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COMMENT AND DISCUSSION

The Uses of Neo-Confucianism: A Response to Professor Tillman

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In his article for *Philosophy East and West* titled "A New Direction in Confucian Scholarship: Approaches to Examining the Differences between Neo-Confucianism and *Tao-hsüeh*" (volume 42, number 3), Hoyt Tillman endeavors to clarify the use of these terms in hopes of shedding new light on the historical development of Confucianism.

I am not sure that I follow his argument entirely, but the main points, briefly stated, seem to be these: (1) that a certain view of Neo-Confucianism, propagated at Columbia by myself and Professor Wing-tsit Chan, has tended to dominate the field; (2) that our use of the term Neo-Confucianism has nevertheless been inconsistent, vague, confusing, and particularly prejudicial to a good understanding of *tao-hsüeh*; and (3) that we would do better without it, just using "Confucianism" instead, and paying closer attention to *tao-hsüeh*.

If I have reservations about how Professor Tillman adumbrates his case, it is not because I disagree with his basic purpose or fail to appreciate his industry and enterprise in exploring the varied riches of *tao-hsüeh*, but because it seems important that we not let a useful exercise in the definition of terms lead us to affirm certain historical realities at the expense of others, or needlessly, by such scholarly legislation and delimitation, foreclose the fuller exploration of Confucian thought in both its inner depths and larger historical significance. By all means let us be as systematic and rigorous as possible in our employment of terms, but without assuming that some peoples' different—sometimes even looser—use of certain rubrics has become a threat to all intelligible discourse or an obstacle to further research.

Professor Tillman (p. 455) cites the contrasting applications of the Neo-Confucian label to Chin dynasty thought by Professor Wing-tsit Chan and Jan Yun-hua as a "blatant" case of inconsistency. Even though Professor Chan might well be thought to have a greater claim to speak with authority in matters Neo-Confucian—a claim I'm sure Professor Jan would readily acknowledge—and one might therefore be cautious about equating them or accepting the seeming contradiction at par value, this would of course be quite invidious as a basis for resolving the issue. No amount of superior expertise confers infallibility. Nor need one have recourse to claims of higher authority in this case. The simple fact is, as Professor Tillman himself goes on to concede, that our scholars are looking at two different phases in the diffusion of Neo-Confucianism, two distinguishable aspects of a long-term historical process. Recognizing these differences by no means obliges us to admit a fundamental flaw in

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our thinking of this movement as a distinct Neo-Confucian stage in the development of Confucianism. Rather it enhances our understanding of how this new articulation of Confucianism came about and how the very conservative resistance to its remodeling in some quarters only confirms our characterization of the renovation as "Neo-Confucian."

Professor Tillman feels that to call these new developments "Neo-Confucian" necessarily implies "a radical break with Confucian tradition." I question whether most scholars or readers understand the term in this way. On the contrary "Neo-Confucianism" combines both continuity and discontinuity, and in this respect faithfully reflects a new phase in the Sung period which witnessed both a powerful reassertion of Confucian tradition and a new interpretation of its meaning in contemporary terms.

Although Professor Tillman generously ascribes to me some special role in defining Neo-Confucianism, I myself make no such proprietary claim. The term was in common use among scholars well before my time, and I have for the most part only followed, or followed up on, the received usage. This is not to say that the continued employment of any such label is justified if, in the light of new knowledge, there proves to be something inherently defective in the concept, as Professor Tillman suggests may be true of "Neo-Confucianism." Yet I am unpersuaded that such is the case.

By the late 1940s, when I began my work, the term "Neo-Confucianism"—of European provenance to be sure—had already gained such currency that most Western writers dealing with Sung and Ming thought availed themselves of it. One does not, except for compelling reasons, clearly stated, idiosyncratically depart from established usage at the expense of effective communication with the wider scholarly community or informed readership. I could not offer then, nor do I see now, a better alternative to "Neo-Confucianism"—one that would be more apt, more concise or precise, or more readily understandable in English—for representing what my predecessors had tried to convey in terms of both tradition and innovation in the later, post-Buddhist development of Confucian thought.

