

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

*The idea that honours, dished out, seemingly indiscriminately, by the Government of Hongkong, will be recognised, internationally, in similar fashion as honours, bestowed on people of merit by the Government of Great Britain, is ludicrous. What in the world is the Hongkong Government, trying to achieve by awarding The **Grand Bauhinia Medal (GBM)**, The **Gold Bauhinia Star (GBS)**, The **Silver Bauhinia Star (SBS)** and The **Bronze Bauhinia Star (BBS)** to its sycophants and shoeshiners? It is only when one is awarded The **Grand Bauhinia Medal (GBM)**, which is the highest award that one may receive in Hongkong, these days, that one may be addressed as The Honourable this or that. When Hongkong was a British Colony, select residents were awarded honours, such as Knight Grand Cross of the **British Empire (GBE)** or Dame Grand Cross (**GBE**), Knight Commander of the **British Empire (KBE)** or Dame Commander (**DBE**), Commander of the **British Empire (CBE)**, Officer of the **British Empire (OBE)** and, lastly, Member of the **British Empire (MBE)**. These honours, known as the 'Order of Chivalry', were established on June 4, 1917, by King George V of the United Kingdom. Internationally, they mean that the person, entitled to these honours, is a person who has been recognised as being worthy of them, a person of merit, of bravery, a person of honour. Now, My Dear Grandchild, please tell me the reason that people, such as Mr Sitaldas Kewalram Motwani and his son, Mr Raj Sitaldas Motwani, are entitled to be honoured with The **Bronze Bauhinia Star (BBS)**? What have these 2 people done to deserve such awards? In my opinion, both of these ethnic Indian residents of Hongkong are entitled to something, but not honorary titles. I shall not harp more on these people except to state that if they are entitled to receive such awards, then, these awards deserve to be thrown into the dustbin – where they, probably, originated, anyway.*

*It is not necessary for Hongkong to try to compete with Great Britain in the game of handing out honorary awards – because it cannot compete. Even the Government of China at Beijing does not recognise these silly honours. Anyway, Hongkong does not have a queen (although there is quite a number of gay people, walking the streets of the territory). The only honour that the people of Hongkong understand is gold and the colour of money, lots and lots of it. In the United Kingdom, honorary awards transcend monetary considerations and people, who are honoured by the Crown, are people who have proved to be outstanding in some field or other in times of peace, and, in times of war, people of exceptional bravery, or those who have contributed, significantly, to the war effort. The veterans of World War II, for instance, even though they may not have been honoured for bravery, may well be invited to the Queen's Garden Party and, in this manner, they are honoured for their service to the country in a time of great hardship. Some of these World War II veterans, such as Royal Air Force bombardiers, navigators, gunners and so on, are in ill health, but they are still recognised for their singular contribution to the victory, won by the Allies in the war against the Nazi oppressors and the Japanese Empire, a war that saw some 50 million people die, around the world. When an honoured, former British veteran of that war, say one with The **Victoria Cross (VC)**, which is the highest military decoration, which is, or has been, awarded for valour in the face of the enemy to members of the armed forces of various Commonwealth countries, it is, immediately recognised by immigration officials, worldwide. These immigration officials, immediately, feel honoured to be in the presence of such an individual. But, can you imagine persons, such as Mr Sitaldas Kewalram Motwani and/or his son, Mr*

Raj Sitaldas Motwani, entering London at Heathrow Airport and telling the British immigration official: 'I am Mr Sitaldas Kewalram Motwani and this is my son, Mr Raj Sitaldas Motwani. We both have been awarded the BBS.' The immigration official is likely to state: 'Blimey! You work for the British Broadcasting Service, do you? Am I supposed to be impressed? Such cheek!'

There are only a little more than 7 million Chinese people, resident in Hongkong, at this time, and most of these people are just trying to scratch out a living. The world cares nothing, of that I am sure, of the honorary awards that are presented to friends of the Administration of the Chief Executive. The Commonwealth of Nations, formerly known as the British Commonwealth, comprises 53 of the world's countries, across all 6 inhabited continents. The members of the Commonwealth of Nations have a combined human population of about 2.1 billion people, almost one third of the world's population, of which number, about 1.17 billion people live in India and 94 percent live in Asia and Africa.. So, if a member of the Commonwealth of Nations is honoured by the Head of the Commonwealth, which is a ceremonial position, currently held by Queen Elizabeth II, it has meaning. But a Hongkong BBS! What in the world is that meant to signify? The Jews would call such honours, simply: Chutzpah!

It was written, more than 1,600 years ago, that they will cheerfully speak of a bad man as happy; and, load him with honours and social esteem ... provided he be rich and otherwise powerful. I have no honours, My Dear Grandchild, but I keep my honour, neat and clean, and, although others see not the purity in my breast, I sleep well at night, knowing myself that I am myself and not a person, claiming to be that which I am not. I carry my adornments on my soul, not on a piece of tin at which one my peer, then, sneer, then, snicker.

Well, I have to go now. Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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