Translations from inspirational articles entitled "Life of Abundance" by the late W. K. Wat, a successful entrepreneur and inspirational writer, originally published in the 1980's in Hong Kong's Sing Tao Evening News, now defunct.

A Sweet State of Mind

In a school laboratory, students mixed two colourless, tasteless and odourless gases with carbon powder, which is black, tasteless and insoluble in water. After mixing, a complex chemical reaction took place, resulting in beautiful, white sugar crystals. Why some tasteless gases when mixed with the black stuff could suddenly result in white sugar, a chemical wonder apparently beyond comprehension? In life, we often find ourselves lost in monotony, devoid of taste, colour, and meaning. In face of anguish hopelessness, we press on. After connecting with an array of factors, including conditions and opportunities, a miraculous change happens, ushering in a new life of hope, happiness and fulfilment, an inscrutable encounter with a life full of abundance. We may not understand how electricity works, but it drives our daily lives. We may not realize how a life of abundance may suddenly arrive, but we work, plan, persist towards a worthy goal. In the apparently monotonous journey, a change appears and our sweet dream suddenly unfolds. The esteemed Aristotle said, "Life is full of change and opportunities. With persistent, tireless, hard work, darkness could turn into sweetness and light."

A Brilliant Future

On vacation in Holland, I saw many windmills in the fields, standing some 40-50 feet tall, their blades turning with the wind. These mills irrigate the wheat and barley in the fields, as well as the turnips Holland is most famous for. Generating more profits worldwide than the country's wheat and barley, these flowers cover numerous fields in a sea of brilliant colour. Some fields are already well irrigated. Their windmills are turning with the wind in vain as the blades are no longer connected to any machinery or cisterns. All the wind energy is wasted or futile. The turning mills are no more than a decoration. Sometimes when we work, we may encounter a feeling of futility. Our ceaseless

activities round the clock may appear vigorous and forceful, but they are not connected to worthwhile goals in life. Blind efforts without any plan or aims only result in wasted energy, running around all day like disconnected windmills in the Dutch fields. Young people should therefore conserve and concentrate their productive physical and mental energies. They should connect this valuable capital for success to life's specific goals of purposeful and meaningful enterprise or services. Like connected windmills, this will turn the clogs and wheels towards the realization of our life aims, ushering in a life of abundance and a brilliant future.

Keep Trying

In a big glass fishbowl are several gold fish, separated by a glass panel in the middle, one side for the fish and the other are tasty fish baits. The fish all lurch to reach the baits but without success. Having banged against the glass panel many times without avail except getting their heads knocked, the fish eventually give up trying, thinking that all they can do is look but will never be able to reach the other side. One day, the fish owner quietly removed the separating glass panel. But all the fish remained on one side, not daring to challenge the invisible separation. All the fish baits remain intact as the fish have given up trying after so many painful and failed attempts. Fear of failure has turned into inertia. Even the barrier has eventually disappeared, the fish have lost heart for one more try. This is an important lesson. After nine failures, the tenth may well succeed, as the obstacles disappeared as circumstances have changed. Somerset Maugham said, "He who loses heart after defeat will always remain a loser". Shakespeare said, "Many fail for lack of perseverance, of lack of thoroughness. Oftentimes only a step away from success, they lose heart for one more try." Hu Shih J@ said, "Success always comes from trying."

Ready to Seize the Moment

After a mission to Elephant Island, British Antarctic explorer Sir Henry Shackleton had to leave a group of scientists behind to compile a meteorological report on weather conditions. He undertook to return to pick them up the following spring. When spring came, Sir Shackleton sailed towards the Island in the Antarctic Ocean for the return-home pickup. However, ice sheets kept the

sea frozen, blocking his passage. After waiting for days, a thawing occurred, allowing a very narrow creek for his ship to pass. On arrival at Elephant Island, he saw in the distance that his comrades were already fully packed and waiting on the shore. Without a single moment of delay, they quickly boarded the ship and commenced their return journey. After an hour, the creek got frozen up again. Sir Shackleton asked his comrades how they managed to identify this rare moment of possible passage and got ready for the pickup. They replied that without fail, they got fully ready every day for over half a month in the firm belief that the promised pickup will happen someday. Otherwise, there was no way they could have made it in time. In our daily lives, we should likewise get ready every moment, in the hope that a life of abundance may one day beckon. When a rare and limited opportunity occurs, are our knowledge, abilities and health remain fully prepared to seize the moment? Frances Bacon said, “A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds."

