

《禮運大同篇》

(出自《禮記》禮運篇，孔子述大同)

馮欣明譯，2008年四月

Confucius: “The Great Together (*Li Yun Da Tong*)”
From the Chapter “The Operation of Etiquette” in *Li Ji*

- Translated by Feng Xin-ming, April 2008, revised September 2008 -
http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Etiquette_Great_Together_Comp.pdf

翻譯者言

這段話非常著名，幾乎凡受過傳統教育的華人都知曉，是在經典《禮記》裡的禮運篇中，孔子描寫實行大道的完美社會。說完這段話後孔子又說，當今大道不能實行，所以不能大同，但可以實行禮，以達到雖不完美但仍然不錯的社會。

近來在網上看到的白話譯文，總覺得都有些脫離了原文意義，所以在這裡謹發表本人的譯文，希望對孔子的研究提供另一方見解。錯漏之處，祈獲讀者指教。

這裡把“大同”用英語譯為“The Great Together”。雖然“together”是個副詞而我這樣就把它當為名詞，但是英語沒有其他字眼更為合適。“Union”，“communion”，“association”，“oneness”，“solidarity”，“coming together”，“come together”等字，都不能完全表達意思。既然在漢語裡，“大同”的“同”字沒有在其他詞語中有同樣的用法，那麼我覺得在英語裡“The Great Together”的“together”也同樣可以有它自己的獨一無二的用法。所以這裡我就把“The Great Together”變為英語的一個專有名詞了。歡迎讀者賜贈更好的翻譯辦法，請寄電郵 contact@tsoidug.org。

Translator's Note

This is a very famous piece that almost every traditionally educated Chinese knows, and is a quote from the chapter “The Operation of *Li* (etiquette or propriety)” in the classic “*Li Ji*” (“*Book of Etiquette*” or “*Book of Propriety*”). Here Confucius describes an ideal society where the “Great Way” operates. After he finishes his description he also says that the “Great Way” cannot be practiced at this time but *Li* (etiquette or propriety) can be

practiced to give us a society that, though not ideal, is still not too bad.

Lately, the Chinese vernacular interpretations of this piece that I've seen on the web somehow all seem to depart somewhat from the original text's meaning. Therefore I have respectfully published my interpretation here, trying to provide a different viewpoint for the study of Confucius. I hope that the reader will point out any mistakes or omissions.

As for my translation of the Chinese term 大同 as “The Great Together”, while it is true that “together” is an adverb and I am using it as a noun here, that is because nothing else in English quite fits. “Union”, “communion”, “association”, “oneness”, “solidarity”, “coming together”, “come together”, and so forth don't really express the idea just right. Since the Chinese word 同 in 大同 is used in a sense not seen in any other context in Chinese, I feel justified in using “together” in a sense not seen in any other context in English as well. Thus, I am making the term “The Great Together” into a sort of a proper noun. If the reader has a better idea to translate 大同, I would definitely welcome the suggestion. Please email me at contact@tsoidug.org.

文章 Text

大道之行也，天下為公。

da` dao` zhi- xing' ye^, tian- xia` wei' gong-

白話文: 實行大道的時候，天下是為公眾的。

When the Great Way is practiced, the world is for the public.

選賢與能。

xuan^ xian' yu^ neng'

白話文: 有賢德和有才能的人被選用。

Those with virtue and those with ability are chosen and used.

講信修睦。

jiang^ xin` xiu- mu`

白話文: 人們講究信用，建立和睦。

People value trustworthiness and cultivate harmony with each other.

故人不獨親其親，不獨子其子。

gu` ren` bu` du` qin- qi` qin-, bu` du` zi^ qi` zi^

白話文：所以人們不只把自己的雙親好像雙親那般對待，不只把自己的兒子好像兒子那般對待。

Thus people do not treat only their parents like parents, nor do people treat only their sons like sons.

使老有所終，壯有所用，幼有所長。

shi^ lao^ you^ suo^ zhong-, zhuang` you^ suo^ yong`, you` you^ suo^ zhang`

白話文：使老人得到應有的歸終，壯年人得到應有的任用，幼年人得到應有的成長。

That makes the aged have the appropriate last years, those in their prime have the appropriate employment, and the young have the appropriate growth and development.

