
I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?"

"Not a bit," said the Caterpillar.

"Well, perhaps your feelings may be different," said Alice;
"all I know is, it would feel very queer to ME."

"You!" said the Caterpillar contemptuously. "Who are YOU?"

—LEWIS CARROLL, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

A PROBLEM OF RELATEDNESS

Once, so the sages say, the Way (*dao* 道) prevailed on earth and the world was in peace and harmony. Then, it had been abandoned and lost and times of turmoil, fighting, corruption and disunity darkened the face of the earth. Maybe it was forgotten (the cynics might say repressed) and as this was before the advent of history, people's true sentiments were confined to oblivion. Then better times arrived and yet, the memory of this loss may have lingered on for generations and accordingly people perhaps never quite attained the sense of well-being they had had before. The ages have handed down many varying and incongruous accounts concerning the Way and the ways to attain it, but as a devoted disciple testified, the more he came closer the farther away it had gotten. Ever since, it is our task to find it again and bring back the serenity that we had had. The toll for this loss is, however, that we the seekers of Way carry the responsibility not only to travel it but to broaden it too, with only minor clues for how we, mortal and limited, can enlarge the mighty Way. We incessantly return to it, whether to idolize it or to criticize it, whether to escape it or to yearn for it, whether to describe it or take it to pieces—or perhaps simply to question it.

In this book I want to do something similar to the latter. Not so much to question it but to be questioned by it. The two protagonists in this book are, thus, the Way and its traveler, the person. They are the core of early Chinese thought and in fact, they are what human life is about. We have learned so

as early as Confucian *Analects*' teaching that the Way can be broadened by the person who travels it, rather than that it broadens the person (*Lunyu* 論語 15:28). Indeed, these protagonists are much more than two: the first is as numerous "as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore" (Gen. 22:17); the second is endless, ongoing and abstract, and its manifestations are abundant. Then again, some suggest that these two are, in some sense, one.

The person—the one about whom voluminous studies were produced in philosophy, literature, psychology, history or cultural studies—is always hard, if not impossible to define. She and her ilk are the seekers of where to go, who to be inspired and guided by, and how to live a better life and burgeon. They belong with a certain form of life having its community and traditions. In general, they are considered (by their peers) as having unique qualities and capacities, including reason—at least a type of reason and reasoning other animals are not known to have. Morality is attributed to them only; animals can be helpful to each other in various ways, but cannot morally deliberate on their next or previous actions. Self-consciousness and being part of a culturally established form of social relations include a responsibility that is solely theirs. Indeed, the defining features of personhood and consequently of what makes a person may differ among cultures and contexts and yet, one thing is quite certain: people's task is to realize their potentiality as human beings. The task of the Confucian follower is to broaden the Way; perhaps better to say, the human task from the Confucian perspective is to broaden the Way.

As for the Way, it is not less sneaky. The Way is what we aspire to and yet, it is also how we advance toward; while not one of us, it is commonly among us, it is in our commonality (*yong* 庸) as coined by Tu Weiming (1989), or in activities that are ordinary and common, as we are embedded in the world. It is near us, and yet, it sometimes appears besides us, above us, in front of us, and at times, as Yan Yuan attested, one may even "look at it before him, and suddenly it appears behind" (*Analects* 9:11). It cannot be hermetically delineated or defined; as Yan Yuan suggested, the closer to it we get, the more distanced it appears. It is something that is always greater, more virtuous, farther-reaching, all-embracing, and more complete than anything we experience and anything we conceive. It is something similar to the "that then which nothing greater can be conceived" in Saint Anselm of Canterbury's reference to God. It is the height of moral knowledge and practice; it is the sociopolitical ideal order, the boundless perfection a person can wish for, and the lofty ideal of incessant self-cultivation. There again, this Highness turns into a common and concrete human way. It is us, humans, who can broaden the Way.

The apparently innocent stand exposes a fundamental philosophical problem regarding the relatedness between ultimate and nominal, infinite and finite, or boundless and limited. How, one may ask, can the person—limited in space and time, by body and mentality—enlarge the boundless Way? How can those who travel the Way as ultimate perfection create it in their striving for perfection? What does the Way imply about the person, the alleged agent of the way? Given that the Way is ever-growing and unlimited, does the person who broadens it share similar characteristics? If so, how?

