Bridging Cultures: Kanbun Through English Translation

Pattern 1

One person, while learning to shoot a bow, carried multiple arrows and faced the target. The teacher said, "Beginners should not carry two arrows. Relying on the second arrow breeds carelessness with the first. Always focus entirely on this one shot, without thinking of success or failure, as if your entire effort rests on it."

Even if there are only two arrows, how could one show carelessness before the teacher? Though one may not consciously notice their own negligence, the teacher is fully aware of it. This admonition applies universally to all things. A person learning a path of mastery should think, in the evening, of preparing for the morning, and in the morning, of preparing for the evening, always striving with utmost sincerity.

Let alone being aware of carelessness in fleeting moments, how difficult it is to commit oneself fully to even a single thought in the present moment! How challenging it is to act with full dedication to this single-minded focus.

Pattern 2

Once, a novice in archery approached the target with multiple arrows in hand. The master advised,

"A beginner must never carry two arrows. Trusting in the second inevitably weakens one's resolve with the first. Each shot must be taken with complete commitment, as though it were your only chance, free of concern for success or failure."

Even with only two arrows, how could one dare to be careless in the master's presence? Though negligence may be imperceptible to oneself, it is all too apparent to the master. This principle holds true across all pursuits. Those seeking to master a discipline must end each day preparing for the next, and greet each morning with the awareness of evening's approach, striving with sincerity at every moment.

How much more elusive, then, is the awareness of even the slightest laxity in a single instant! How arduous it is to act with unwavering dedication to the present moment.

Pattern 3

A student learning archery once approached the target, carrying two arrows. The teacher advised,

"As a beginner, you should never hold two arrows. Counting on the second arrow will make you careless with the first. Always treat each shot as your one and only chance, free from the worry of hitting or missing."

Even with just two arrows, would anyone dare to slack off in front of their teacher? You might not realize your own negligence, but the teacher certainly will. This lesson applies to all aspects of life. Those seeking to learn must end each evening ready for the next morning and start each morning prepared for the evening, striving consistently and sincerely.

If we can’t even notice our own lapses in tiny moments, how can we fully dedicate ourselves to what we are doing right now? Truly, it’s no easy task to commit wholeheartedly to the present.

1. Describe the characteristics of three different English translations of classical Chinese texts. Write concisely.

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| Pattern 1 : |

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| Pattern 2 : |

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| Pattern 3 : |

2. Among the three English translations of the Kanbun text, which one do you think is the best? Write your answer along with your reasons.

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