



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Hongkong is suffering the worst economic downturn in years. And, it is quite likely to get worse. I have a great deal of trouble in restraining myself whenever I pass by the shops, selling my favourite clothes. I am even thinking that I should not purchase the latest spring fashions from Paris and Milan because of self-imposed, budgetary restraints. According to Bo-Bo, we, all, have to concern ourselves with being thrifty in these difficult economic times. Bo-Bo maintains that he wants to be in tune with his people, not just in Shanghai, but in every part of China. (He has a political mandate from Beijing, you will recall) In Hongkong, he told me, we have to empathise with the poorest people, understanding and sharing their sorrows and seeing what can be done to ameliorate their difficult situations. It is not politically correct, he cautioned me, to see the wife of an important person, such as he, to parade round town and in fashionable restaurants and shopping malls, wearing the latest fashions from European capitals. Having finished lecturing me on the way that I should spend my money, he turned on the television in order to watch the latest news – and, then, the feathers flew! ‘What is he doing?’ I heard him yell. ‘He can’t leave his people in such a period of crisis!’ ‘He’ is the Chief Executive of Hongkong, Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (). Bo-Bo’s blood pressure shot right up to boiling point, I could see, as he pranced through our home, cursing the actions of the Chief Executive. He sent off a hurried note to Beijing, informing the top muck-a-muck of the situation. There will be trouble, now that Bo-Bo has written of his displeasure to the top delegates of National People’s Congress. According to Bo-Bo, it is a leader’s duty to be with his people whenever there is a time of crisis and, also, on the most-important days of the year, the Lunar New Year Festival, being the most-important one of all. Also, it is the duty of the Chief Executive to send a message to his people, telling them, among other things, of the actions that he will be taking to lighten their burden and to give hope to them for the future. This is, exactly, what President Hu Jin Tao () and Premier Wen Jiao Bao () did, during the Lunar New Year Festival. They want to be in synchronisation with the people of China and to be seen as being in synchronisation with the people to whom they owe a duty of fidelity. Instead of doing his duty, during the Lunar New Year, however, the Chief Executive of Hongkong determined to take a holiday, leaving a flunky to deliver a speech over Hongkong television stations, a speech that could, and should, only have been delivered by the person, selected by the National People’s Congress to guide the fortunes of Hongkong: Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen. As far as Bo-Bo is concerned, Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen should be utterly ashamed of himself. I concur. I am sure that Bo-Bo is correct. When our first child was about to be born, Bo-Bo was at the hospital. That is what I would expect of any husband. The birth of a child is a matter for the 2 people who helped to bring the child into the world: The husband and the wife. The pain and suffering that a wife invariably experiences, during childbirth, must be shared, if not physically, at least, psychologically.

In today’s Hongkong, the people are suffering a recession. Money is tight. Banks are not lending. Consumer spending is down. Factories, restaurants and shops are closing down. Unemployment is rising. And where was the Chief Executive, during the Chinese New Year festival season: Having a little holiday in the US? ‘Enjoying’ a holiday, one is told. If I cannot spend my money in accordance with the style to which I have become accustomed over the years, for what reason may Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen take a holiday, during

the Lunar New Year Festival? It is a disgrace! Bo-Bo did some research and discovered that the Chief Executive decided to take a holiday, during the Lunar New Year Festival from the afternoon of January 23 to February 1. The official notification of his holiday was made on January 22, which fell on the Thursday, 3 days before the Lunar New Year Festival kicked off. He went to the United States, leaving Mr Henry Tang Ying Yen (), his flunky, as the Acting Chief Executive. It was Mr Henry Tang Ying Yen who delivered the message to the people of Hongkong, a message which, in a word, said, be brave and all will come out in the wash. Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen left a short, pre-recorded, 2-minute statement, welcoming the Year of The Ox – the statement said nothing. When there was that terrible earthquake in Sichuan, in April, last year, the Premier of China quickly flew there in order to be with his people in their time of need. That is called, being a leader. I am not suggesting, not for a second, that Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen is a patch on Premier Wen Jiao Bao, but one would have thought that he could follow the example of his boss. Don't you agree?

Shame on Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam Kuen! Let's have a walkabout to demonstrate our displeasure with this man. Shame! Shame! Shame!

Enough of this for now. Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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