Obviously the new efflorescence of Confucianism in the Sung is only one phase in its larger history, and the new teaching remains subsumable under the original rubric whenever one is focusing on the longer duration or perennial core values of the tradition. But, just as undeniably, significant new features do appear in the Sung, and these persist to varying degrees in later periods down into the nineteenth century. Moreover, participants in this movement—under whatever label—saw it as having a new meaning and special dynamism, going beyond the routine reaffirmation of traditional values to the regeneration of the whole society and culture. They expressed this by adopting a variety of new terms which I have discussed in my introduction to *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*,[1] in *The Message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism*,[2] and in *Learning for Oneself*.[3] None of these new terms is without its own meaning as an aspect of the larger development, but none by itself conveys the full significance of the Neo-Confucian movement as it continued to grow. Such common terms as the Learning of Principle (*li-hsüeh*) and Learning of the Mind and Heart (*hsin-hsüeh*) only came into wide use after Chu Hsi's time, each expressing a heightened perception of what was most central to the new teaching, but none by itself comprehending all aspects.

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For our purposes today it is essential that, whatever general rubrics we adopt, they be accompanied by an accounting for the appellations by which Confucians identified themselves in those times or expressed what they held to be core values. We cannot, however, expect that their professions alone will suffice to represent or fully embrace the larger features of the movement as it has come to be seen in the longer term and wider perspectives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Certainly *tao-hsüeh*, for all the increased attention given to it by Professor Tillman in its own historical context, does not suffice for this purpose, and rather than make such an outright claim Tillman settles for "Confucianism" as an all-around rubric.

I, for one, have been well disposed toward such usage—but alongside of, rather than at the expense of, "Neo-Confucianism." Some Sung thinkers contributed more than others to the new movements which later became identified with *tao-hsüeh*, *li-hsüeh* or *hsin-hsüeh*. To refer to any of them as Sung Confucians is certainly not wrong, but neither is it to speak of some more particularly as Neo-Confucians, to underscore their special role in shaping a tradition that far outlasted the Sung. The use of "Confucianism," however, is subject to limitations of its own which must be reckoned with. For one thing, "Confucianism" is no less foreign a term than "Neo-Confucianism." While those we speak of as "Confucians" did indeed consider themselves followers of Confucius, ordinarily they did not attach his personal name to his teaching (most often they referred to him as "the Sage," just as the followers of Jesus' teaching have most often referred to it not by his personal name but by the title "Christ"). Yet, granting the Western provenance of both expressions, this alone should not be grounds for disqualifying either "Confucianism" or "Neo-Confucianism." Regularly, as historians we use non-Chinese terms like "Traditional China," "Early Modern,"or "Late Imperial China" to good pedagogic effect, for the sake of denoting long-term historical developments of which the Chinese themselves, being accustomed to periodize things in dynastic terms, had not usually conceived. We do not disallow "Late Imperial" as inherently alien or Eurocentric, nor do we see it as an obstacle to continued, concurrent use of the traditional Chinese dynastic titles in such things as "Ming studies" or "Ch'ing studies." Of course the use of such terms may be open to question if their scope and meaning is not made clear in relation to Chinese or other East Asian developments. Even though not everything Chinese was "Imperial," dynastic rule and institutions were a reality in China, and not just a Western misconception. If used for Japan, however, it would have to have a quite different meaning. Likewise with Neo-Confucianism, which runs parallel in time with "Early Modern" and "Late Imperial," expressing continuities in thought and culture of longer duration than dynastic rule. Nor should the use of "Neo-Confucian" for the later expansion of Confucian thought stand in the way of the fullest possible concurrent exploration of such contributory movements as are variously labeled "Sung Learning," "*wen-hsüeh*," "*tao-hsüeh*," and so forth. Could one say that the use of "Late Imperial" has seriously inhibited Ming or Ching studies or "masked" the historical realities of those periods? On the contrary, these newer expressions, like Neo-Confucianism itself, draw attention to significant continuities, discontinuities, and developments in Chinese history that belie the old misconception of the traditional order as simply repetitive, static, or stagnant.

