

## The Wong Way .....

**Mr Wong is a practising solicitor in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Because he is a solicitor, he is very proud of his position in society. He wears only the latest fashionable clothes, which he purchases at a very fashionable departmental store, the same fashionable departmental store from where he purchased all of the furniture for his home. Solicitor Wong lives on The Peak, a very fashionable part of Hongkong. He lives in a house. He is married to a former teacher of the English language. He has a teenaged son who attends an international school. He is the proud owner of a white Rolls-Royce, which he purchased, second-hand, about 8 years ago.**

**The following are just some of the things that Solicitor Wong does; and, the reasoning (or lack of it) for his actions.**

Being a solicitor, an officer of the High Court of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is not an easy task. There is quite a number of dos and don'ts for somebody who has donned the robe, indicating his exalted rank in the very closed society of the tier of the territory. Over the years, Solicitor Wong had established himself in

Hongkong as being very much a homebody, guarding his family from the trials, tribulations, and terrors of illicit elements of society. He had his white Rolls-Royce and, although it was more than 8 years old, it was still in very good condition. Whenever, it had a scratch on it, Solicitor Wong would instruct his Filipino driver to take it to the garage, immediately, and have the scratch, painted over.

However, having gone through more than 3 Filipino drivers, Solicitor Wong found himself in a conundrum. It was a conundrum that he had never anticipated.

It has been the modus operandi of Solicitor Wong to import Filipinos from Manila and either have them taught to drive in Hongkong or, if they, already, had a valid driving licence from The Philippines, then, make application to the Hongkong Transport Department for a Hongkong Driving Licence on the grounds of reciprocity. The latter-mentioned application never resulted in speeding up the process of getting a valid Hongkong driving licence for the newly landed Filipino because, for some reason that Solicitor Wong never, really, understood, the Hongkong Transport Department always rejected every application even though Solicitor Wong signed as the employee of the applicant. Even so, importing drivers from The Philippines had worked very well, in the past, because the cost of a Filipino driver to work in Hongkong was much lower than employing a

Hongkong-Chinese driver. But, one day, the world threatened to come crashing down on Solicitor Wong. It happened more quickly than one could have anticipated: The Hongkong Transport Department introduced the '*Probationary Driving Licence Scheme*' for private motor cars. On reading the new law, Solicitor Wong was horrified when he noted: '*The holder of a probationary driving licence to drive a vehicle class is required by law to undergo a 12-month probationary driving period ...*'. That was not all, however, because the Probationary Driving Licence Scheme continued:

*'Display of "P" Plate*

- *According to regulation 12K(1) and the Thirteenth Schedule of the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap.374B), the holder of a probationary driving licence is required to display a "P" plate made of reflex-reflecting material in the following positions:*
- *For a private car or a light goods vehicle, a Small Plate shall be securely fixed at the front and rear of the motor vehicle, or on the left-hand side of the front and rear windscreens of the motor vehicle, in such a manner that the plates are clearly visible...'*

What was of great concern to Solicitor Wong, on scanning the new law, was that everybody and his cat would know that the driver of his Rolls-Royce was not an experienced one, at least, not in Hongkong. In fact, it would come to be known that Solicitor Wong was employing his Filipino driver, not out of consideration for his, the driver's, position in society, but in order for Solicitor Wong to save money. He imagined the embarrassment in being driven to The Grand Hyatt Hotel in his white Rolls-Royce where, displayed in a position that everybody could see, was that offensive '**P**' Plate, measuring 150 millimetres square, with the '**P**', emblazoned in the colour red. What an embarrassment! Here was an 8-year-old, white Rolls-Royce with a '**P**' Plate, indicating that the driver had only a Probationary Driving Licence. The question: What could Solicitor Wong tell his fellow solicitors about this situation? It goes without saying that Solicitor Wong could not tell a falsehood about the '**P**' Plate so that, if challenged, he would have to tell the truth: 'Yes,' he could claim, '*my driver made a mistake and, now, he is paying for his mistake.*' Such a rebuttal might be considered stretching the truth a little, but only a little.

One evening, when Nickolas, the teenaged son of Judy and Solicitor Wong, had gone to bed, Solicitor Wong obliquely asked his wife to consider '*their*' little problem. Judy had long given up the idea of sitting in the back of the Rolls-Royce, with a Filipino driver at the wheel, and had purchased her own motor car. Judy looked up at the ceiling, then, eyeball to eyeball with Solicitor Wong, and said: '*Since when was your problem, "our" problem? I told you, many months ago, to get rid of that clunker of a motor car and purchase a new German motor car. I don't ride in the Rolls-Royce so it is your problem, not mine.*' '*The motor car is 50 percent yours, at law,*' Solicitor Wong, donning his proverbial High Court cap, corrected his wife. '*Therefore, my problem with "our" Rolls-Royce is 50 percent yours, I suggest to you.*' '*May I abrogate my entitlement in respect of the Rolls-Royce?*' Judy asked. '*Certainly, not!*' came the immediate reply. '*Then,*' continued Judy, '*I think that we should sell the Rolls Royce and purchase a new Japanese or German motor car.*' This suggestion infuriated Solicitor Wong. After all, how could he parade round Hongkong without sitting in his famous, white Rolls Royce, while his trusty Filipino driver negotiated traffic conditions. '*You are completely unreasonable!*' he told his wife as he left the room, mumbling to himself about the lack of common sense that most women demonstrated, these days.

It was raining the next morning and the white Rolls-Royce of Solicitor Wong became very dirty and resembled a greyish luxury motor car instead of the shiny white motor car that it, actually, was ... or had been. It, then, struck this intrepid member of the Hongkong High Court that there was not a

requirement at law that one's motor car had to be clean. If, therefore, the windshield and the rear window were besmeared with mud, nobody would be able to see, clearly, the offending '**P**' Plate. And so, Solicitor Wong determined that it would be better to be known as a solicitor of a dirty white Rolls-Royce than a Hongkong solicitor who hired Filipino drivers in order to save money. It was, in fact, substituting a little dirt in order to save a lot of face.

*After all, is it not written that  
the skin of a proud man's face is very thin?*

.....*yaW gnoW ehT*

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