



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I like to go to see the old Japanese movies where there is a lot of action, where the heroine wins her man without, seemingly, doing very much. Which, of course, is the way that it should be: Men should woo the woman – who selected him. The Blind Swordsman, starring Toshiro Mifune, will always be one of my favourites, you know. What I loved about those old, black-and-white Japanese movies was how The Blind Swordsman, with a swish and swoosh, would kill the bad guys and the beautiful ladies would be saved from the brutal advances of the horrible ones. Ah! If only true life were like that! With a swish and swoosh, I could chop off the heads of the so-called democrats of Hongkong; and, then, Grandpa and I could live in peace. No more bleating little democratic 'lambs', flying off to Beijing and Washington to tell whoever what I did, or what Grandpa did, or what we did not do; and no more Hongkong people, complaining about the physiognomy of Grandpa, claiming that he looks too much like a member of the family of bufonidae. Life would be a lot different without the trouble-makers of the world, as The Blind Swordsman used to comment, when he quietly walked down the gravel road, at the end of each of his movies, and into the setting sun. The end of those old movies was always satisfying: The Blind Swordsman triumphs, yet again! My goodness, My Dear Grandchild, come to think of it, how things and styles have changed over the years! The hair styles of the old samurai warriors and the hair styles of the lords of old feudal Japan, some three hundred years or so ago, look positively outlandish by today's standards. Even the underwear of the Japanese of three hundred years ago was, completely, different to the Jockey underwear that Grandpa wears, today. What do you think people, three hundred years from now, will say about our generation? I see people, walking down the road, with wires, sticking out of their ears. Some people have metallic, or plastic, sticks, protruding from their ears. So important has become the mobile telephone of today that these people walk around, plugged into the airwaves, probably for fear that, if their ears did not hear something, immediately, the world might come crashing down around them. Also, I have noted that some ladies and young girls are wearing coloured mobile telephones, around their necks, as though they were badges of honour, or medals of valour. Even Filipina maids wear them, prominently displayed, on Sundays in Statue Square, showing them off as though they were some kind of special electronic jewel. And, only too often, it is difficult to know whether or not a person is talking to himself/herself or talking to a friend, walking beside him/her. I sometimes think to myself: Is that person mad? And, then, I see a wire, sticking out of the person's ear and I realise that the person is holding a conversation, via a mobile telephone, which is secreted somewhere in the person's clothing. It can be a little disconcerting, also, you know, especially when walking down the street and somebody behind you can be heard to state, in a very loud voice, that dinner will be at eight o'clock. One has to think: Is that person talking to me? You turn in the direction of the voice only to find an office lady, agreeing to go on a date with her boyfriend.

Then, also, I see people, walking around town, holding onto a plastic bottle, full of mineral water. I wonder, I say to myself, whether or not there is a commonly held belief in Hongkong that if one does not drink, copious amounts of water, during a walkabout around town, one could die of dehydration in a matter of minutes: Hence, hang on to that bottle of mineral water for dear life!

Another thing: For what reason do ladies have to show off their midriffs? Is there any beauty in showing off one's belly and one's belly button? By the year 2080, people could well be looking at photographs of today, those in which ladies, whose naked midriffs are exposed, resplendent with belly buttons, are captured, walking down a street, and laugh at the fashions of this age. To admire a lady's curves or a man's bulging muscles is one thing, but to view a midriff, a belly, a belly button, even a bejeweled belly button, especially that of a rather fattish European lady, can hardly be considered a thing of beauty. Hongkong and its changing fashions are legend, of course, but it appears to me that Hongkong fashion is going, or has gone, a little wonky. Yes, Hongkong 2004 will come to be known as the wonky year. Bring back The Blind Swordsman to right the wrongs.

On that point, I think that it is time for me to polish my nails. I have decided that they should be painted green, today, in keeping with the green strip that I have highlighted in my hair. My eyes, you know, have a little green tint so I thought that I should accent that with green in my hair and with my fingernails and toenails, painted to match my eyes. I am told that Shiseido is bringing out a greenish face powder in order that Japanese ladies, when they are in the sun for too long a period of time, can be protected from skin discoloration, caused by the ultraviolet light, beamed by the sun. Japanese ladies' skins turns yellow when exposed to too much of the sun's rays, I have been reliably told. One must always try to look one's best on all occasions. Well, I must go, my dear. Talk to you next week.

The Chief Lady of Hongkong

While TARGET makes every attempt to ensure accuracy of all data published, TARGET cannot be held responsible for any errors and/or omissions.

If readers feel that they would like to voice their opinions about that which they have read in TARGET, please feel free to e-mail your views to editor@targetnewspapers.com or targnews@hkstar.com. TARGET does not guarantee to publish readers' views, but reserves the right so to do subject to the laws of libel.