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If, on the other hand, to speak of such things in their larger dimensions seems to open the door to excessive generality or vagueness, one can hardly maintain that there is more "inherent vagueness" (to use Tillman's expression) in Neo-Confucianism than in "Confucianism" itself. Depending on one's point of view, one can find as much, if not more, abuse, misuse, and misappropriation of the latter than of the former. Like Tillman I would not want to encourage any more of either, but the freedom or license some people take with these terms does not alarm me greatly, nor do I find the dangers of confusion so threatening that we must by all means legislate a "final solution" to the problem of cultural miscegenation. Neo-Confucianism is a term that has been used to cover a broad range of developments that helped to shape a later tradition: it is not so serviceable for close work in the intellectual history of the Sung itself, before that tradition had taken more defined form. Let us then do all we can to delve into the intellectual diversities and social particularities of Sung, Chin, Yüan, and Ming thought. Let us trace the continuities as well as note the discontinuities in the use of such Chinese terms as the Sage Learning (*sheng-hsüeh*), the Correct Learning (*cheng-hsüeh*), the Learning or School of the Way (*tao-hsüeh*), *wen*, and *wen-hsüeh*, the Learning of Principle (*li-hsüeh*), the Learning of the Mind and Heart (*hsin-hsüeh*), and so forth as different manifestations of a complex process that we shall never fully exhaust or entirely pin down. Indeed we should "let a hundred flowers bloom." Whether the variegated colors of Sung or Neo-Confucian thought are seen to highlight and set each other off or sometimes to blend into one another, we can appreciate how, standing

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together, they enhance the appearance of the garden as a whole. In this light, recognition of that larger whole need not lead inevitably to a blurring of the parts or "masking" of the facts.

(Parenthetically it may be pertinent here to comment on Professor Tillman's reference to Dr. Ronguey Chu's use of "Neo-Confucian" as showing some "slippage" in the preconceived, and allegedly fixed, definition of the term [p. 467]. Leaving aside for now the question of whether there is any more of a substantive issue here than in the case of Professors Chan and Jan above, it seems not only irrelevant but invidious to speak of Dr. Chu's "dissertation as written under Professor de Bary's direction," with the implication that he and I could be expected to bespeak a single consistent point of view. Granted that today Ph.D. candidacy is often carelessly described as a kind of indentured discipleship, dutifully replicating and recycling the work of one's mentor, more properly the dissertation should be viewed as evidence of a capability for independent scholarly work. The last thing I would look for in a Ph.D. candidate is conformity to my own views and usage—though I would hope that he [now more often "she"] would take into account my own work, as well as that of others in the field, as they formulate their own positions, come to their own conclusions, and prove able to defend them against alternative interpretations.)

As to whether there is, or should be, an established definition of Neo-Confucianism, I note with amazement Professor Tillman's assertion that Columbia's University Seminar on Neo-Confucianism, which Professor Chan and I founded and once led, presumed to speak ex cathedra in such matters. I cannot believe that anyone "closely affiliated with de Bary's University Seminar" as Tillman puts it, could actually have asserted "that Neo-Confucianism is their own term" (p. 457). What could this possibly mean? It must have been said in jest, not to be taken literally. Professor Tillman is closer to the mark when he cites Conrad Schirokauer, a member of the Seminar, as pointing to use of the term "by twentieth century scholars before Professors Chan and de Bary." Indeed its provenance must go back to nineteenth century Europe, since Japanese writers familiar with the writings of European Orientalists, had already adopted the term as early as 1904.[4]

Nevertheless Tillman credits us with "popularizing the term" and thereby somehow appropriating it. Even now, however, Neo-Confucianism is hardly a household word, and at that time, if anyone had seemed to give it definitive content, it would have been Fung Yu-lan and Derk Bodde, whose widely used *History of Chinese Philosophy* focused mainly on the Ch'eng-Chu philosophical synthesis, with somewhat lesser prominence given to the so-called Lu-Wang school. In his Chinese text, Fung had referred to the overall movement as "*Tao-hsüeh*" and Derk Bodde, translating this into English, had reason to equate Fung's broad use of this word with the expression "Neo-Confucianism" prevalent in the West.

I cannot speak for Professor Chan in this matter, since however closely we worked on this and other projects, we often agreed to disagree. Still, most participants in the Seminar would have had frequent occasion to note our different approaches, and it would be surprising if any of them asserted that the Seminar held to a single fixed position or a company line in these matters.

