



cannot exist outside of Heaven and Earth. Thus, for Heaven and Earth to give life to the myriad beings is to give life to themselves. If Heaven and Earth did not regard the myriad beings as one body with themselves and only looked after themselves, they would become merely a single isolated thing — how could that be worthy of being called Heaven and Earth?

The Sage stands alongside Heaven and Earth, and he too treats all under Heaven as one family, all nations as one person. He places himself last and regards himself as outside. Yet through the cycling of Heaven and Earth, what was placed last turns around and naturally ends up first; what was regarded as outside — his self thereby grows great beyond all outer limit, enduring through all ages.

Were it otherwise — if one cared only for oneself and scrambled to be first, if one cared only for oneself and scrambled to survive — everyone would seek to destroy such a person. How could he come first? How could he survive?

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