鰥寡孤獨廢疾者，皆有所養。

guan- gua^ gu- du` can` fei` zhe^, jie` you^ suo^ yang^

白話文：老而無妻無子女者、寡婦、孤兒、老而無子孫者、殘廢者、患疾病者，都得到照顧。

Elderly men with no spouses or children, widows, orphans, elderly people without children or grandchildren, the handicapped, the ill – all are provided for.

男有分，女有歸。

nan` you^ fen`, nv` you^ gui-

白話文：男的有本分，女的有歸宿。

Males have their station; females, their places to belong to.

貨惡其棄於地也，不必藏於己。

huo` wu` qi` qi` yu` di` ye^, bu` bi` cang` yu` ji^

白話文：貨幣被厭惡而被拋棄在地上¹，不需要把它收藏在身上。

¹ 這句裡的“其”字使翻譯有點困難。如果死板地按照表面字眼來翻譯，“貨惡其棄於地也”應該譯為“人們厭惡貨幣的被拋棄在地上”。但這樣不是使文章好像在說，大同的時候，人們認為對貨幣應該多緊張一點，不應該把它拋棄在地上，所以看到人家這樣做就厭惡嗎？相反，整篇文章明明是在說，大同的時候，人們並不緊張自己的利益，為人家著想多於為自己著

Money is despised and thrown on the ground¹; it is not necessary to store money on oneself.

力惡其不出於身也，不必為己。

lì wú qí bù chū yú shēn yě, bù bì wéi jǐ

白話文: 勞力被厭惡不是自己發出的，亦不必為自己而發出。

Labor is despised if it does not come from oneself, and it does not have to be on behalf of oneself.

是故謀閉而不興，盜竊亂賊而不作。

shì gù móu bì ér bù xìng-, dào qiè luàn zéi ér bù zuò,

白話文: 所以人們不搞陰謀，不做搶、偷、叛亂等事。

Therefore people don't engage in intrigue or trickery, nor do they engage in robbery, theft, and rebellion.

故外戶而不閉。

gù wài hù ér bù bì

白話文: 因此外出而不閉門。

Thus, though people leave their houses they don't close their doors.

想。所以我不能接受照字譯字所得出來的，是作者真正的原本意義。我認為，這個“其”字，其實意思同“而”字。所以我就把句子當為是“貨惡而棄於地也”來翻譯。

¹ The word “*qi* 其” has made this sentence a bit hard to translate. If we rigidly translate according to the apparent meaning of the words, then the sentence would translate as, “People despise the throwing of money on the ground.” Does this not, however, interpret the piece to be saying that under The Great Together, people think that one should be more concerned over money and not throw it on the ground, and that people despise it when they see someone doing that? On the contrary, the whole piece very clearly says that under The Great Together people are not very concerned over their own interests, and that they think of others more than they think of themselves. Therefore I cannot accept the meaning generated by translating word for word as truly representing the author's meaning. Instead, I think that the word “*qi* 其” here is the same as the word “*er* 而”, and so I translate the sentence as if it said “*huo wu er qi yu di ye* 貨惡而棄於地也”.

是謂大同。

shì wèi dà tóng'

白話文: 這便叫大同。

This is called "The Great Together".

筆後言

刊登譯文後不止一次收到讀者建議，把“大同”翻譯為“Great Harmony（大和諧、大和睦）”。這個翻譯方法，其實刊登文章之前，我們也曾經考慮過。奈何《禮運大同篇》作於春秋戰國，但是春秋戰國甚至秦漢時代的文章裡，據我所知都沒有把“同”字作為“和”、“和諧”或“和睦”等意義來使用。直到了距離孔子大約一千年的唐朝時代，才出現了這樣把“同”字使用的唯一一個例子，那就是唐朝陸德明對恰好是《禮運大同篇》的註解，到了最後一句“是為大同”時，所寫下的五個字：“猶和也，平也”。