Speaking for myself, well before I met Professor Chan my own views of what Western scholars called "Neo-Confucianism" had been much informed and shaped by my studies of Huang Tsung-hsi and by my reading of such modern scholars as Ch'ien Mu and T'ang Chun-i. Huang, looking back from the late seventeenth century, held two equally strong convictions about his Sung-Ming inheritance in Confucian thought. One was that, despite his thorough disgust with Ming autocracy and its baneful consequences, the single thing most worth preserving in the aftermath of the Ming debacle was the legacy of Sung-Ming Confucian thought which he spoke of as *li-hsüeh* (the "Learning of Principle"). His first major effort in this direction was the *Case Studies of Ming Confucians* (*Ming-ju hsüeh-an*). By its title it can be seen that he associated this legacy with Confucian scholarship (*ju-hsüeh*) in its Ming incarnation, yet in his preface, by referring to the thought itself as *li-hsüeh*, he clearly identified it as a later outgrowth of Sung thought. For him *li-hsüeh* (the "Learning of Principle") and *hsin-hsüeh* (the "Learning of the Mind and Heart") were complementary, not opposing, values in Sung-Ming thought, equally important in what he saw as the prime achievement of the new teaching: its creative response to the philosophical challenge of Buddhism and Taoism. Thus it was no less Confucian for having made a unique contribution to the further development of this teaching, yet it was also a new, hence neo-classical, formulation for which he expressly used the relatively recent term of *li-hsüeh* (unknown in classical Confucianism).

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Huang was an admirer of both Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming, as well as of many other scholars who contributed to this distinctive refinement and elaboration of Sung-Ming thought. Thus *li-hsüeh* for him embraced this whole large company; it was not to be identified with any one school. In the same vein, *li-hsüeh* has subsequently come to be widely used in modern China as an overall designation for that distinctive later phase of Confucian thought spoken of in the West as "Neo-Confucianism."

Equally important for Huang was that one not acquiesce in the exclusive claim to orthodoxy made by certain Ch'eng-Chu scholars who professed to speak for, *tao-hsüeh* (the "School or Learning of the Way"). Huang saw the School of the Way as narrow, bigoted, and doctrinaire, self-absorbed and out of touch with the practical realities of Chinese life. This was not because he lacked any sense of orthodoxy himself; rather he firmly believed in the need to defend the distinctive values and doctrines of Confucianism, and had no use for mushy syncretisms that left one without a solid ground on which to take a stand in resisting social evils and political despotism. But he was certainly unwilling to yield that firm, central ground to the *tao-hsüeh* School of the Way, whose theoretical approach to basic principles tended (in his mind) toward the arid and the abstruse, and whose moral and spiritual praxis (especially quiet-sitting) was often so airy or so self-enclosed as to be of no practical use. Thus, in the matter of canonizing Confucian worthies, Huang did not take the iconoclastic position that enshrinement should be totally abandoned, but he did ask that the broadest understanding of Confucianism and *li-hsüeh* be adopted as the standard—one that saw as paragons of the teaching not only doctrinally pure metaphysicians but also exemplars of moral integrity in action and practicing statesmen.[5]

Huang's treatment of these matters made me aware that distinctions had to be made among *ju-hsüeh* (Confucianism), *li-hsüeh* (learning of principle), and *tao-hsüeh*, as variously understood in their several forms. Each had its own pertinence to the discussion of later Confucian thought. Still, as regards the prevailing Western understanding of Neo-Confucianism, it accorded much better with Huang's conception of *li-hsüeh* than with any narrower definition of *tao-hsüeh*. From this standpoint I can quite understand why Professor Tillman would take exception to any simple equation of Neo-Confucianism with the Ch'eng-Chu school, or of Ch'eng-Chu with *tao-hsüeh*, and feel it important to clarify further the nature and full extent of *tao-hsüeh* thought and fellowship, as he has nicely proceeded to do. Yet, it should be noted that several younger members of the Neo-Confucian Seminar have also been engaged in this process[6]—showing that nothing in the Seminar's purposes or self-definition discouraged this.

For all this, when we began our Seminar in 1964, "Neo-Confucianism" still accorded well to my mind with the range of Sung-Ming thought that Huang described as *li-hsüeh* (the Learning of Principle), while it also fit with what Derk Bodde had translated as Neo-Confucianism in Sung, Ming, and Ch'ing thought. Whether or not Fung's original use of *tao-hsüeh* had been altogether felicitous, Bodde, in my view, improved on it in his translation, and Fung apparently accepted Bodde's friendly amendment. Indeed some years later he went along with E. R. Hughes' similar use of "Neo-Confucianism" in translating Fung's *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, which applied "Neo-Confucianism" to the same combination of *li-hsüeh* and *hsin-hsüeh* for which Bodde had used it.[7] In the case of Huang Tsung-hsi, however, we should note that his view of Sung-Ming *li-hsüeh* included practical statecraft and was definitely not limited to metaphysics.

