



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

It is, now, time for you to have your first lesson about sex. Sex is wonderful, of course, but, as the ancient Greeks would have told you in the Third Century Before Christ: Everything in moderation (anyway, too much of anything takes the edge off of it; and, with sex, one just gets sore). Recently, China, our Motherland, has made a number of decisions with regard to sex. To begin with, it is still permitted, so don't worry about that, however, as a student, there are limitations that have to be imposed on every one of you for the sake of the entire country. Shenzhen University is setting the pace for China, it seems, by making a determination that students should not be permitted to hold hands, kiss or cuddle, especially in public places. If a student is found doing any of these dirty things, then, after a number of warnings, he/she is thrown out of school. Anyway, for what reason should a student want to hold hands with another student of the opposite sex, or to kiss him/her and/or cuddle a person, who is not part of the family? If you, my dear, want to kiss and cuddle, just ask Mommy or Daddy. Kissing in public, my dear Grandchild, contradicts social morality and it is disrespectful to other people's feelings, the University has decided. In public, everybody must respect others' feelings. I think that Shenzhen University is correct because it would be terrible if everybody cuddled and kissed everybody, don't you think? Think of the number of germs that would be passed from one person to another! Think of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and how it flew, round the world, killing as it went. Probably, it was started by a single public kiss. History is full of things that started with one single kiss. Do you remember Helen of Troy? She was the daughter of Zeus and Leda and the wife of Menelaus. Her abduction by Paris caused the Trojan War, which lasted for one decade. 'Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?' asked Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), an English dramatist and poet, who wrote about the love affair and its tragic consequences. So, don't let it happen to you, my dear. Anyway, if you go round, holding hands with a boy friend(s), with an occasional public kiss and cuddle, people might get the wrong idea about us, Chinese, and think that we have some kind of kissing disease ... or something even worse. Leave that sort of behavior to the Americans and English, both of which races appear to indulge in all kinds of dirty things in public. And, as for the French, they even pee in public. I, personally, have seen this as I was taken from La Havre to Paris along the highway. French lorry drivers would just pull over to the side of the road and, then, relieve themselves in full view of everybody. I mean to say! What next? And I can tell you that it must be very intimidating for a Chinese man to have to see such a sight in view of the fact that they are smaller than their French counterparts. You, my dear, will have plenty of time to engage in sexual activities when you are married, provided, of course, that you take precautions so that you only have one child, in accordance with Chinese law that states that families should only be permitted to have one child.

Now, passing on to marriage, you must understand that if you get married before you are finished your studies in university, your academic life is over – forever. Married people are not permitted to attend universities in China, The Ministry of Education for the People's Republic of China determined, some years ago. However, of late, there has been a number of modifications to the original law. Firstly, the ban on the age limit of students, taking the entrance examination to universities, has been lifted. Now, anybody may take the examination. Even if an

applicant is married at the time that he/she takes the examination, it is legal. And, also, some special students, or prospective students, such as the offspring of cadre, may attend university even if they are married. However, even a married couple, attending a university in China, may not hold hands or kiss and cuddle in public. You can understand the reason for this, can't you: How would it look to other students, who are not married, but for whom the sap is rising? In view of the large population of China, which is about 1.30 billion human beings, it is important to restrict the growth of the population without, at the same time, infringing on the rights of man to do the natural things. Such controls have to start somewhere, don't they? I have been told that there is a suggestion, now being considered, to limit the number of copulations per week between husbands and wives. It is considered better than castration, don't you think?

So, what to do about you're your sexual feelings when you have that urge that you feel that you cannot control? Well, you could take a cold shower. That is what I tell Grandpa to do whenever I am tired of his childlike whimpers about my reluctance to do it. You could start jogging around Tiananmen Square when the feeling is strongest. You could study the great works of Chinese philosophers. That helps, too, especially The Four Books of Confucius. Confucius, who lived close to the same time as Socrates, said that moderation in life is everything. I am not suggesting that you should not love, but love carefully, quietly, secretly, and respectfully, in the manner of a good, Chinese lady. Have you ever seen me kiss Grandpa in public? Of course, not! Confucius said that if you think that something is impolite or improper, then, don't think about it; don't touch it; don't talk about it; don't stare at it: In other words, don't pine after it. There is a big difference between a man and a woman, you know. It does not matter where you are, how close the relationship may be between you and your boyfriend, you must treat him, only, on a very friendly basis, showing no emotion in public ... until, of course, he graces your finger with a five-carat diamond ring and proposes to you, in the company of your parents.

Here ends the lesson for today.

Love you,

The Chief Lady of Hongkong

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