Confucius denotes the unattainable as the given: Not only the Way can be broadened, it is human beings, limited and flawed as they are, who can broaden it. Any monotheistic framework would see this philosophical attitude as scandalous; in fact, in monotheistic terms, the saying that human beings can broaden the Way, rather than that the Way broadens humans can be rendered as analogous to saying that rather than God created human beings, it is human beings who create divinity in each and every step in their walk—somewhat anarchistic, indeed. From the Confucian perspective, however, we can only attain perfection when we cocreate it, and we create it in our own self-cultivation; what alternative do we have? Moreover, cultivating our own selves is, in fact, cultivating others (*Analects* 6:30). In other words, the task is attained in human deeds, in moral deeds. So, in order to broaden the Way, that is to reach others, we broaden ourselves, and we can only broaden ourselves by taking care of others. Moreover, this broadening necessitates overcoming boundaries and obstacles, including ones that we usually consider nonpassable, like one's own predispositions, rooted conceptions and biases that create these boundaries. Then again, what means do we have to overcome these boundaries and obstacles and transcend them?

One may suspect that a Confucian antinomy is revealed regarding the two Confucian notions of the Way and the person. Recalling the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, we may think that the Way as perfection is beyond concrete experience, yet when our thinking transcends the limits of possible experience, it becomes entrenched in antinomies that are equally rational but contradictory. In this line, the relatedness of person and Way could be seen such an antinomy: Thesis: The Way as perfection is bigger than any creature, including humans (hence it cannot be broadened by any other creature). Antithesis: The person broadens the Way. Indeed, an anomaly concerning human-ultimate relation appears: First, the idea of Way annuls radical transcendence (either as the religious idea of God or the philosophers' Truth) and thus, apparently, looses firm standard for perfection. Second, in the very

broadening of Way, a discrete subject disappears too, as broadening shifts the experience of a defined unique individual to incessant relatedness, self-broadening and self-transcendence.

But can we truly determine the limits of possible experience? Can one know in advance what is possible and what is not? Antinomies isolate themselves: they are like discontinuous points scattered in the field of logic. The discussion that was part of Kant's plan to set limits to science and philosophical inquiry is replied to in our days through interdisciplinary thinking, acknowledging the fact that human rationality must be negotiated and expanded, and strict boundaries are both impossible and unhelpful in search for human understanding.[1] Perhaps, contrary to the accepted principle of logic, according to which a contradiction may lead to every possible conclusion, the antinomy of the Way does not isolate itself. It may be disastrous to a formal system but it agrees with the riddle of life.

According to the present study, if broadening the Way can be considered the Confucian task, it was not until the days of the Song dynasty (960–1279) that more systematic approaches were offered for *how* the Way is to be broadened, giving the antinomy a living sense. As suggested by the philosophies that are exemplified here, the focus then turns to finding the boundaries that we can remove, or obstacles we can overcome, and the means to do so. The latter is tightly connected with inquiring for a foundation for human spirituality, and the alternative sense of transcendence that may be suggested in the system that lacks a notion of absoluteness.

PERSON AND WAY: THE CONFUCIAN CONVICTION

The Confucian idea of the person as always related to others is traced here back to the Mencian spirit according to which "humanity is the person" (*renyezhe renye* 仁也者人也; *Mencius* 孟子 7B:16). A person (*ren* 人) is a related person—or a person in two—(*er* 二), or human (*ren* 仁). It is a person in relationships, or person to person, implying a lack of idea of person as an isolated individual. This attitude stands in sharp opposition to the philosophical (typically Western) idea of subject, meaning a unique being with a distinctive experience and a singular consciousness who considers himself a discrete entity that relates to additional entities, usually referred to as others or as objects of one's knowledge. The Confucian presupposition, in contrast, does not arise from an underlying principle that the world consists of objects, which the subject

allegedly considers to be separate entities, with the resultant duality of experience, and the problem of relating subjects to objects.[2] Pondering the idea of subject as distinct, or an individual, one might find oneself puzzled with the difficulty of isolating both subjective experiences and subjective consciousness from one's surroundings. The Confucian-related person is free from this bafflement.