陸德明這麼一下註解“大同”，令到大約一千年之後出版的《康熙字典》，也把“同”字的其中一個意義列為“和也”，而同時也引用他這五個字作為根據。

但是，陸德明這個對“大同”的解說，我個人並不同意。春秋戰國至秦漢時代都沒有採取過的“同”字用法，竟然到了唐朝才捧出來，說為是一千年之前古人的“同”字用法，讓人有一點難以信服。如果《禮運大同篇》的春秋戰國作者或作者們真的是“和諧”或“和睦”的意思，為甚麼他或他們不乾脆使用“和”這個字呢？為甚麼遺留給我們的，不是“大和”而是“大同”呢？

看來，1989年把《辭海》翻新的學者們，也不信服陸德明對“大同”的解說，他們把1936年版《辭海》抄襲《康熙字典》而載的同字“和也”意義，給以刪除了。

所以，無奈，我們不得不尷尬地把“大同”翻譯為英語用詞法中屬於

創新的 “Great Together”。

當然，這純屬我個人的淺見。如果任何人能夠舉出春秋、秦漢等年代文章把“同”字用為“和”、“和諧”或“和睦”等意義的例子，我們就會欣然地重新考慮把譯文改為“Great Harmony”。其他可以代替“Great Together”的英語詞句，只要有根據，能夠忠誠地反映原作者意義，我們也會考慮採用來代替“Great Together”。絕對希望能夠這樣做，使我們不再需要採用對英語創新的用詞方法。

謝謝，請個位讀者繼續指教，當洗耳恭聽！

馮欣明

Postscript

Since publication of this translation of Confucius' piece *Li Yun Da Tong*, on more than one occasion we've received the suggestion to translate "*Da Tong* 大同" as "Great Harmony". Indeed, before we published this piece we've already considered this translation. Unfortunately, however, *Li Yun Da Tong* has been written during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, yet during those periods, even up to the Qin and Han Dynasties, as far as I know there has been no piece of writing that uses "*tong* 同" to mean "harmony" ("*he* 和”、“和諧”或“和睦”). It hasn't been until the Tang Dynasty, about a thousand years after Confucius, that the only example of such a use of "*tong* 同" appears, and it is exactly the annotation of this very *Li Yun Da Tong* by Lu De-ming of the Tang Dynasty, that is, the five words he has written annotating *Li Yun Da Tong*'s last sentence "*shi wei da tong* 是為大同": as "*you he ye, ping ye* 猶和也，平也”。

That Lu De-ming has annotated "*da tong* 大同" in this manner has caused the *Kangxi Dictionary*, which has been published about one thousand years afterwards, to also list one of the meanings of "*tong* 同" as "*he* 和”, and lists those five words Lu De-ming has written as grounds.

I personally do not, however, agree with this explanation of "*Da Tong* 大同" by Lu De-ming. A usage of the word "*tong* 同" that hasn't been seen from the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods to the Qin and Han Dynasties, but is finally brought out during the Tang Dynasty and said to be the way that ancients from a thousand years prior have used that word - this is a bit hard to believe. If the Spring and Autumn or Warring

States period authors of *Li Yun Da Tong* really have meant "harmony" (*he xie* 和諧 or *he mu* 和睦), then why haven't they simply used the word "he 和"? Why is it that what is in our heritage is not "da he 大和" but "da tong 大同"?

Therefore, helpless, we have had to put up with the embarrassment of creating a new usage for an English word and translate "da tong 大同" as "The Great Together".

Of course, this is just my personal unlearned opinion. If anyone can point out an example of using "tong 同" to mean "harmony" (*he xie* 和諧 or *he mu* 和睦) in a piece of writing from the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods to the Qin and Han Dynasties, then we will gladly consider changing our translation to "Great Harmony". Any English term that can replace "Great Together", as long as it has grounds and faithfully reflects the original author's meaning, we will also consider using to replace "Great Together". We definitely wish that we could do so, as we then will no longer have to create a new usage for an English word.

Thank you, dear readers. Please continue to enlighten us; we will listen most respectfully and attentively.

Feng Xin-ming