Subsequently I had occasion to discuss my assessment of this problem with Professors T'ang Chun-i, Ch'ien Mu, and Fung Yu-lan himself, none of whom had difficulties with the general approach outlined above. T'ang Chun-i, when translating some of his own writings into English, had used "Neo-Confucianism" to cover the same Sung-Ming combination of *li-hsüeh* and *hsin-hsüeh* as Huang Tsung-hsi.[8] Ch'ien Mu did not, to my knowledge, ever try to express himself in such Western terms, but he, too, stressed the need for an integrated approach to Sung-Ming thought and for recognizing both the broad range of thought and long-term continuities of Neo-Confucianism as prerequisite to the understanding of later Chinese thought. Likewise with Fung Yu-lan, when I last talked with him in 1985, though he still held to *tao-hsüeh* (of which he took a strongly hegemonic view) as the best general rubric in Chinese for what we called Neo-Confucianism. Obviously these three scholars had less of a stake than I in the use of this Western term, but their receptivity to my opinions encouraged me to think that these views were not out of line with their own or to be considered suspect as alien impositions on the Chinese tradition.

Even so, allowing for the utility of "Neo-Confucian" to cover both the new trends and broad range of thought emerging from the Sung and carrying down into the nineteenth century, this term alone was not serviceable in handling the claims or pretensions to orthodoxy found within the larger movement. Though influential modern writers in the West had spoken of Neo-Confucianism simplistically as an ideological orthodoxy, they were for the most persons who had never examined Neo-Confucian thought firsthand, and for them, even some who wrote in a rather scholarly vein, the term "orthodoxy" hardly represented more than a cliché of modern liberal or liberationist ideologies. Nevertheless, as my earlier discussion of Huang Tsung-hsi intimates, the question of orthodoxy was indeed an endemic issue within Neo-Confucianism itself. It could neither be ignored, nor could it, on a closer reading, be easily resolved. From Huang's discussion one could see that there were tensions here as between official and unofficial views. The canonization process he criticized was an official one, though some canonizations might also take place in local shrines and academies with minimal official sanction. Yet not only were there different conceptions of orthodoxy as between private scholars and the state, or between the scholarly consensus and official enactments, but even the official stance underwent change from time to time, when what had been formally defined in one official codification might be modified or retracted in a later one. Even such a key conception of orthodoxy as the *tao-t'ung* ("succession to the Way" or, more loosely, "orthodox tradition") could drop out of official notice because it had become too contested a matter, and the state, were it to take official cognizance of this and choose one side or the other, would have had to abandon its pose of grand and lofty impartiality.[9]

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Orthodoxy was thus a much stickier and uncertain business than most people realized, and, as with *tao-hsüeh,* subject to considerable variation. There is probably no one terminological solution, but in an attempt to sort things out I have come to distinguish between official and nonofficial orthodoxies, the former relating to organs of state and the latter to a consensus among scholars institutionalized in some form (in academies or local shrines, by charters, manifestos, sacrificial rites, canonization, and so forth). On this basis we may speak of one or another form of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy (with a strong reminder that it is usually a collective noun, plural and not singular), but at the same time we should allow for views professedly orthodox (and far from heterodox) that may not be institutionally embodied or enforced and yet have some basis in tradition. For these I have used the expression "orthodox Neo-Confucian. . ." as distinct from "Neo-Confucian orthodoxy," but in the absence of any official certification or codification to document it, for this to be meaningful or persuasive one must be prepared to cite a consensus among leading scholars and influential teachers, should actual evidence be called for.

Although it is my feeling that the making of such distinctions is forced on one by the complexities of the factual record, Professor Tillman seems to find these delineations either too "subtle," on the one hand, or too "vague" and "general," on the other, as if they tended only toward opposing extremes and no mean position were allowed for. Very well, let him or others come up with something better. I only assume that we are engaged in a continuing iterative and reiterative process, and at this point, the surface of Confucian (let alone Chinese) thought having still only been scratched, there is plenty of room for modification and amendment. Almost always, however, we must first attend to and deal with motions already on the floor; rarely do we come upon a perfectly clean slate—unless, of course, we insist on wiping it clean and rewriting the whole text ourselves.

