

Epilogue

I Have a Dream

Since my father passed away in January, 2018, I moved back to my parents' place to take care of my ageing mother. Every day is a challenge. The most important task of my day is to make sure she takes the appropriate medicine at the right dosage and at the right time. On top of this, I have to perform my duties and responsibilities as a college lecturer. That means preparing for my daily lectures, grading students' assignments, and working on my research projects and, worse of all, handling the many students' complaints. During the last few months, I know that I have been stressed out. I have little time for myself. I remember I was writing this book on a Saturday afternoon. After several hours of writing and editing, I fell asleep on the sofa in the living room. Possibly in a trance state, I had this dream:

I was standing in a hotel lobby with a lot of reporters. In front of the camera's flashlights, the announcer, an attractive young TV star, handed me a cheque of 10 million dollars----- I have just won the grand prize of the state lottery, known as the Golden Mark Six, in Hong Kong! I had never won anything significant in my life. I was so happy. I saw people, whom I never knew, hugging and congratulating me on my fortunes. Abruptly, the dream moved to the next scene. That should be on a cruise liner in the Bahamas. There were a lot of young people, mostly attractive women in tight bikinis, dancing along the poolside. The music was loud and I hardly recognized what kind of music they were playing. But one thing that captured my attention ----- the sumptuous moment of joy and happiness that I had long been searching for. Plus, there was an endless flow of good food, beers and, of course, no grading on students' assignments. The sky looked brighter. I also looked a bit taller and younger. Apparently, I didn't have to prepare for my lessons and work hard for a monthly pay cheque anymore. At that moment, I felt like the happiest man alive. But suddenly, the phone rang. I tried to reach out for my mobile phone in my pocket. I thought I should have put my Mark Six winning ticket together with the phone. Shit. I should have dropped everything into the pool. Recklessly, I jumped into the cold pool to search for the winning ticket, only to find that I never learnt how to swim. I thought I was drowning and possibly dying for the gambling money.

But, in a panic, I woke up. The phone still rang. Some salesman named Joe called in to promote a mobile phone plan. After a polite goodbye, I pulled myself together and reflected on the dream. Though I have much reservation on the theoretical foundations of the addictive personality syndrome proposed by Alan Lang (1983), I am more attracted to Kiang Fan's (2010) assertion – gambling in China began as Chinese civilization began. For the majority of ethnic Chinese, being rich is our chief concern in life, and this goal is buried deep in our collective unconscious. And, for a humble worker like myself, gambling is a fast and inexpensive means to achieve personal riches and happiness.

I have to be grateful for finishing this research project. I understand more about Chinese gambling and my own heritage. In the meantime, as I am making some final touches on the manuscripts, I look forward to, rather eagerly and earnestly, the continuation of the audacity of my hopes in the Bahamas dream – tonight.