

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I was in the Salvatore Ferragamo shop the other day, buying a new pair of shoes and a blouse, but I could not help but stop my shopping spree in order to watch a couple of plump, young Chinese ladies, buying shoes at the front part of the shop. Well, I could not believe my eyes! This duo of plump, Chinese ladies, both of whom were local residents, not Chinese ladies from across the border at Lo Wu, must have tried on at least 6 different pairs of shoes, each, and, still, neither of them could make a choice. These ladies did not know each other, of that I am sure, but their actions were, almost, identical. First, they would examine the shoes, very carefully, holding them at different angles, at eye level, in order to visualise this or that. Then, they would put them on and walk to a 7-foot mirror in order to see how the shoes looked on their little feet: First, a full, frontal view; then, the left-side view; then, the right-side view; then, the back view. Then, a little walkabout on the carpeted floor, and, then, sit down to view the shoes on their little feet while seated. Then, up once again they would stand in order to see how they looked in the new shoes in the mirror. After about 20 minutes of these ladies' actions, I was getting tired of watching them, doing their mime acts, and was about to leave, but stopped myself: I had to know whether or not either lady would purchase a pair of shoes. The result, which must have delighted the salesgirls, was that they, both, bought one pair of shoes, each.

That evening, I felt in the mood to have a dinner at a restaurant which had a very good buffet. I took Bo-Bo with me because, after all, somebody had to pay the bill. Lo and behold! There was one of the plump Chinese ladies, who had been shopping for shoes at Salvatore Ferragamo. She was sitting with a person who appeared to be her boyfriend (probably, as in my case, somebody had to pay the bill). I could not help but overhear part of the conversation as the boyfriend asked the plump lady with the new shoes as to what she would like to eat. Her answer was that she, really, did not care because, as she put it: 'I do not think much about eating, just feeding my hunger pangs.' This surprised me somewhat because I would have thought that she would have taken as long about selecting the food to be put into her stomach for the evening as she did in selecting her new shoes. The enigma here is that this lady, as with so many people in Hongkong, these days, pays more attention to her outward appearance than she does to her health. We are what we eat. There can be no question about that statement. Look at the majority of Americans, living in the major cities of the United States, if one questions the veracity of that statement: They are terribly obese. The tons and tons of junk food, devoured by Americans, have made the country populated by what could only be described as human slugs. And the slugs continue to proliferate, year, after year, after year. Human beings, it seems to me, don't seem to make too much sense when it comes to selecting the kinds of food that they put into their mouths, but they spend countless hours on the making of silly determinations about the multicoloured shoes that they want to wear, parading down the street. Interestingly enough, for the most part, ladies select shoes not for their comfort and/or utility, but for their (the shoes, that is) looks.

From birth, most of us are given the same, or similar, bodies: Two arms, two legs, a set of thirty two teeth, and so on and so on. However, as we mature, most people do not look after their bodies and the end result is that they ruin them, either slowly or quickly. Some people smoke cigarettes until they develop lung cancer or some other horrible disease as a direct result of indulging in that filthy habit, while others drink alcohol to

excess and, thus, help to speed up the process of dying. We are only given one body in this life so we ought to treasure it. But the sad truth is that we do not give our bodies the care and attention that it so richly deserves. I have forced Bo-Bo, for the past few decades, to go to the gymnasium at least five days per week, one hour and thirty minutes per session. He spends about one hour, performing aerobic exercises, followed by weight training for the last thirty minutes. Although Bo-Bo is sixty five years old, he, still, looks good and he has a fine set of muscles on his arms, legs and chest, although he, still, has a bit of a belly. He looks after himself – with my help, of course – and, as a result, he enjoys health. With health comes the ability for all bodily functions to operate properly ... and well. There is, as you may imagine, method to my causing Bo-Bo to exercise, regularly. At the same time, I watch his diet and keep him away from fatty foods even though, as you are well aware, he is a Shanghainese by birth. I cannot understand, therefore, the reason that, as I have said at the beginning of this letter, a plump lady would spend such a long time in purchasing a pair of fashionable shoes and, yet, spend very little time in selecting healthy food to put into her stomach and give reasonable consideration to establishing a regimen in a gymnasium. The conclusion to this letter is that man is killing himself, slowly but surely, by eating himself into his grave. Are we, all, mad?

Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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