Of the contrasting impressions Tillman gives of the University Seminar at Columbia—one of appropriating Neo-Confucianism to ourselves and rigidly circumscribing it, and the other of sliding into great vagueness and inconsistency in practice—the latter would be the more plausible insofar as the work of the Seminar, the guests invited, and the conference and publication projects it has promoted over almost a quarter century, have been of the broadest possible scope. From the start we have tried to deal with Neo-Confucianism on several levels of thought and institutions. Increasingly we have emphasized ideas and attitudes in institutionalized forms: schools, academies, curricula, sacrificial and commemorative rites, various types of *chiang-hsüeh* ("learning through discussion"), publication and popular dissemination in several genres, lectures and discussions at court, specific forms of contemplative praxis

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and moral discipline, and, especially, those institutions identified with the Neo-Confucian program of social action that Chu Hsi had endorsed: community compact organizations, community granaries, local schools and academies, and so forth.

This breadth of approach need not mean that the inquiry has lacked focus or become too loose and undefined. Most of these ideas and institutions had clear Neo-Confucian formulations, usually given to them by Chu Hsi. They invoked ancient models and classical ideals, but were articulated in Sung terms, sometimes in language redolent of the post-classical Chinese experience with Buddhism and Taoism but given new and specifically Neo-Confucian application.

This was particularly true of those concepts that drew inspiration and scriptural authority from the new Neo-Confucian textual canon, which included the Confucian classics but with new Sung commentaries. The most influential texts in shaping the new Neo-Confucian scholarship were not so much the original Chou texts as the writings of the Sung masters anthologized in Chu Hsi's *Reflections on Things at Hand* (*Chin-ssu lu*) or included in the Ming *Compendium on Human Nature and Principle* (*Hsing-li ta-ch'üan*), as well as the *Four Books*, drawn from the original classics but edited, commented on, and provided in two cases with challenging prefaces by Chu Hsi; the *Elementary Learning* (*Hsiao-hsüeh*), arranged and edited by Chu; Wang Yang-lin's *Three Character Classic* (*San tzu ching*); and so on among a whole set of graded textbooks that became the basis of the new educational curriculum of late Imperial China.[10]

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In this perspective, the fact that Chen Te-hsiu, by compiling one of the most authoritative early editions of Chu Hsi's commentaries on the *Four Books* and emphasizing them in his teaching, contributed importantly to the process of establishing these as basic texts in the new curriculum for schools and examinations—an accomplishment that would endure for centuries and spread throughout East Asia—is a fact of far greater long-term significance than the mere circumstance that Chen had personal associations with a few remaining followers of Lu Hsiang-shan and, like other Ch'eng-Chu schoolmen of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, tried to minimize the differences between Chu and Lu.[11]

To speak of this new curriculum or canon simply as "Confucian" (though in a generic sense it was that) would be not only to ignore the epoch-making personal contribution to the new canon of Chu Hsi, his Sung predecessors, colleagues, and followers, but also to obscure the historical circumstances, social exigencies, and cultural needs that called forth this new process of canon formation. It was not just an ancient canon barely resuscitated but a neo-classical one freshly constructed, as energizing for its own age as the neo-classical revivals in the European Renaissance and Enlightenment would be in their own time for the West.

Thus while it is not incorrect to call this canon a "Confucian" one in the broadest sense, it is more precise and true to historical life to call it Neo-Confucian. This revamped canon, to get established in the late Sung and Yüan periods, had to contend with and win out over the previous canonical version, a product of the Han, T'ang, and early Sung (indeed what could properly be called the "Sung Confucian" canon). Had the later version not proved more meaningful to new generations and exerted more intrinsic appeal, conservative defenders of the scriptural status quo, with the great inertia of customary thinking, established practice, and entrenched institutions on their side, would have had little difficulty in simply stonewalling and turning back the new movement's redesigned curriculum. With its convenient packaging (abbreviated texts and pithy, pointed commentary), however, and packing a more challenging and accessible message, the Neo-Confucian canon won out over the "Sung Confucian" one. And so complete indeed was the victory in the Yüan (under the Mongols no less), that the succeeding Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, for over five hundred years, never thought twice about whether to renew the curricular contract.

Still more important even than the new packaging and processing—the scriptural canon, the innovative literary genres, the more systematic reading method, the carefully sequenced curriculum, and so forth—were the new philosophical terminology and the new language of scholarly discourse, offering better models of self-cultivation for the latest version of the Chinese educated elite. We know that these new terms and issues were crucial in the debate that the champions of the new learning engaged in with rulers, literary antagonists, Buddhist rivals, and other Confucians—debates wherein the key issues were increasingly couched in the language special to the Neo-Confucian discourse—terms often quite unprecedented in traditional Confucianism and others drawn from the classics but given an altered or heightened significance by Sung thinkers.