In analytical terms, this characterization is quite an achievement: the relation between the person as human being (*ren* 人) and the virtue of being human (*ren* 仁) is similar to the inherent natural relation between the predicate raining and the noun rain: When one says, it rains, others know that it is the rain that is raining, and there is no need to ask what is raining? or who is raining? or what does the rain do? Subject and predicate are introduced as one: the rain rains and anything that rains is the rain. (We may say that someone rains favors on another, but then clearly we use rain as a metaphor, wishing to indicate that the favors were given in a natural flow reminiscent of rain.) We tend to think that the more complex our subject is, the harder it is to self-define; and we consider the human extremely complex. In this Confucian line, however, the distinctive characteristic of the human being amounts to being morally related to others; a human "humans," in the way rain rains. When Mencius defines *person* on its own terms, he introduces Confucian humanistic terms as not only the words or the language through which we deal with ideas and values, but also—conditions. A necessary and sufficient condition for being a person is one's being related to others; caring and living in dialogue.

Accordingly, in every given situation, we live, we know, we feel and we act within a human net of relationships, and any specific relationship commits to a certain attitude and a distinctive set of values. This is quite simple and self-explanatory: I am my parents' daughter, my children's mother, a partner, a neighbor, a teacher, a student, a colleague, a customer, and so on. Being a caring mother is definitely different from being a caring daughter, a caring teacher, customer, or neighbor; each role demands different skills and responsibilities. In this way, the ethics that is based on virtues accords with one's concrete roles in differing situations.[3] In this way, in all roles, one is bound to answer the practical question, how can I realize myself in this particular context? Or how should I act so that it brings me closer to the Way? The practice whereby we realize ourselves in all relations is being human as caring for others and as morally committed to act accordingly. The self-knowledge that one gains is knowledge of oneself as morally related, or as reaching others through

transcending one's boundaries. *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) describes this characterization.

> Only the perfectly sincere person can actualize his own essence. Actualizing his own essence, he can fully actualize the essence of others. Fully actualizing the essence of others, he can fully actualize the essence of all things. Being able to fully actualize the essence of all things, he can assist Heaven and Earth in their transformation and sustenance. Able to assist in Heaven and Earth's transformation and sustenance, he forms a trinity with Heaven and Earth. (ch. 22)[4]

The understanding of a single person as inherently related to others, even embodying others is given sense when we understand that everyone is a subject, as actualizer of others, an agent, an and a co-creator with heaven and earth in actualizing him- or herself. In this way boundaries that are sometimes considered strict may dissolve between oneself and another, even between oneself and heaven and earth. This is the essence of self-transcendence.

Mou Zongsan's牟宗三idea of immanent transcendence (*neizai chaoyue* 內在超越) is valuable in this context.[5] Accordingly, rather than having a transcendent ultimate being that carries the responsibility for every immanent phenomenon in the human world, in Confucianism, through moral transformation, every person can transcend him- or herself to ultimately become larger, as a sage. In Mou's immanent transcendence, heavenly principle and human nature are never distinct or substantially separate from each other. However, despite the spiritual (perhaps religious) overtones in this perspective, it is vital to note at this point that the sense of transcendence this book refers to has little to do with religiosity in its strict sense.[6] Transcendence is used here in the sense of the human ability to rise above or go beyond accepted limits, to triumph over restrictive aspects of one's existence, to overcome serious difficulties and thus find oneself above material existence, yet never beyond existence. Importantly, the essence of this overcoming is human, located within a moral framework, rather than the divine sphere. Indeed, the ability to transcend one's boundaries does carry a spiritual alternative with regard to ideas such as infinitude or immortality, and yet the ideas are based on human effort and morality, rather than divine omnipotence. Then again, questions come up: Can one, in this system, be at all limited in space and in time? Can we make clear conceptual distinctions between that which is within life and that which is external to it? What sense does death—the ultimate boundary

of life—have in this view? Is there at all a sense to the end of life? Is it the end of the world? Or does the Confucian system necessarily imply that as eternally related, something must live forever? But then again, we have no clue for an idea of immortality in early Confucianism.

I undertake this study seeking to understand the later frameworks and methodologies that enable this transcendence of boundaries of the person who broadens the Way. Early Confucian philosophers offer a moral tip for understanding the cultivated traveler of the Way. Accordingly, by way of a never-ending commitment, one transcends one's so-called corporeal or spatial boundaries through person-to-person relatedness; one's temporal boundaries through conveying past traditions into present practices; and one's symbolic boundaries through ritualistic practice. The elevation of oneself over personal boundaries allows one to live morally in others' lives.

