

## The Meanings of Filial Piety and “One Principle and Many Manifestations” in Zhang Zai’s “Western Inscription”

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Zhang Zai’s (1020-1077) “Western Inscription” plays an important role in the philosophy of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism. It regards *Qian* and *Kun* as Father and Mother, and human beings should be filial to *Qian* (Heaven) and *Kun* (Earth) as their sons and daughters. It is with the notion of being filial to Heaven and Earth that the “Western Inscription” expresses the meaning of the metaphysical aspect of filial piety. Moreover, “One Principle and Many manifestations” is a related concept embodied in “Western Inscription”. Containing metaphysical and ethical meanings and implications, it had aroused discussions among Neo-Confucian scholars and even New Confucian scholars today. This paper tries to explore the meanings of “One Principle, Many manifestations” and the metaphysical aspect of filial piety through an explanation of the “Western Inscription”, and reveal the special status of filial piety in Chinese philosophy.