

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I was pondering whether or not, if invited, I should agree to join the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It is likely to happen, you know. What is your opinion? You may not appreciate this, but being a member of the Chinese Communist Party means that I would have to be obedient to my Party Seniors and do what I am told when told to do it whatever it may be. This would be a little difficult for me, at times, because I am, usually, not a very obedient person, especially when I am in my down cycle. Having lived with Bo-Bo, my froglike husband, for these many years, I have learned the gentle art of getting what I want even when The Frog does not want me to have it. Being a member in good standing of the Chinese Communist Party, however, I would be able to get whatever I wanted without any fuss at all. I have made a list of all of the perquisites that I would expect, being a member of China's elitist club:

- 1. When I travel, throughout China, I would not have to go through the commoners' channel at airports, but go through the CCP Channel where bags are not searched and where one has specially trained staff to take care of the likes of my kind;*
- 2. Once it is known that I am travelling on an aeroplane, Seat AAA would be assigned to me as a matter of courtesy by the management of the State-Owned airline and, if it is a foreign airline, such as Cathay Pacific Airways, then, the Chinese Foreign Service would arrange that I would be seated in the front row, first class, where nobody else would be permitted to sit;*
- 3. Naturally, when I am required to attend meetings in Beijing, there would be no cost for me to travel and I would be chauffeured everywhere I went and, in Beijing, there would be a motor-cycle, outriders escort, awaiting my arrival, with flags flying and young girls, waving little Chinese flags, singing: 'Welcome, Mother of China! Welcome Betty!' (To tell you the truth, I have been practicing the back-hand salute, just like the Queen of England, in preparation for the grand day of my arrival in my Capital City);*
- 4. When shopping in Beijing, I would have my own security team, of course, so that my beloved Chinese people would be kept at a respectable distance. After all, one cannot be too careful these days, especially after the riots in the Xinjiang Province;*
- 5. At official receptions in Beijing, a secretary would have to be assigned to me in order to brief me whenever I am introduced to somebody that I had not met before. After all, the Queen of England cannot know all of her subjects, but all of her subjects are required to know the Queen of England;*
- 6. Still on the subject of security, I suppose I would require to have a crowd-control team so that I could do my shopping without standing in a line with smelly commoners; and,*
- 7. When in Hongkong, I take it that the People's Liberation Army would assign a squad of young,*

good-looking, virile soldiers to take me around and, when in IFC Mall or other shopping malls, they would make certain that I am the only customer in the shops that I deign to visit, having evicted all of the riff-raff so as not to disturb my deliberations.

Then, there are the negatives:

- 1. I would have to write reports to Beijing and that would take up a lot of my shopping time;*
- 2. I would not be permitted to show my anger in public because, if some Hongkong Press people caught me, ticking off some stupid salesperson or a waiter in a restaurant, I may have to explain my actions in Beijing;*
- 3. I would not be able to talk to people who are known to be inclined to harbour airy-fairy thoughts of making Hongkong a democracy;*
- 4. When attending official functions, either in Hongkong or Beijing, I and The Frog would have to wear Chairman Mao Jackets – and I know that I do not look my best in dark blue;*
- 5. It would not be correct for me to wear expensive jewellery when I go out of the house because I would have to give the appearance of being one with my beloved, Chinese riff-raff;*
- 6. I would be required to colour my hair in accordance with all of the other members of this elite club – jet black, dye-code: CCP-aa1 – and that would go for The Frog, too; and,*
- 7. I would never be able to Baat Poh () on the telephone with my girlfriends because my telephone calls would all be monitored and recorded for posterity.*

Yes, My Dear Grandchild, there are plusses and minuses when thinking of climbing the ladder to fame, you know; and, one must think carefully before accepting high honours. There is something to be said for the sweet simplicity of the three percents, you know. I was once asked by The Frog: ‘Don’t you want to be one with the people?’ I replied: ‘I have no complaints about the common man or common woman, or being one with him or her, except that ‘I’ should not be as common as they.’ I went on to explain that I did not want to be common or ordinary, but uncommon and extraordinary. ‘After all’, I said, ‘you determined to marry me so you must have known that I am not a common person, but an uncommon and special person. You recognised something in me that you could not find in other ladies. That is the reason that you selected me out of all of the other ladies of the world.’ Then, staring at him with my most-pathetic look, I said: ‘You did not make a mistake, did you?’ The Frog dared not answer and I suspected that I saw a tear, well up in his eyes. Ah! Love! Isn’t it wonderful! ... Almost as good as being selected to be a special member of the CCP.

Well, think it over, My Dear Grandchild, and let me know what you think of my paradoxical situation, will you? By the way, when I am made a member of the Chinese Communist Party, I shall still know you and still love you. But, as you can appreciate, our relationship will have to change, somewhat: The cost of rising through the ranks, you understand.

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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