However, the mystery remains unsolved in terms of methodology and left open to its later renovators in the Song dynasty. Not disclosing the idea in early times and holding onto the idea of broadening oneself through moral interaction also explains the fact that Song dynasty philosophical texts, which lean on early Confucian morality, also apply ideas from Daoist mysticism and naturalness, correspond with Buddhist ideas of emptiness, and perhaps even use methodological cues from other schools.[7] Focusing on Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), and Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077), I suggest that the renewed philosophical attitudes can be better understood as echoing the early Confucian mystery in various ways, not as a bewilderment or a flaw, rather as a *riddle* of a special kind, that can be responded to only in the practice that reflects the philosophical system.

A BRIEF ON LIVING RIDDLES AND RIDDLE AS METHODOLOGY[8]

When something is difficult to solve or to achieve, we refer to it as a problem. In a philosophical context it may be an unsettled question raised for inquiry, deliberation, discussion, and hopefully, some kind of solution. At times, problems of this kind are revealed a source of perplexity, unease, frustration, and sometimes even agony. In this sense, broadening the Way could be seen such a problem; indeed, broadening the Way is not easy to achieve; it is always demanding more inquiry and consideration, it is never fully settled, and can turn into a source of perplexity for its learners. Broadening the Way, however,

is not aspiring for a theoretical solution; rather, it calls for a response in action. Only upon traveling, the idea of Way and what broadening amounts to, can be understood. Hence, rather than being a source for frustration or agony, it is a source of action, in particular moral action.

An early hint for understanding as living riddle in the Chinese tradition, can be found in the early philosophy of the *Book of Change* (*Yijing* 易經) and its appreciation of life as transforming and unforeseen, suggesting a concrete practice of "foretelling" that cannot simply be understood in reference to telling future events only. It is a forecasting not as casting an event into a fixed mold; rather, it is causing to move or sending forth, like casting a fishing lure. What one tells in advance is one's position regarding the issue in question. We cast our movements beforehand, but not their outcomes not knowing what it will bring back. This understanding corresponds with Jung's explanation of the sixty-four hexagrams as the tool by which sixty-four different paradigmatic conditions can be interpreted but never determined. The fact that the conditions are paradigmatic necessitates consideration of nuances and subtleties. Realization that there are various possible responses for any question relies on one's reflection and projection, yet never on one firm solution.[9] The book's foretelling can thus be understood better as deciphering a mystery or understanding through riddles. In this way, it offers a first methodological clue on *how* we can address life as a riddle.

Seeing life and death as a riddle, deciphered step by step, by means of subtle clues given by sixty-four symbolic shapes and enigmatic words, which can never be disclosed, is assisted by the *Xici Zhuan* 繫辭傳 (or the *Great Appendix*, 大傳 *Dazhuan*), the philosophical appendix regarding the relationships of the hexagrams as embodying clues for understanding. The most important characteristics of the first two hexagrams—those of Qian 乾 and Kun 坤, according to the Appendix, address the question of boundaries: "Qian knows the great beginnings; Kun brings them to completion" (*Xici* 1). First, Qian is the knowledge of great beginnings (*qianzhi dashi* 乾知大始), never of ends that are typically unknown. Kun refers to completion (*cheng* 成), signifying process again, rather than a full-stop or an ending (*kunzuo chengwu* 坤作成物). Hence, beginnings are to be known for endings to be reached appropriately. The basic presupposition of the system as the human capability to "trace things to their beginning, and turn back to their end—thus knowing death and birth" (原始反終, 故知死生 *yuanshi fanzhong guzhi sisheng*) is cited in the times of the Song dynasty as part of the cosmic process that humans embody. The use of images in the *Book of Change* as means of focusing organic changes

enables practitioners to reflect on moral implications of paradigmatic states as representations of personal occurrences. Seeing life as ongoing transformation understood by various combinations and variations of two basic powers brings practitioners to a new perspective on understanding regarding transformation, relatedness, and the lack of concrete boundaries—including those between life and death.