Professor Tillman's discussion is largely centered on the twelfth century, and on China, but Neo-Confucianism had major ramifications in later centuries and among other peoples. Though *tao-hsüeh* itself made claims to certain ultimate values and theoretical generality, and some of its concepts served as impressive weapons in the Neo-Confucian arsenal, the whole ensemble of the Neo-Confucian program and new learning had far wider appeal than did *tao-hsüeh* alone to non-Chinese peoples—first Mongols and Central Asians in the Yüan period, and then the Koreans, Japanese, and Vietnamese. So catalytic an effect did the new movement have, even in these different cultures, that one is entitled to speak of a Neo-Confucian stage in the development of East Asia as a whole, whereas *tao-hsüeh* itself received less of a welcome and left less of a mark on things. Important rulers, like Khubilai Khan, Ming T'ai-tsu, and Tokugawa Ieyasu, decisive actors at major historical turning points, were influenced by the wider movement while being resistant to, or quite skeptical of, its specifically *tao-hsüeh* elements. The same was true of many later scholars responding to the new trend who were no doubt influenced in some ways by *tao-hsüeh* thinking but often were quite pointed in disavowing any identification with, or membership in, what Tillman refers to as the *tao-hsüeh* fellowship. Kaibara Ekken, Itō Jinsai, and the leaders of the Shingaku movement are typical examples among many such in Tokugawa period Japan.

It is of course true that these non-Chinese extensions of the Neo-Confucian movement could also be referred to separately as "Korean Confucianism," "Yi or Choson dynasty Confucianism," "Tokugawa Confucianism," and so forth insofar as the new stimulus to learning and scholarship brought forth, in turn, other outgrowths that sometimes identified themselves more with earlier forms of Confucianism than with Neo-Confucianism (a disavowal that only underscores their perception of the Neo-Confucian teaching as a noticeable, but unacceptable, departure from traditional Confucianism), or else were developments that proved to have a particularly Korean or Japanese cast to them. We should of course be free to note such temporal and local variations, as well as to make such distinctions as are appropriate to them, but without letting these particularities obscure the larger fact of these later developments' emergence from a Neo-Confucian matrix, not from a preexisting local Confucianism. The new educational curriculum under Khubilai in the late thirteenth century; the subsequent fourteenth-century reestablishment of the Chinese civil service examinations in a Neo-Confucian form; the transference of these to fourteenth-century Korea and the subsequent revamping of the Korean state and many social institutions; the major intellectual turn in seventeenth-century Japan away from a medieval religiosity to a new secular scholarship in the early Tokugawa period—none of these momentous changes arose autonomously from the evolution of preexisting schools of classical Confucianism in those countries, and all of them were powerfully affected by the spreading contagion and well-documented propagation of Neo-Confucianism in successive waves throughout East Asia. (I am less in a position to speak with assurance about Vietnam, but my strong secondhand impression is that Neo-Confucianism had a similar impact there in the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries.)

To be sure, one might also observe that in these same situations the new movement could tap a reservoir of traditional Confucian scholarship, and assume a familiarity of educated peoples with certain basic Confucian concepts and values. The same is true for their earlier exposure to Buddhist, and to some extent Taoist, concepts and practices that had become naturalized in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam—these, too, help to explain the readiness to accept a new teaching that was post-Buddhist, and enriched by the experience of Buddhism or by Taoist influences, at the same time that it reasserted basic Confucian values. Especially was this true of the preparedness of the educated to accept a new, higher and more sophisticated level of philosophical discourse.[12]

One important clue to the specifically Neo-Confucian character of this spreading intellectual, moral, and spiritual movement follows from what I have said before about how it employed a special Neo-Confucian technical vocabulary to define crucial issues and express key concepts. This was marked in China by Ch'en Ch'un's compiling of a Neo-Confucian lexicon in his *Pei-hsi tzu-i* ("Neo-Confucian Terms Explained," as rendered in Wing-tsit Chan's translation).[13] This text traveled to Korea and Japan and inspired a succession of similar philosophical lexicons, as new generations of scholars tried to assimilate the new terminology, sort out the different uses of them by earlier contributors to the Neo-Confucian discourse, and in turn try to define their own position in respect to key concept.[14]

To focus on the late Sung and Chin contexts of *tao-hsüeh* is one way—obviously congenial to the specialist in those periods—but only one way of contextualizing things. To point to the larger outreach of Sung learning in its Neo-Confucian form—its long *dureé* and wider East Asian ramifications in different historical circumstances—is another. Hence, to assume that contextualization only applies to the microscopic view, while it rules out the larger historical context or macroscopic view, is needlessly to lapse into a self-imposed limitation on one's own historical and philosophical horizons.

