



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I was delighted to learn that the Motherland had won the first Gold Medal at the Olympic Games in Greece. It was only in the ten-metre, air-rifle shooting event, of course, but if it had been in a one-mile, machine-gun event, or even a bigger weaponry event, the Motherland would, definitely, have won. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the best army in the world, today, with the strength of this army, being about three million men and women at arms. Totally, therefore, the Motherland bristles with fighters, all ready and willing to defend the country should US President George W. Bush get it into his little head to do an Iraqi thing on the Motherland (assuming that he remembers where the People's Republic of China (PRC) is situated in relation to the US). Which brings me to a rather sore spot about the PLA: For what reason did the PLA ever adopt a green uniform? I would have opted for a red uniform, myself, not because I am partial to the colour, red, but because it is such a practical colour. The flag of the Motherland is red; and, there is that very famous classical song: 'There is a Red Sun in the East'. While I would have liked to have taken credit for proposing a red uniform for my brave soldiers, actually, it was the Sparta, of Sixth Century Before Christ, which came up with the idea. In Sparta, there were three classes of people: Those who performed all of the agricultural work (known as the slaves); a subject class of free men without political rights, who were mainly tradesmen and merchants; and, the governing class, the rulers and soldiers. The last-mentioned were the highest class, of course. Aside from the fact that the Motherland does not possess a slave class, nevertheless, we do have an agrarian class, which has the duty to keep the Motherland well stocked with staples. Other than this little difference, it would appear that our system of government is very similar to that of ancient Sparta. But there is one exception: The colour of the soldiers' uniforms. The uniforms of the Spartan Army were all coloured red. This was because, in the event that a soldier got wounded in a fight, his blood would be obscured by the colour of his red cloak. The Spartans were, in their day, the best fighters of ancient Greece. The Motherland has among the best athletes in the world, today, and the colour of the country's flag and the symbol of the country is blood red. But not our brave soldiers' uniforms. The only thing red about the uniforms of the soldiers of the PLA is one, little red star. The British Army, until only recently in the history of the British Empire, always believed in red uniforms. In fact, in the Eighteenth Century, the British Army was known, popularly, as The Red Coats. As national sport tends to galvanise a country, acting as a type of social glue, so a man or woman in national uniform singles that person out of a crowd, from being an ordinary person to being a special person. Spending money on athletics is money well spent, and the Motherland will reap the benefits in years to come, as more and more of the youth of the country will want to excel in certain disciplines in order to be the next hero, or heroine, of the most-populous nation in the world. The fact that the Motherland has spent tens of millions of renminbi on training up the youth of the country is money that will earn interest as the years fly by. As the country becomes more wealthy, more and more of our population will want to engage in various sports, visit quality health resorts, and purchase more and more sporting goods. Already, you see how little Ms Du Li, the first person to win a gold medal at the 2004 Olympics, is the darling of the country. In contrast, look at the once-vaunted US Dream Team of basketball: As deflated as a popped balloon. While each member of the Dream Team is an excellent basketball player, the players do not work as a unified team, most of the time. The members of the Dream Team are not sufficiently 'hungry'. And so the team

was easily beaten in its first test. Pride in accomplishment and pride in appearance of our heroes is very important.

Let there always be red in the flag of the Motherland; and, let red be the colour of the fire in the hearts of our men and women in sport ... and in national uniform!

Love you, all.

The Chief Lady of Hongkong

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