The point that life is seen in riddles is quite explicit in texts of the Lao-Zhuang 老莊 tradition, then with the assimilation of Buddhism in China, reaching its peak in the Chan practice of *gong-an* 公案.[10] Confucian philosophizing in riddles is less explicit and yet, in major texts we encounter points in which the text appears to contradict itself. Examples, as shown hereafter to refer to the most significant terms in the system; just think of Confucius's different and at times apparently contradictory replies to what humanity is about (e.g., *Analects* 4:3 vs. 4:4).

Rather than settling apparent contradictions and interpreting away significant passages, we may treat them as riddles of a special kind that cannot be responded by theoretical means. Implying what Ludwig Wittgenstein called "the riddle of life and death in space and time," it is a living riddle, or a riddle that must be responded to in practice.[11] According to the present suggestion, the Way embodies a living riddle that is responded to in the Confucian form of life.

In the present book, the riddle is not only an idea, but moreover, it is a methodology for reading philosophical texts that belong to forms of life that are not one's own. With regard to the Chinese case, sinological methodologies are necessary in any research that aims at learning anything about Chinese culture from Chinese texts yet, their strength in clarifying, classifying, and forming good taxonomic schemes of terms and contexts is liable to leading one to overlook the philosophical point in a text. My choice to apply the conceptual methodology of riddles takes its cue from Wittgenstein's own attempts at understanding other cultures and others' beliefs.[12] In this context, Wittgenstein refers to two senses of understanding: first, the sense in which understanding a sentence is one's ability to construct another sentence that says the same thing in different words; second, the sense in which understanding a sentence involves seeing why it cannot be replaced by any other words (referred to hereafter as "the uniqueness sense").[13] Wittgenstein stresses that the two senses together form our concept of understanding. Replacing words by other words is a practice with which we, researchers and teachers in the Humanities, are quite familiar; it is what we usually call explanation and at times interpretation. Yet, we also want to show the uniqueness of a system, in

its own terms, even when not habitually used by us. In these cases, we may find the comparative riddle methodology useful.

According to this suggestion, encountering a textual paradox or ambiguity may signify a key idea that cannot be hermetically defined, and *has to be* textually expressed through contradiction. Usually it denotes a real-life conflict, for which the response can be provided only in life and practice. Finding textual riddles as signs for living riddles is therefore joy rather than agony. With the Wittgensteinean philosophical spirit, I wish to offer a systematic approach, according to which in understanding a form of life as living riddle, one acquires *a point* (PI §564) rather than rules and techniques, regarding its beliefs and practices. If one can show that a certain text embodies a living riddle, and that riddle language is necessary for the issue at hand, one may acquire some understanding of that text in Wittgenstein's second sense, as the uniqueness sense of understanding a form of life.[14]

The philosophies of Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, and Zhang Zai, which originated around the same time during the Northern Song, indicate the renewal of Confucianism as a humanistic philosophy that takes the cultivation of the person not as a hermetically defined goal, but as the proper response to the Way as introducing a riddle of a unique type; that of a perfection that can be perfected by human beings, imperfect as they are. As this study suggests, each of the three philosophers offers a unique perspective on what the early Confucian vision of the person who broadens the Way amounts to, and on the way in which it can be attained. Each perspective contributes to forming a more complete concept of a Confucian sense of transcendence that is never separate from the Confucian person; rather, it is inherent in the self-creation of the person who has to incessantly transcend self-boundaries as part of the natural engagement in self-realization as a realization of others, or of something bigger than oneself. The renewed neo-Confucian idea also influences the understandings of core thinkers in contemporary Confucian humanism, as indicated in the first chapter of this book.

THREE NEO-CONFUCIAN RIDDLES AND THEIR RESPONSES

What, then, does this book suggest? After a background chapter on Way and person in early Confucianism, the rest of this book addresses the attitudes of Zhou Dunyi, Shao Yong, and Zhang Zai as three different responses to the Confucian riddle of how the finite can broaden the infinite Way, or of

broadening oneself as perfecting the ultimate. As there is no radical transcendence—each of the three neo-Confucians embarks on the Way, searching for his own response. The understanding that broadening the Way presupposes broadening oneself, and broadening oneself is attained by an ongoing process of removing self-boundaries that delimit and delineate who one is brings each of the philosophers to transcend boundaries and suggest their own unique philosophical understandings. Although all three philosophies are multidimensional, in the present context Zhou Dunyi's perspective on broadening the Way is focused on here as a *metaphysical* perspective; Shao Yong's is explored as adding an *epistemological* perspective; and Zhang Zai's is viewed as offering a *pragmatic* sense to the broadening of the person as broadening the Way. All perspectives, though absorbed with foreign ideas, stem from Confucian morality, and reaffirm the early Confucian idea of broadening the Way through human virtues and moral relations.