I have tried in the foregoing to address what seem to me the main issues in Professor Tillman's article. There are lesser ones that might call for comment, but I have not sought to take up every outstanding issue or to inventory all the points that might merit attention. There is, however, one final general plea that I would like to make. It is that we not allow our taste for precision to become, inadvertently, an impediment to the comprehension of these matters by those unfamiliar with the original Chinese terms. More specifically I mean: not to let too ready a resort to the original Chinese terms in romanization become the solution to all our problems of definition and interpretation, as if purity, clarity, and exactitude could only be preserved by discussing Chinese questions in exclusively Chinese terms or in a highly specialized version of Pidgin English.

In our Neo-Confucian Seminar, Professor Chan, as one might expect, was a bulldog about translation. (Here I believe I *can* speak for him, but now unfortunately in the past tense since he is no longer able to participate.) Not that he expected others to follow his own renderings, but that he held firmly to two basic principles. One was the difference between interpretation and translation (translations should be as literal as possible but there is room for freer renderings or interpretations as long as one acknowledges them to be extensions of the basic meaning). The other principle was that romanization not be thought a substitute for translation. As one who had devoted a major portion of his scholarly efforts to translation, he felt that scholars in the West had an obligation to translate Chinese as best they could into English (and this indeed was a test of how well one understood the Chinese!)—an obligation evaded by too frequent a resort to romanization.

Here I have referred to *tao-hsüeh* in romanized form as the most appropriate way of responding to Professor Tillman's use of it in his article for *Philosophy East and West,* whereas normally I would translate it as Learning or School of the Way. For readers of *PEW,* more likely to be familiar with Chinese terms, this use of romanization imposes no undue burden. But insofar as many of our publications are intended for a wider, nonspecialized audience, and also attempt to present matters in a broader East Asian context (involving several different original languages), it becomes all the more important, in writing for Western readers, that we not abandon more familiar terms like "Confucianism" and "Neo-Confucianism" for romanized Chinese ones that may appeal to the preciousness of the purist but leave the reader without much help in gaining access to a strange subject.

This is one point on which Professor Chan and I *did* pretty much agree. As for Professor Tillman I shall be happy if he and I can agree on one underlying principle which, at the risk of sounding heterodox, I draw from Hua-yen Buddhism. On this level at least (if on no other) we might agree to "Let no one thing [in reality] stand in the way of another" (*shih shih wu ai*). Let neither Neo-Confucian nor *tao-hsüeh* studies get in each other's way. Let them stand and thrive together.

事事無礙

Notes

1 – *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea,* ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Ja-Hyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

2 – Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

3 – Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for Oneself* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

4 – See Okakura Kakuzō, *The Awakening of Japan* (New York, 1904), pp. 65–74.

5 – See my *Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 192.

6 – Ari Borrell, Ellen Neskar, John Reese, and Ronguey Chu among them.

7 – Fung Yu-lan, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. E. R. Hughes (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner, 1947).

8 – E.g., in his "Ideas of Spiritual Value in Neo-Confucianism," in *The Chinese Mind*, ed. Charles Moore (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967).

9 – See my *Message of the Mind*, pp. 175–179.

10 – See my "Chu Hsi as an Educator," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee, *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 186–218.

11 – This latter fact is said to have been obscured by the alleged overemphasis on Chen as an orthodox follower of Chu Hsi (Tillman, p. 466), but actually it is a fact long known, and pointed out earlier by myself in *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind and Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

12 – See, as one example, Michael Kalton's discussion of the matter in "The Writings of Kwon Kun: The Context and Shape of Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism," in de Bary and Haboush, *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, pp. 89–124, esp. pp. 93–98, "The Buddhist Ambience."

13 – Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucian Terms Explained: The Pei-hsi tzu-i by Ch'en Ch'un* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

14 – Discussed in extensive detail by John Allen Tucker in *Pei-hsi's Tzu-i and the Rise of Tokugawa Philosophical Lexicography* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1990).