



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

*I am so upset with the so-called democrats of Hongkong. I don't want Grandpa to see the extent of my ire, but I can tell you that I am fit to explode. And it is not the first time, too, I might add. Too much anger means more lines in my forehead and more wrinkles on my face, making the corners of my eyes look as though chickens had been walking there. I suppose you read of the recent question-and-answer session in the Legislative Council and how they berated my dear little fat frog, as I call Grandpa. Everybody seems to be complaining about Hongkong and the state of the economy, and looking for somebody to blame. What's it got to do with Grandpa? Further, he can't help it if certain people contract **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome** (SARS). Who told those people to go to the open market, or to a certain housing complex where SARS was known to be hanging around? Grandpa can't be held responsible for the actions of stupid, peripatetic people. How can Grandpa be held responsible for the acts of God? Even insurance companies will never cover a person, house, motor car, etc for the acts of God. I am really fed up with it and with people, such as Martin Lee and his mob.*

Grandpa, as everybody knows, has been trained, from the time that he could use an abacus, to his ascension to managing a large shipping company. As the previous chairman of that sometimes, large shipping company, which is still listed on The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd, by the way, he became famous for his takeover of a British shipping company, which nearly broke the back of the poor dear. He stepped down from commerce in order to help the Government of China in managing these four hundred and sixteen square miles, known as Hongkong. If he had not agreed to help out, who else was there? Nobody, nobody, nobody! Nobody was better qualified than Grandpa to lead the seven million, downtrodden people of Hongkong, as far as Mr Deng Xiao Ping, the former Paramount Leader of China, was concerned. It is, still, true today. History has proved that Mr Deng Xiao Ping was correct in his choice of a leader for Hongkong, during the transition from being a colony of imperialistic Great Britain to being a 'colony' of China. He was elected for a second, five-year term because Beijing could not find anybody in the entire length and breadth of China to replace him.

You know, managing a fleet of container ships and Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) is not too different from managing a territory, such as Hongkong. But, of course, managing a fleet of ships has its advantages in that one does not have to put up with democratic nonsense from employees. Who would dare to talk back to Grandpa if he were to bark out: 'You shallow people!' Stop! Don't jump at me just because I used the term, 'democratic nonsense'. There is nothing democratic about running a company: It must be run as a dictatorship, with just one bossman. Grandpa used to be that bossman and he did a wonderful job of it, too. Nobody ever talked back to him: His word was that of the god of the company. Of course, when the seas were rough and one of his ships got into trouble, he never once blamed the captain of the vessel for the conditions of the sea. How, then, can people, such as Legislative Councillor Martin Lee, blame Grandpa for the pitiful shape of the economy of Hongkong? What does Martin Lee think Grandpa is? He is only a man, not yet a god! For Heaven's sake, tell that democrat to be reasonable! All that Grandpa can do when one of his ships is at sea and is in trouble is to order the captain of the ship, which has encountered heavy seas, to turn his vessel into the wind in order to be able to protect the

ship from damage from large waves or swells. As Grandpa could have been described as being the 'admiral' of his fleet of ships in days of yore, so, today, he is the admiral of Hongkong, guiding the good Chinese ship so that it does not, completely, flounder. When Grandpa needed help in running his shipping company, many years ago, there was China, backing him. It is the same, today, in respect of the running of Hongkong: China is backing him, giving medical assistance and signing trade deals when required, as well as full psychological support to his management skills. I would, really, like to see Legislative Councillor Martin Lee, or his friend, Legislative Councillor Emily Lau, do better than Grandpa. I would suggest that they could not even get the support of the Beijing elite.

Talk is cheap, as are complaints, complaints, complaints, but have you ever heard of somebody, saying to Grandpa: 'This is the way out of the dilemma.' Of course not! They don't have an answer. All that they have are complaints, complaints and more complaints. All I can tell you, Grandchild, is that I have been married to Grandpa for a couple of years and he has always been good to me – and he never, once, complained about my chicken's feet. Complaints are utterances of the devil. Hongkong does not need the devil, but needs patience and understanding ... and it needs the fourth estate to report the good things about Grandpa and Hongkong, in that order. Just because Martin Lee, Emily Lau et al do not understand Grandpa, they should not regard him as a fool. It is said that one may be able to find an argument for just about anything, but I wonder whether or not finding understanding is more important than finding the argument. Nobody except I and the immediate family seem to understand Grandpa. I feel very sad that those democrats don't try to understand him more. It is strange that the democrats, keep saying that Grandpa should listen to them. Have they, ever, once listened to Grandpa? Have they, ever, once thought about his health? After all, Grandpa is only doing his job in the best way that he can – for China and his bosses, in reverse order. How can anybody blame him for the poor state of the economy of Hongkong; for the speedy spread of SARS in Hongkong; for the many years of deflation that Hongkong has endured; for the clearly sad state of esprit de corps of the people of Hongkong? People, who are honest, should respect Grandpa for his merit, whereas the masses – which include the democrats, of course – should respect him for his luck, in the same way that rich people are respected for their money. Think of it: If Martin Lee, Emily Lau et al had been selected by Beijing to administer Hongkong, do you think that either one of them could have done better? Jealousy, my dear Grandchild, is the green devil that will, in the end, devour you. Greed is one of the last passions of people, whose early lives have been squandered in pleasure, only to devote the latter part of their lives to amassing the trinkets and tapestries of past ambitions.

My dear Grandchild, don't be greedy and don't be too ambitious. Wealth is but a weight that hangs around one's neck and becomes a bore in the fullness of time. Further, to amass great wealth is time-consuming and, at the end of one's life, one realises that there were other things of much more importance than a simple medium of exchange. Be like Grandpa, who cares nothing of baubles of office and knows that, even though one may not be loved in this life, there is another life ... where people, such as Martin Lee are barred from entrance. People, such as Martin Lee come and go, but people, such as Grandpa, will go on forever; and, they will be remembered in the history books long after Martin Lee's bones are bleached white. That is the lesson of today.

The Chief Lady of Hongkong

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