First, we encounter Zhou Dunyi's metaphysical understanding. Seeing reality as a process of becoming that necessitates ongoing creative movement and transformation, *one* transcends the boundary between infinitude and finitude as that between the Non-Polar and Supreme Polarity (*Wuji er Taiji* 無極而太極) and the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物)—of which the person is only one manifestation. We first address the short treatise *Diagram of Supreme Polarity Explained* (*Taijitu Shuo* 太極圖說, abbreviated hereafter as TJTS). The early Daoist diagram is explained by Zhou as an impressive Confucian statement on the continuity between the ultimate and the world under heaven. In the present context, the daring opening "Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity" of the treatise presents its reader with the riddle: what is Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity? and, more importantly, how Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity at once?

In his explanation, reminiscent of a Laozian attitude, Zhou offers a dialectic of Duality/Nonduality, in which he refers to the world through analogous references, represented in the diagram by five symbols in the spirit of the *Book of Change*—both graphically and textually. Accordingly, Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity as the archetypal One that is at once its own negation, sets the framework (and also the nonframework) of discussion. Manifested then through the interpenetration of tranquility (*jing* 靜) and activity (*dong* 動) of yin-yang, the transformations of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行), and the dynamics of Qian and Kun 坤, the harmonious progression in seasons and natural changes are created. The myriad things, including humans, embody the process as a whole. In this way, the cultivated person as sage is depicted as the human manifestation of Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity.

Zhou's work leans heavily on the philosophy of *Change* and the understanding that life is transformation from a moral-metaphysical perspective. Dealing with the aspect of *wu* as nonbeing, Zhou accommodates terms that were foreign to the Confucian spirit. However, if the terms are indeed foreign, the *use* Zhou makes of them is genuinely Confucian, in a way that creates a renewed and more open version of the doctrine. Zhou's new use of the unified concept Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity (WJTJ) in the Confucian context is taken here to be *a living riddle* that can only be responded to in one's life and practice; in his case in elevating oneself over the strict boundary between One and many, or in attaining infinitude in finitude.

Projecting TJTS on ideas from *The Penetrating Book* (*Tongshu* 通書, abbreviated as TS) demonstrates how the person can embody the riddle. In short, the boundary between One and many disappears through sincerity (*cheng* 誠), presented in terms of an earthly manifestation of Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity. TS opens in three chapters on sincerity, each referring, according to the present understanding, to a different dimension of the idea, first as analogous to Supreme Polarity; then, to the myriad things; last, to Nonpolar and Supreme Polarity. The suggested response is described through the interpenetrating of activity and tranquility in human tasks—manifesting the succession of yin-yang, five phases, and Qian-Kun dynamics in the human heart, and the attempt at being a sage (*shengren* 聖人). The striving for sagehood is thus presented as Zhou's response to the riddle of WJTJ in "to be and not to be a sage," both at once.

The next response to the riddle of the Way takes an epistemological perspective in the philosophy of Shao Yong, who broadens the Way by observing its travelers. Shifting the focus to his inquiry of observation (*guan* 觀), self-realization and the ability to expand one's boundaries revolves around an ability to observe the world and one's position in it. As observer, Shao transcends the distinction between in (*nei* 內) and out (*wai* 外). Shao's understanding of life through observing a game of Weiqi 圍棋 (more familiar by its Japanese name of Go) in his "Great Poem on Observing Weiqi" (*Guanqi dayin* 觀棋大吟) serves as cue, leading to Shao's broader philosophical ideas. The three-hundred and sixty lines of Shao's poem refer through correlative thinking to life and game at once.[15] The choice of game as a model enables understanding of the person both from within as a player, and from without as an observer, thus forgoing the boundary between in and out, entering others' lives through game. Shao's text has clear Daoistic overtones, including as part of his observation a process of forgetting both (*liangwang* 兩忘), with a Confucian twist, reaffirming the necessity of a framework that enables this forgetting.

