

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I have been intrigued to listen and to read the twaddle of self-appointed, political scientists of Hongkong in their prognostications in respect of the resignations, last Tuesday, of 5 Legislative Council members, dubbed the Pan-Democrats. Pro-Beijing Press reports claim that the political theatre has turned into a farce. Learned Hongkong academics have claimed, in interviews, televised widely, that the Pan-Democrats could lose the game and their huge gamble could knock them for a loop. I do not agree – because the Pan-Democrats have, already, won the day! What these people attempted to do, and succeeded in their quest, was to tell the people of Hongkong, in a language that all can understand, that the Government of the territory should be accountable to the people. This, to me, is the true meaning of Universal Suffrage. But, strangely, this simple concept has been conveniently forgotten, replaced, instead, by gobbledegook terminology which is quite unnecessary and, if anything, is confusing and tends to obfuscate the very concept of Universal Suffrage. Simple people, such as I, need simple concepts. These former Legislative Councillors have made an attempt to bring to the people of Hongkong, the idea that their Government should be held accountable for its actions. The present situation is that it is not accountable to anybody. The horrible mistakes, perpetrated during the time of the reign of Mr Tung Chee Hwa () when he was the Chief Executive of Hongkong, have been swept under the carpet of history. Look at the Hongkong Disneyland debacle as an example. It is a \$HK23-billion disaster! Who is responsible? Nobody! At least, the 5, former Legislative Councillors of the Pan- Democratic Camp are trying to do something – which is unlike the present Government of Donald the Duck – Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (). That these 5 people are trying and, perhaps, they will fail in the opinion of certain Hongkong academics, but their concerted action is far better than failing to try.

At dinner, on Tuesday night, after turning off the television programme where that lout of a Legislative Councillor with long hair was trying to be civilised, for a change, I asked Bo-Bo, my froglike husband, what he thought of the situation. 'It is crazy!' he said as he munched on some cashew nuts. 'Who are these 5 Legislative Councillors to try to intimidate Beijing? It is nuts, I tell you.' And into his mouth went some more cashew nuts. 'But,' I said calmly and with aplomb, 'they are just trying to make a point that the people of Hongkong have a right to be heard. They want freedom of choice and they want the Government of the day to be held accountable. What is wrong with that?' The Frog looked at me and smiled as though I was some kind of moron: 'Beijing ... (into his mouth went another handful of cashew nuts) Can you imagine the chaos that would follow if the people of China tried to go along the same road that is being suggested in Hongkong by these Pan-Democrats? Use your head, will you? China is the second-largest economy of the world, today, second only to the United States of America. It gained that position by having a government that determined what is best for China and, by extension, what is best for the human population of the country. Our leaders have sacrificed themselves on the altar of public service; and, they have asked very little for themselves other than the right to help all of the peoples of this great nation of ours.' With that monologue, obviously feeling very proud of himself, The Frog took yet another large handful of cashew nuts and, along with his glass of whisky, smugly nested into his armchair as though to suggest to me: 'Let's see if you can better that!' 'Just like a man,' I thought to myself. Still being calm and collected, I said: 'Should a

government pick up the socks of the people or teach the people to pick up their own socks? In economics, as I recall, it is accepted that when people are hungry, one should not feed them, making them dependent on handouts, but teach them to feed themselves. Who is to say what is best for the people of China? Are the delegates of The National People's Congress infallible? Can any one of them make a mistake and, if a delegate does make a mistake, who will be held responsible for that mistake? I am not a child to be told by my mother or father what I should or should not do, especially at my age. I do not think that I want some elderly person in Beijing, on a whim, to dictate to me what I may or may not do. I want due process of law. In business, if I err, I suffer financially. In politics, if an elected official is found wanting, then, he may suffer the wrath of the electorate and be impeached from office. But, today, in Hongkong and in Beijing, there is no mechanism by which officialdom can be brought to book other than the rule of the gun. And this is exactly what the Pan-Democrats are trying to make the people of Hongkong understand.'

While I was continuing with my defence of my position in response to The Frog's emotively charged monologue, I was pacing the living room, my back to The Frog for most of the time. On concluding my monologue, I turned to The Frog in order to see his reaction ... but he was fast asleep, having downed his whisky, his glass, having fallen onto the carpet.

I had completely wasted my time.

Chief Lady

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