



## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*Putting aside the issue of Universal Suffrage for the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the fact that there is unlikely to be anybody, now eligible as a resident of the territory, to be fully, or even partially, capable of being a duly elected delegate to represent the seven million-plus residents, it would, perhaps, pay dividends first to scan the people who are making the most noises about this matter. For what reason, for instance, are these people, putting their names to public advertisements, imploring the Beijing-appointed, Chief Executive of Hongkong to be 'courageous' and to seek a timetable for the people of Hongkong when Universal Suffrage shall be implemented? Shall we assume that leading solicitors and barristers, all being multi-millionaires, are putting aside their respective (very lucrative) legal practices so that they can become the George Washingtons, the Thomas Jeffersons, the John Adams of Hongkong? Has political altruism, suddenly, popped out of the soil of the territory, following more than one hundred and fifty years of political infertility? When the British ruled the territory, then known as the British Crown Colony of Hongkong, there was never a call from these same professionals for the people's voice to be heard in the corridors of power. The British gave to Hongkong, inter alia, good and equitable laws, a practical system for the administration of the Colony, a well-oiled civil service a very well-trained police force ... and free speech. It was not as though to speak one's mind when the British were administering the territory, that one was likely to be accused of treason and be sent to prison. Far from it, the Legislative Council members of those days, quite often, took the British Administration to task quite openly in the Legislative Council Chamber. One only has to read copies of the Hansard, during the time that British ruled the Hongkong roost, to understand how very vociferous were certain members of the Legislative Council of Hongkong of those days. The British, however, never envisaged Universal Suffrage for Hongkong, at least, not publicly. Alternatively, if there had been such a consideration by the British Administration, it was not a large issue in those days of yore as far as the population of Hongkong was concerned. The people of Hongkong, today, seem to enjoy berating the British Administrations of Hongkong, complaining about this and that. In the words of William Shakespeare: 'The good is oft interrèd with their bones.'*

*It is, now, politically expedient for some people of the territory to fly the standard of Universal Suffrage and to demand a timetable when it will be implemented in what is, today, the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. I wonder, My Dear Grandchild: What is the motive behind these people's call for a one-man, one-vote? Also, I note that calibre of many of the people, making the most stentorian of noises about Universal Suffrage. Which of their number, do you think, would be sufficiently ambitious as to seek high office in their vision of the new Hongkong, which will, like the phoenix, rise from the ashes of the Hongkong when Beijing no longer hand-picks The Chief Executive to do its bidding? Will it be a nice, well-heeled barrister? A multi-millionaire solicitor? A felon, who is able to muster sufficient votes from a small constituency so that he may sit in the Legislative Council? A tergiversator, perhaps? A well-known adulteress or adulterer? Would these well-meaning people have the courage to stand up in public*

*and to state, unequivocally: 'I love Hongkong! I shall fight for Hongkong's rights! I am one with my people!' And, when the solicitor/barrister/felon/adulteress/adulterer makes such statements, does he include in 'his people', the vegetable hawker of Wong Tai Sin, the prostitute in Mongkok, the minibuss driver of the New Territories, etc? Or, is he limiting his field to people of his ilk, only? Hongkong is far from being the British colonies of the Americas of 1775 when the call went out by some of the inhabitants for independence from Great Britain. Beijing is never going to permit Hongkong to be independent of the Motherland. I wonder whether or not these people, flying the flag of Universal Suffrage, realise this fact. Alternatively, if those people, making the loudest calls for a timetable for Universal Suffrage for Hongkong are not interested in being the leader of their people in the future, that is to say that they are not sufficiently ambitious to seek high office when it becomes vacant and available to them, what are their motives? Nobody, yet, has broached this question, it seems to me. Perhaps, it is time.*

*Talk to you next week.*

*Chief Lady*

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