Desert Flower

If you travel to the edge of a desert, apart from rare oases, tiny plants can sometimes be found to grow, thanks to some vapours in the air despite the aridness. These plants drop encrusted seeds which are hard to grow. However, once a while, when rain comes, the seeds’ crust may get cracked open through hard sand while being washed down the dunes. Where well placed, these plants may indeed bloom. In life, we may have to face new and unwelcome circumstances which may break our body or mind, forcing us to adapt, or even surrender. Nevertheless, if we persevere, a new compatible environment may eventually arise where our hard-earned adaptation becomes in demand. We may then bloom again like a desert flower. So, never say die!

Captivating Sound of Music

An astronomer training a gigantic telescope towards the deep sky marvels at the orderly movements of heavenly bodies in the immensity of the universe. Yet he sees no God running these remarkable operations. Similarly, when I examine an

exquisite violin, I cannot detect any moving music. Great violin music comes from an accomplished violinist playing with the best of violins. Neither alone in this perfect combination can produce the best music. A priceless violin will be able to produce the most captivating of music only in the hands and mind of a virtuoso violinist. Similarly, health, wisdom, knowledge, skill, wealth, power, reputation, position and time are not enough to constitute a life of abundance. For that, we need to be guided by a pleasant disposition, an integrated mentality, a clear conscience, a calm state of mind, a satisfied mentality, an ability to get along with others, and a righteous and lofty goal in life. Only when material abundance and spiritual nurture are driven by a righteous goal in life can a life of abundance be built.

Walk with Faith

What is faith? It's something intangible. Something unseen. Something not grasped in hand. Something not yet realized. But faith when believed exists. And that faith encourages us. It calms us and drives us forward. There was once a very poor teacher. He was leading a hard life. He had to take care of a very sick better half in the family. His was living from hand to mouth. His future was bleak and uncertain. One day, a long-lost boyhood bosom friend found him and paid him a visit. Seeing his plight, the friend, who has grown very rich after all these years and is now a bank president, gave him a wrapped piece of paper on departure after a cordial heart-to-heart talk. After opening the wrapped paper afterwards, the poor teacher found it was a properly signed cheque but with an open amount to be filled in. He immediately phoned his rich friend and asked why. The rich friend said, “I want to give you a helping hand. But I don’t know how much you need. So just fill in the amount. Regardless, the cheque will be honoured”. The poor teacher kept the cheque without filling in any amount. With the blank cheque at his back, he eventually overcame his difficulties and went on with a secured and fulfilled career. He eventually decided to return this open-ended signed cheque to his friend with heart-felt gratitude, saying, “I haven’t cashed in anything you could have given me. But your solid support has given me unbound faith. It has given me confidence I never had. With this, my life has so much changed for the better.’’. St Paul said. “We walk not with Sight, but with Faith.” We need not see Faith, but with it, we can walk steadily towards the Promised Land, daunting challenges regardless.

Bliss

A captivating scenery consists of many components. Just like a painter putting different strokes on a canvas to create a masterpiece, soul-purifying nature is composed of individual flowers, plants, a clear stream, a waterfall, a birdsong, a whiff of flowery fragrance, chirping of insects, sunlight peeping through tree leaves, sunrise, sunset or starlight. Entirely separated, these components are less impactful. But woven into a harmonious and coherent whole, they could stir the heart and renew the soul. Napoleon said, “There are two forces in the world that unite people. One is Fear. The other is Interest.” What Napolean forgot to mention is Love. With Nature, all the trees, plants, insects, streams, sounds, light and fragrance are woven into a harmonious and purifying whole. With Love, different hearts could bind, and diverse interests could work towards a meaningful goal.

