朗讀比賽文章 綜高高二 1

Once upon a time in a faraway, isolated kingdom, there lived a king who ruled the land with an iron fist. This king was considered to be unfair and cruel, primarily because of his “unique” sense of justice. Each time a man was accused of a crime, the king would never rely on evidence to prove the man’s guilt or innocence. Rather, he believed that the gods decided the suspect’s fate and insisted that the suspect be put on public trial. The accused would be brought to the center of an amphitheater filled with people. Directly opposite the person on trial would be two closed doors, exactly alike and side by side. The accused person would then be forced to open one of the two doors.

As identical as the doors looked, what lay behind them was very different. Behind one door was a fierce, man-eating tiger, and behind the other was a beautiful young woman. In other words, one door would ultimately lead to death for the accused, while the other would lead to glory. The king believed that if someone was genuinely guilty, he would choose the door to the tiger and be eaten alive. If, on the other hand, he was truly innocent, fate would guide him toward the door hiding the beautiful woman. The king would then allow him to marry this woman. Spectators at these trials never knew in advance whether they would witness a terrifying death or a grand wedding.

The king had a daughter whom he cherished above all else in the world. What the royal father didn’t know, however, was that the princess had a secret lover. As handsome and honorable as this young man was, he came from a family of very low social status in the kingdom and was by no means a worthy match for the princess. One day, the princess and her secret lover were seen embracing passionately in the palace garden. When the king became aware of their romance, he immediately ordered that the young man be thrown in jail to await trial.

Not long after, the day arrived when the accused was brought before the two doors. The amphitheater had never been so full, and the entire kingdom was curious to learn the young lover’s fate. Terrified at the thought of death, he nervously paced back and forth as the people of the kingdom watched. He also looked to the princess for help, hoping that she would know which door hid the beautiful woman and which hid the terrible tiger. His eyes desperately begged her for a clue.

The princess felt tragically conflicted. She did not want her true love to be torn apart by a wild beast. However, she couldn’t stand the thought of him marrying someone else, either. Shaking with anxiety, she made her decision. To instruct her lover which door to open, the princess made a subtle movement with her hand, a sign she was sure none but he would see. After seeing this gesture, the young man slowly approached one of the doors. All the onlookers waited with bated breath as he leaned forward to open it.... —Adapted from “The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank Stockton, rewritten by Mark Darvill

朗讀比賽文章 綜高高二 2

“Instead of the students going to school, the school reaches them.”

—Mohammed Rezwan

Bangladesh, a country in South Asia, suffers from terrible monsoons every year. Around one third of the country is flooded during the rainy season. These major floods cause roads to get blocked and thousands of schools to shut their doors for months at a time. As a result, many children are often denied access to proper schooling. Fortunately, an innovative architect named Mohammed Rezwan has come up with an appropriate and promising solution: boat schools!

The boat school program was launched in 2002 by Rezwan. Its goal was to provide elementary school children in Bangladesh with education throughout the year. The design of the boats is based on that of traditional local wooden boats called noka. Each boat is about fifteen meters long and three meters wide. On top of the boat is a weatherproof roof held up by arched metal beams. If the roof were not built with such strong materials, the boat would be damaged by heavy monsoon rains. Inside, the boat school looks just like a regular school. It’s equipped with tables, chairs, a blackboard, electronic equipment, and multimedia resources, including a computer connected to the Internet. All the power needed on the boat is supplied by solar panels installed on the roof. Each boat school can accommodate as many as thirty students and provide basic education up to the fourth grade.

Every morning, six days a week, students wait at the docks near their muddy villages for the boat schools to sail by and pick them up. Aside from traditional subjects, students also study environmental topics like biodiversity and water pollution. Each learning session lasts three hours. When the session is over, the boat takes the students back to their village and then sails on to the next village to pick up another thirty students for another session. After school, many students receive low-cost solar lanterns that enable them to study at night. Also, in the evenings, the boat schools project educational films onto their sail cloth, which can be viewed by villagers who live nearby.

The floating classrooms benefit not only children but also adults. They offer onboard training in practical issues like nutrition, health and hygiene, and human rights. Boat schools also teach adults various farming techniques, such as growing floodresistant crops. Such training makes it possible for the villagers to increase productivity so as to ensure sufficient food and year-round income. The boat schools even offer lessons on financial management so that people may better manage their money.

The boat school concept has now been adopted by other countries at risk of flooding, including Cambodia, Nigeria, and the Philippines. If these countries didn’t have such an innovative program, they would not be able to rise above flood waters, overcome geographical barriers, and improve their people’s lives. Indeed, boat classrooms have created opportunities for high-quality education for both children and adults. By doing so, these schools have provided brighter futures for people living in countries that frequently suffer from severe flooding. —Written by Elena Yu

朗讀比賽文章 綜高高二 3

Cultural heritage gives us precious glimpses of life in the past and therefore adds to our own sense of identity. Despite this, our traditional view of progress has often been “out with the old, in with the new.” It is necessary that development take place, of course, but this doesn’t have to come at the cost of destroying ancient treasures that can never be replaced.

An example of this took place in 1959, when the construction of the Aswan High Dam endangered the future of Egypt’s precious Abu Simbel temples. The proposed construction project would enable this North African country to control the annual flooding of the Nile. However, an artificial lake would be formed as a result, and the Abu Simbel temples would then be submerged. Though Egypt has an abundance of historic sites, many felt that no part of its rich and unique cultural heritage should be lost. After a UNESCO-led campaign, it was concluded that the temples would be transported to higher ground. In order to accomplish this challenging task, Egypt decided that the sacred structures would be cut into 16,000 huge blocks. These were then moved and reassembled at a site situated 65 meters higher up and 180 meters further back from the water. In the end, the temples were saved from being drowned, and Egypt was spared the loss of these historic treasures.

Taiwan’s southern port city of Kaohsiung once faced a similar problem and also had to figure out how a priceless old structure could be preserved. In the early 2000s, Kaohsiung was in need of a new underground metro and railway system to relieve traffic congestion and promote urban development. The only problem was that for the underground system to be built, the decades-old Kaohsiung Railway Station would need to be demolished. Since the train station held many precious memories for local residents, it was crucial that the authorities act quickly to save it. Urgent meetings were held, and plans for moving the old building were discussed. Experts suggested that the structure be moved as a whole. Enormous wooden tracks were built, and then the 3,500- ton building was raised up and made to slide along these tracks to its new location at a speed of six meters per day. All in all, it took 17 days to move the building to its new location. The rescue mission stayed on track, and both the station and the fond memories of local people were successfully preserved.

As these two examples demonstrate, we don’t always have to clear out the old to make way for the new. After all, when it comes to development and cultural preservation, a balance that allows the two to exist side by side can be struck. Whether it’s possible to preserve our heritage and still see progress simply depends on how much thought and effort we’re willing to put in. —Written by Joe Henley