

## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*I was reading how the Emperor and Empress of Japan had so much time on their hands, last week, that they took the trouble to bid farewell to the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr Hu Jin Tao (), at the hotel in which he was staying in Tokyo. Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko bestowed that which must be considered a singular honour on the President of China by going to this hotel and bowing low as an indication of subservience to this great, world leader. I, personally, think that that was a wonderful gesture on the part of the Emperor and Empress. It must have taken great courage on their part. That singular act shows, among other things, that the President of China has achieved the same level as the Emperor and Empress of Japan, at least, one must suppose. Of course, one may like to ponder whether or not the same honour should have been bestowed on the President of the United States of America when Mr George W. Bush visited what used to be called The Land of The Rising Sun. It seems, in retrospect, that President George W. Bush was not afforded similar treatment as that afforded to the President of China. As far as Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko are concerned, I suppose that their actions of the past week were suggestive that they think more highly of the President of China than the President of the United States of America? And they might just be correct. In the case of President George W. Bush, of course, it could be held that he represents the head of government of the conquering nation, revisiting the vanquished Japan. In the case of President Hu Jin Tao, he represented the most-populous country of the world, which was 'raped' by Japan between 1931 and 1945. In today's world, I fully realise that the national crimes of yesteryear must be forgiven in order that the many peoples of the world may live in harmony with each other because it is in their mutual interests so to do. Then again, there is, of course, the matter of money, isn't there? I suppose the fact that Japan is leaning more and more on trade with China had nothing to do with the Emperor and Empress of Japan going to the hotel of President Hu Jin Tao in order to say 'sayonara' to him? If President Hu Jin Tao had gone to England, do you think that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II would have gone to the hotel in which he was staying in order to take tea with the leader of China? Or, perhaps, to see him off on the day of his departure at Heathrow Airport? Also, it is highly unlikely that the President of China would have been invited to Buckingham Palace in order to meet the Queen of some 60 million, unwashed Englishmen. I do not think that Queen Elizabeth II is of the opinion that President Hu Jin Tao is of the same rank as the Royals of Great Britain? Not on your Nelly, in the vernacular of the Australians.*

*I must tell you, My Dear Grandchild, that I feel a little sad that members of the top family of Japan, which is representative of this once great and proud nation, have fallen to such a level as to be, effectively, demoted to the rank of a 'butler' for the Government of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. What must the loyal Japanese royalists think of this state of affairs? To have lost World War II was a terrible dishonour for Emperor Hirohito. Some people still ponder the reason that Emperor Hirohito did not perform that ritual in the time-honoured tradition of achieving an honourable death. It is well known that Emperor Hirohito, the unassuming grandson of Emperor Meiji, on succeeding to the throne in 1926, adopted 'showa' (enlightened peace) as the official designation for his reign. However when General Baron Giichi Tanaka became Prime Minister in 1927, things changed and Japan adopted an aggressive expansionistic policy, leading to the Sino-Japanese Conflict of 1937. Today, the Emperor of Japan is the head of state on diplomatic occasions, but I do not think that he is duty bound to act as the person to open the doors of hotels for visiting heads of state from other countries.*

*It was on August 14, 1945, that Japan accepted, in principle, the terms of surrender to the Allied Forces, thus ending World War II, as far as the Japanese people were concerned. It was Emperor Hirohito, himself,*

*by dint of his will, who forced Japan's paralysed government to surrender, unconditionally, and he broadcast to the people of Japan, for the first time, despite a last-minute attempt by Japan's militarists to sabotage the broadcast, his reasoning. As history has recorded, the formal act of unconditional surrender was signed aboard the American battleship, USS Missouri, at Tokyo Bay, on September 2, 1945. Since then, Japan has enjoyed 63 years of uninterrupted peace, economic prosperity, and, today, it is the world's second-largest economy. The great nation of Nihon (or Nippon) (the origin of the sun), hence, The Land of The Rising Sun, has risen from the ashes of 1945. The people of Japan have reason, once again, to be proud.*

*The Emperor of Japan is, today, a figurehead, to be sure, in the same way that Queen Elizabeth II is a figurehead for her people. As the Emperor of Japan, he is seen as being the personification of goodness and righteousness. He carries, upon his shoulders, the heritage of his nation. He is revered by most of the 130 million human inhabitants of some 3,000 islands that comprises the sovereign nation of Japan. He is, if you will, the guardian of the culture and traditions of this great country whose history dates back to 660 B.C. when, it is said, Jinmu Tenno became the first Emperor. Emperor Akihito remains a binding force for his people. He is the 'glue' that binds the people to the great traditions of centuries past. He is held in high esteem, being the personification of a great nation. But he is not supposed to be a 'butler' for the right-wing government of the day. Or, am I wrong?*

*Talk to you next week.*

*Chief Lady*

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