

## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*All that I think that I know is merely pretence. I have come to acknowledge this of late and I have made a determination that the pretence of knowledge, as far as I am concerned, shall never grow out of proportion. I know very little about anything, of that I am certain, and, from this base, I think that I have an opportunity to learn and to understand that cultural selection is, probably, a wiser choice than the suggested knowledge of elitists. I am humbled. About science, one learns a great deal about a little; about philosophy, one learns a little about a great deal. I want to pass this message on to you, today. It is a pity that some of our Hongkong leaders and, especially, a number of our Legislative Councillors, do not accept the truism of that which I have just come to understand (a little, at least) because, if they did, then, Hongkong might benefit, immensely, and this, obviously, would cascade down to you and to me. I read, daily, of this Hongkong Government bigwig, saying this and that, and some Legislative Councillors, making determinations which, clearly, leave a lot to be desired. What is required in the Legislative Council is a 'compass' in order to permit those who sit in this august chamber to be able to navigate through the fog and confusion which must pervade it, regularly, now. I am only a housewife, you understand, so that I suppose that it is correct to state that I cannot understand very much that is being discussed in the Legislative Council. Housewives, a subspecies of the female homo sapiens, of the phylum, hominidae, it is widely believed by most men, do not understand politics, finances and business, knowing only about shopping and the raising of children. However, since I have come to realise the fact that what I think I know is merely a pretence of knowledge, I have adopted a policy of trying to disprove the latest Hongkong political posturings – to falsify them may be another way to put it – and, if all of my mental callisthenics fails to bring about proof that something is wrong, then, clearly, it must be correct. In the case of the matter of the proposal to impose a Goods and Services Tax for Hongkong, for instance, I am well able to falsify just about all that I have read about this proposal from the Government's arguments: Ergo, it must be wrong. Putting a new idea as a coefficient of an unproven formula, allowing it to be exposed to scientific competition, permits permutations to be discovered – which lead to more discoveries. More importantly, however, I ask myself: From where did this idea of a Goods and Services Tax originate? It seems to me that the intellectual calibre of most of Hongkong's Ministers and Government leaders are not such as to allow them to understand very much, other, I am told, than the cost of very expensive bottles of wine – bottles of wine which are being purchased for them by a Hongkong moguls in order to lay the foundations, for some reason or another, either today or in the future. The scientific world accepts that the study of economics is rooted, firstly, in philosophy, which was a branch of theosophy in ages past. Alchemy is the progenitor of all modern scientific investigations – chemistry, anatomy, botany, etc, etc, etc. Everything, you see, is derived from something else because ex nihilo nihil (nothing comes from nothing). Blind acceptance (or rejection) of what is termed as common knowledge is very convenient, I know, but the problem is that it can, and very often is, wrong in part if not in whole. To state that because a certain, well-respected, international organisation, such as International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, also known as The World Bank, has determined this or that and, therefore, Hongkong should adopt a certain posture, such as widening its tax base, based on the findings of that certain, well-respected, international organisation, is, as far as I am concerned, a guarantee for Hongkong to be headed in the wrong direction. Blind acceptance is no acceptance at all, but akin to lemmings, rushing in mass migrations in order to drown themselves in the sea in their search for food. It is not, always, possible for a formula in one situation to be exported and become applicable in another. Suppose the Legislative Councillors (those who are able to think, that is, and not just spout stupid remarks and be thrown out the Chamber for so doing) look carefully at the proposal for the adoption of a Goods and Services Tax, introduced by the Financial Secretary, Mr Henry Tang Ying Yen (), in order to try to falsify*

*the very idea of it, coming very existence. What do you think would be the result? I am certain that Legislative Councillors would be able to convince Government that it is wrong or, alternatively, that it is correct in essence, but not in its present form. Such a determination would be based on that which Rene Descartes would have called, 'Cartesian Doubt' – which is indisputable. Rene Descartes' method for discovering a truth, of which he could be absolutely certain, was to use scepticism: He attempted to doubt everything that he believed to be true and to investigate if it was indeed possible to doubt it. Using this 'method of doubt', he found that he could doubt whether or not he was, in fact, awake, since it was always possible that he was dreaming. He could also doubt whether or not the physical world and his own body existed, since it was always possible that a powerful and malicious daemon was creating the illusion of these things in his mind. However, try as he might, he could not doubt that he, himself, existed, since the very act of doubting required a doubter, namely himself. In order to doubt, he had to exist. Rene Descartes penned this conclusion in the famous Latin expression: 'Cogito, ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am). Today, I prefer to use the term, 'falsification of knowledge' – an attempt to prove the converse of an argument in order to examine it, objectively and impartially.*

*It is extremely easy for Legislative Councillors to criticise or to be passionate ... for the sake of criticising or for the sake of demonstrating passion, mostly for the benefit of the electorate, I would suggest. What Hongkong needs is not passion, for the sake of passion, criticism for the sake of criticising, or the spouting of slogans in order to embarrass or to make unfounded insinuations against this person or that person, but rational, well-reasoned determinations, based on impartial and objective reasoning, reasoning that will stand the test of time.*

*Think about it, My Dear Grandchild.*

*Until next week,*

*Chief (humble) Lady*

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