



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Pick! Pick! Pick! That is all that I hear, these days. What is happening in my Hongkong? I can't understand it. When the British were in charge of the territory, it was never like this. For what reason has there been this sudden change? Grandpa is distraught, I can tell you in confidence. It appears that a great number of people are blaming him for the problems that confront the territory and its people. I suppose that if our bitch, Bo-Bo, conceived, Grandpa would be held responsible, too. People are unkind, you know. The other day, it was suggested that people had lost faith in Grandpa and that, as a result, he should resign from any and all important posts in Government. I told him to forget it because, after all: 'You have the ear of Beijing: The critics don't even know the location of Beijing. Beijing will, always, come to your assistance. Does Beijing have any alternative? Who else could be appointed to run Hongkong? There is nobody such as you.' The stubborn little frog would only say: 'It is time for an homogenized unity of all the people; it is not time to lay blame on anybody.' I know of homogenized milk, of course, but I have never heard of homogenizing people. And I told him so in these words: 'People are not milk. You cannot mix them up and disperse them throughout Hongkong. Milk is milk and people are people. You are the boss: Act like one!' What a waste of time and of breath! All that he would say was that the economic problems of Hongkong, today, cannot be solved by people, picking on him. Nobody picks on anybody else in the way that they pick on him, he lamented. Ascribing blame to a single person will not ameliorate the situation, at all, he told me. He talked of getting the people of Hongkong together in order to come up with a plan. What do people know? Nothing! The average Mr Wong of Wanchai or Shatin can hardly remember his name, let alone understand the intricacies of economics. That is the reason that Grandpa was given the job of running Hongkong: He knows about finance, buying and selling things, being Mr Nice, when required, and asking for favours – when things do not go well. Grandpa has survived because he is what he is. The biggest of the big shots in Beijing love him for himself. For what reason cannot the people of Hongkong, that is all the people of Hongkong, love him for what he is. I love him just the way that he is and, if it is good enough for me, it ought to be good enough for everybody. Love is accepting somebody as that somebody is, complete with all that person's complexities, that person's foibles; that person's idiosyncrasies; and, of course, that person's cuddly appearance – as is the case with Grandpa.

It would appear that Pick! Pick! Pick! has, also, spread to other Hongkong Government departments, too. It is contaminating the Establishment. The latest Pick! Pick! Pick! was aimed at my dear friend, Secretary for Security, Ms Regina Ip. And all because of that little piece of legislation that, in the end, will protect Hongkong from people, such as Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Hongkong needs this type of draconian legislation, you see, but many members of the Legislative Council are incapable of seeing things as Government does. Government is far-sighted, but the elected members of the Legislative Council can hardly read a comic book. When Great Britain was in Hongkong, the English legislation was exported in order to cope with all kinds of things, relating to subversion and treason. But, after China kicked out the imperialists, it was required that we have our own legislation, all kinds of it. My dear Grandchild, let me explain about legislation. Normally, laws are fashioned because the people of a territory want them in order to safeguard their rights. Laws are, in fact,

the will of the people, reduced to writing. In the United States, it is the Constitution that is paramount, but, in Hongkong, there is only The Basic Law of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The Basic Law is not comprehensive and, from time to time, new laws must be promulgated. Article 23 of The Basis Law falls far short of its objective: To protect the State from any individual or group of people. Some of the elected Legislative Councillors are suggesting that the Hongkong Government's intention is merely a political one, aimed at deceiving the people of the territory. What rubbish! All that the Government wants to do is to protect Hongkong from itself. If an individual or a group of individuals starts to attack the State (Hongkong), then the Government must protect itself for the sake of the State and the people, living under the laws of the State. Let me give you an example. In the event that your little son, aged 7 years, was bullied at school, would you not want him to defend himself. Of course, you would! You would, probably, send him to karate school in order to learn the art of self-defense. That is all that this new piece of legislation is aimed at achieving: A kind of karate for those who would usurp the rightful government. So vociferous was the attack on Security Secretary Regina Ip that I remarked to me social secretary that she was lucky that she had a good boss, such as I. Legislative Councillors, it seems to me, ought to be seen but not heard, at least, not to the extent of their recent outbursts in the Legislative Council Chamber. Such outbursts give Hongkong a bad name, internationally, because people will tar all of Hongkong with the same brush that is being used to tar the Legislative Councillors. And people think that democracy is the best form of government! Such nonsense! Now you can see what happens when you give people too much freedom. As for freedom, it is all well and good to talk about it, but the residents of a territory can only have so much freedom because, too much of a good thing tends to detract from its true intent. Put another way, if one eats ice cream, all day long, one will, eventually, get sick of it: One needs a little salt and a little sugar. Life must be balanced: The yin and the yang, if you will.

Well, I have to go now. Talking about politics tends to weary me.

Love you,

Chief Lady of Hongkong

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