Subliminal confidence

During the Second World War, a British transport ship full of medicine and other relief provisions was crossing the Atlantic from America to Liverpool in Britain. Fearful of attacks by ubiquitous Nazi battleships along the way, the vessel's captain received a firm instruction to proceed regardless, on the understanding that upon an emergy, he should seek instructions by wireless communication. Halfway, the captain saw he was being tailed by a German warship. The instructions in response to his S.O.S was to carry on, rest assured that his ship would be protected all the way to his destination. Undaunted, he pressed on and finally made it to his destination safe and sound, shortly followed by his unseen escort warship. Similarly, in life's journey, so long as we maintain our upright conscience and steadfast confidence, in face of what may seem unsurmountable obstacles seen and unseen, oftentimes we will be able to sail through stormy seas and choppy waters, sometimes almost miraculously, as if we were protected by an unseen providence.-

Greater wealth

In Bagdad in ancient Peria, a shopkeeper prized himself for selling only fair-prized goods of excellent quality, but his business failed to take off as he had hoped. So, he sought advice from a sage. After observing his business for a while, the sage told him, "Your goods are excellent. Your prices are very fair. But your manners are sometimes foul. You are seeking to win business. but you fail to win friends. You want to establish a good reputation for your merchandise. But your manners are a wall keeping more customers out." Good human relations are essential for business. Hence the role of Customer Relations. Similarly, a life of abundance will not happen just from exceptional knowledge and ability. Good human interactions, friendship and rapport can travel a long way. Shakespear said, "Great wealth belongs to someone with a wealth of good friends". Cheerfulness, politeness, respect, harmoniousness, smiles, tactfulness, humility, resourcefulness, flexibility, and compassion. In search of greater wealth in life, all these are at least as important as good quality and fair prices.

Enjoying Nature's best

Lu You, alias "Lu, the Care-Free", was a famous poet in Southern Song Dynasty. When young, he tried his lick with the army but returned undistinguished. He dabbled in government service but was equally unsuccessful. After retirement, his amply talent found outstanding expression in poetry and travels. He lived to the ripe age of 85, still strong and active. One of his sayings goes, "*Eighty-years still as hard as iron, returning with harvest of water chestnuts in a stormy night*". Lu's whole life became famous with his excellent poetry and moving travels. He loved good wine, poetry, travels, company, exercise, and nature. He could be said to enjoy life at its best. His fly in the ointment was his lack of wealth and official recognition. But he was very contented, creating songs and poetry, numbering over 7,000 distinguished pieces throughout

his life. His village living was graced with books, flowers, and bamboos. He had no lack of fish and vegetables, nor clothing. He led a long life of country walks, traveling near and far, enjoying nature to the full. As one of his most famous poems goes, “A life of enjoying nature at its best is a life well spent.” A person fond of travels enjoys an active life, rich in his experiences, spirit of adventure and thirst for knowledge. He is a seeker of a life of abundance. As literary scion Emerson says, “The world belongs to him with money and time to enjoy it.”

Peace of Mind

A primary student wants to show off his luxury-brand trainers. A nouveau riche flouts his new luxury limousine. A budding lady wants to flout her bejeweled evening gown. A newly wedded couple wants to reside in the prestigious neighborhood at the Peak. Such desire to show off one’s status, wealth, and superiority are non-exceptional. However, if exaggerated and devoid of reality, they are often counter-productive. Just like at a masquerade. We know that a masked King is not a real King. Or a costumed Napoleon is not the real Napoleon. People know and just pretend for the fun of the occasion. But the mask must be discarded to return to the comfort and confidence of our real selves. Persons spending their whole life in faked appearances, falsehoods and make-believe will not be able to experience the real happiness and contentment of a life of abundance, even if their deception may fool some people some of the time. Mark Twaine says, “Those able to forsake hypocrisy will reap great peace of mind”. For a life of abundance results from the latter.