First, the chapter refers to the cultural significance of using games as a model, then to playing the game of Weiqi. Next, Shao's idea of observation, which opens the poem, is introduced with the aid of his philosophy of observation of things (*guanwu* 觀物), as introduced in the *Book of Supreme World Ordering Principles* (*Huangji jingshi* 皇極經世, hereafter abbreviated as HJJS), and the central topic of his major philosophical treatise *Inner Chapters on Observing of Things* (*Guanwu Neipian* 觀物內篇). Then, Shao's ideas are exemplified in the poem, first by describing how he observed the game and drawing from this observation analogies to life. Moving from in to out, the observer transcends his own subjective boundaries to understand the players and the game as a microcosm of life. Then, observing history, Shao moves this time from out to in. Seeing the game in history brings him to transcend history as such and reveal the game in one's life. The poem implies a theoretical perspective on an unceasing interchange between in and out, between observing and playing, between game and life. Transcending dichotomies, one is led to seeing the single world order.

Last, Zhang Zai's pragmatic personal transcending of the most essential boundary in human life—that between birth (*sheng* 生) and death (*si* 死)—is presented through Zhang's use of the family as a model for universal interactions. Within the various relationships with living and dead family members, one creates oneself beyond the boundaries of birth and death. This perspective brings Zhang Zai back to the significance of moral practice of all human beings as reverent sons and daughters (*xiao* 孝). As suggested, he makes relentless attempts to overcome death—both as his own fear of death and as overcoming pain and loss upon the death of others. As his philosophy of qi 氣 suggests, he even seeks to overcome any loss in the world. While the tendency to see the harmony of the natural world as a model for human harmony in the spirit of the *Book of Change* is an almost all-Chinese philosophical tendency, the analogy of cosmic harmony to family relations suggests a clear Confucian flavor.

Accordingly, in his writings Zhang Zai takes the perspective of an involved seeker of the Way. As a seeker, heaven and earth are introduced as embodying an ontogenetic nature as the origin and development of the human being, in a way that inherently denotes and delimits one's identity as son or daughter. The denotation as sons and daughters—necessitating the family as a frame of reference—by definition cannot be fixated or limited. This family connectedness attributes the cosmic powers with a human flavor, in terms and sounds that are familiar to the Confucian ear. Zhang's call for engagement in the universal order through moral practice is a pragmatic call to move on from daily

practice to universal morality, or from existence to essence, and reverses Zhou's and Shao's emanation from ultimate perfection to the myriad things, thus introducing his unique sense of human broadening of the Way.

To follow this understanding, we will take up from a concise text, this time that of the *Western Inscription* (*Ximing* 西銘, hereafter abbreviated as WI) with references to the broader Works of Zhang Zai (*Zhangzaiji* 張載集, hereafter abbreviated as ZZJ). We first addresses WI as reference to the remarkable view of Qian and Kun as parents; the relatedness within the different branches of the universe as one body; the commitment to the universe as family reverence; and the conclusion that serving one's parents with reverence during life enables one to die in peace. In order to suggest that through family reverence one may overcome the boundary between life and death, we then move on to Zhang's philosophy of qi as that which builds and fills any living creature; its functioning as void (with both Daoist and Buddhist overtones); its moral perspective; and its suggesting a continuity that transcends the strict boundary between life and death. Last, I suggest that looked at jointly, the two former perspectives—on universal relatedness and on qi—necessitate a unique moral sense of immortality or a Confucian idea of transcending one's boundaries as timelessness or morally living in the present.

Granted, the scope of this inquiry prohibits me from addressing each philosophical attitude from all or even most of its perspectives—historical, personal, religious, and others. Hence, I do not discuss or only briefly mention central issues that do not reflect directly on the present theme, such as Zhou's political ideas, Shao's elaborate philosophy of numbers, or Zhang's deliberations on spiritual forces.[16]

The weaving of perspectives together into one fabric reflects my own attempt at understanding, as an attempt at transcending my academic and personal boundaries, and enter the philosophies of three great thinkers, trying to understand others through their own eyes, rather than explaining away ideas that might appear counterintuitive in our day inconceptual schemes. It then calls to transcend yet another boundary: that between then and now. The practical sense of the latter is, however, left for a future discussion, and more importantly—the practice thereof.