

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I went to a kind of clinic where rehabilitated drug addicts go for counselling after they are released from prison and there I met a very charming European lady who took the trouble to explain the work that she and her colleagues undertake on a regular basis at this establishment. She was very nicely dressed, but I noted that her clothes were not fashionable, at all. Of course, I did not comment on her clothes, however, I could not help but wonder as to the reason that she was dressed in a manner that was so plain and drab. During the conversation, which lasted for about one hour, she corrected me in calling the place a clinic, saying that I should not make mention of the word, 'clinic', but instead refer to the establishment as a rehabilitation unit. Her colleague, another young lady of about 28 years, came over and we had a really interesting time, talking about all kinds of things, culminating in referring to men – naturally – and how most of them are unsympathetic to the needs of ladies. At about this time, I discovered that these young ladies were not ordinary women. They were nuns! I was really shocked. 'Why are you not wearing the uniforms of nuns?' I asked. 'You fooled me, completely.' The answer came back that if they had worn a nun's habit, then, the men at the rehabilitation unit would have been on their guard and would have treated them differently. This, I was told, would defeat the purpose of the exercise. Then, I understood the reason that their clothes were not fashionable. And I said this to them. They laughed. 'You fooled me! You fooled me! You fooled me, completely,' I giggled. 'Without your uniforms, I would never have known of your calling. Do you ever get propositioned?' The answer was that the men propositioned them nearly every day, but very politely. Then, they left me to do their duty as another bunch of reformed drug addicts entered the rehabilitation unit. It was my first time to come face to face with American nuns of the evangelist sect who have come to Asia to save the souls of Asians.

Then, a few days later, I was having luncheon at a Chinese restaurant in a 5-star hotel in Pacific Place when, at the next table, there were 2 Europeans, dressed in the black garb of the clergy. They were the guests of a group of 3 men and 3 women and they were discussing something that seemed very important because they seemed intent on eating a great deal while the conversation progressed. One of the priests said very little and, instead, kept loading his mouth with food. The other one spoke most of the time, in between mouthfuls of food, you understand. He remarked on how tasty was this dish and that dish. Needless to state, the clergymen were quite plump and their priestly uniforms looked almost new. Being the baat-poh (), that I am, I could not help but listen to some of the conversation, which, in essence, was about converting the heathens of Asia to the ways of Christianity. Now, here we have a situation whereby some Europeans have come to Asia in order to help the downtrodden yellow race to accept the one-God. The words, heathens and laity, were used over and over again, during this meal. I found the use of these words was fast becoming offensive to me.

This is, actually, the chief reason for me to write this letter to you, today, My Dear Grandchild. For what reason would these religious European zealots think that the yellow race knows little to nothing about the existence of God. On the contrary, we invented the idea of, not one God, but a whole family of them. Asian cultures, going back more than 5,000 years, have, always, believed in gods. We have a god for this and a

god for that. The universe is full of gods, in our beliefs, because we know that the gods cannot see everything and need help, from time to time. In Shintoism, for instance, before one enters a shrine, one must ring the bell in order to wake up the Shinto gods. We, Chinese, have a very horrible-looking god whose job it is to frighten off anybody that would have any idea to hurt us. We have a goddess of the sea, who helps us so that we will not drown. We have gods for this and goddesses for that. We are covered from every angle ... just in case, you understand.

When I went with Bo-Bo, my froglike husband, on an official trip to North America and, then, to Italy in order to hold talks with the Chinese residents of these areas, first I insisted that we visit a Buddhist temple in Wanchai and then, in Taiwan, we visited 2 more Buddhist temples in order to obtain blessings so that we would be safe on our journey. I had heard that some people try to assassinate politicians so I wanted to obtain all the help that I could get. Well, I can tell you, now, that nothing happened on the trip and we returned home without any incident, at all. The reason that I was safe: Because our gods had been protecting us. Naturally, I had made offerings to the temples, but the few thousand dollars that I put into the temples' boxes was well worth it, considering the security that it gave to me and The Frog.

Do you think that the Christian God is more powerful than the Asian God? Huh! I challenge the one-god of Europe to the many and powerful gods of Asia to a duel: Let the better god take all the spoils. God bless everybody! By the way, still on the subject of god and goddesses, there has never been a time in the history of civilisation that man has not believed in some kind of deity. It is due to man's inability to live without the requirement of a mental crutch that he has determined that there must be something else, an all-powerful being, that guides his life, rewards him for his good deeds and punishes him when he is naughty. But because man is so limited in his thinking, he can only perceive of deities as having shapes, known only to him, shapes that are in human forms. I have never heard of an all-powerful deity, looking like a hippopotamus, an elephant, or a worm, have you?

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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