



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Questions are being asked, once again, as to what the Government of China considers ‘State Secrets’. The answer, as far as I am concerned, is easy: Whatever information could be sensitive or embarrassing to the Government of the Motherland must be State Secrets. Mr Zheng En Chong, formerly a solicitor, practising in China, recently learned his lesson about the definition of a State Secret when he was given the sentence of three years in jail for telling some foreigners about property and labour disputes in Shanghai (by the way, Shanghai is the city of my birth). The foreigners, as it was discovered by the Motherland’s police (God bless their lovely green uniforms!), were the international do-gooders – also, known as international trouble-makers – known as human rights activists. Of course, such information was embarrassing to the Government of China. Mr Zheng En Chong, being formerly a lawyer, should have known this. If he did not realise that telling outsiders about property disputes in Shanghai was an embarrassment to the Government of China, for what reason was he permitted to be a lawyer? How did he get his practising licence from the Government of China, in the first place? Clearly, he did not understand the law. A Chinese lawyer, especially, should know what is embarrassing and sensitive to his Government. I applaud the Government of the Motherland for jailing this traitor. Maybe, the sentence should have been for life? He was released from Shanghai’s Tilanqiao prison, early last Monday, but he is on a kind of Chinese probation for the next year. That should put a zipper on his big mouth. If he tries to embarrass my Government, again, it will be back in jail for this felon. If you think that I am wrong with regard to jailing bigmouths, just consider the following indisputable facts from history. During the time in England when the monarch was the head of the Church, the Judiciary, as well as Parliament, if anybody in his Kingdom defamed the monarch, it was ‘Off with His/Her/Its Head!’ And, I assure you, that lots and lots of heads did roll under the headman’s axe of the Fifteenth Century and the Sixteenth Century. In Thailand, today, there is the law of Lese-Majesty – the crime of insulting the king or holding him in disrespect. This law allows for the prosecution and execution of one found guilty under this archaic statute. An archaic law that has never been repealed remains on the statute books, you know, and prosecutions may take place even though, at first glance, such prosecutions may appear ludicrous. Let me give you another example and you will understand, more clearly. There is a law in England that states that anybody found defacing a bridge or public monument may be transported for life. The term, ‘Transported for Life’, meant, in days of yore, shipped off to Australia and the felon would not be permitted to return to England. This law has never been repealed although I know of no incidents of late of it being used in a Magistrate’s Court in England whereby the convicted offender was transported for life. I am certain, however, that prosecutions have taken place for people, found defacing monuments and bridges in the United Kingdom, but the penalty was, probably, just a fine, or having the convicted person, serve some time in a county jail, cleaning toilets and what-have-you. I suppose, also, that the chief reason that British magistrates have not been forcibly exporting felons to Australia is that the Australian Government has become a little stropky of late. This is the typical case of a child, trying to tell its grandmother how to suck eggs. Still, there is no reason that, one day, a Magistrate, sitting in his Court in, say, Exeter, should not recommend that a felon be transported for life to the outback of Australia, complete with permanent-fastened, iron leg-shackles. The law is a wonderful invention of man and a country without laws would, without question, be a country in chaos. China needs good laws in order that there be a well-oiled and well-beloved civilisation, commensurate with the veneration that the people feel about the country. I, for one, love my country and respect all of its laws, those that with which I am fully conversant, and those laws about which I know nothing. I trust the lawmakers of China, its judges, the delegates of The National

People's Congress and all of their family members, the policemen, members of the People's Liberation Army, etc, etc, etc. Love ... Love ... Love ...Love ... Love. I hope that that is enough advertised love of China ... just in case I may make a mistake when talking to my friends about matters in the sphere of common knowledge, or of documents, which are open to any member of the public to view upon the payment of the prescribed fee for such viewing and their republication, unless there is an Order of the Court, proscribing such republication.

Ah, yes! The law is, really, a wondrous thing!

Talk to you next week,

Chief Lady

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