

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I fully appreciate that, in certain parts of the world, security of government servants and officers of the judiciary is an important issue. But, in Hongkong, it has never really been an issue as far as Government servants and members/officers of the Judiciary are concerned. In Italy, of course, the country is governed through the auspices of various not-so-secret organisations, called, generically, The Mafia, the funding for which is known to come from organised crime syndicates that operate, openly, in every part of the country. In Mexico, one has a situation, today, whereby organised criminal elements, supplying various types of drugs to North American distributors, are fighting for supremacy of that market. Trying to make living, anywhere near the Mexico-United States of America border is very dangerous, with gunmen, roaming the area, shooting at anybody who comes into range. In Hongkong, there are triads, of course, but, for the most part, they do not target Hongkong Government officials or officers or members of the High Court. But tell that to our Chief Executive and you will be told that he fears for his safety when he has the urge to take a little walkabout. So much so, that, in his recent walkabouts in order to sell his 'Act Now Campaign' – public support for the 2012 electoral reform proposals – he surrounded himself with an 'army' of security people. On his June 6 walkabout, he kept secret the locations that he and his ministers had targeted in order to be secure from unruly Hongkong elements that might attempt to compromise his safety. On June 17, the Chief Executive of Hongkong, Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (), also known as Donald The Duck, has scheduled a debate with Ms Audrey Eu (), the Chairperson of The Civic Party. The venue for this event will be at the Central Government Headquarters. The reason, he said, for choosing the Central Government Headquarters and not The University of Hongkong or some neutral ground was because of security considerations. Ergo, our Chief Executive fears for his safety from his own people.

I talked to Bo-Bo, my froglike husband, about the matter of security in Hongkong and asked him whether or not we should be concerned about my safety – I mean, of course, 'our' safety when walking round Hongkong – or should we engage the services of armed guards. 'Donald The Duck has become paranoid since taking office!' The Frog blurted out. 'Nobody wants to hurt him let alone try to assassinate him. He is a nobody! Don't you realise this? Of what is he afraid: Being hit by some overripe bananas? Does he fear that 'Long Hair' Leung Kwok Hung () will yell at him and call him a naughty name? As for us, we are more at risk than Donald The Duck because we are free-thinkers and do not have to make pretences about any political matter of note.' I found these statements to be incorrect because, after all, Donald The Duck is my Chief Executive, the leader of Hongkong and its 7 million-plus human inhabitants. I mentioned this to The Frog, telling him that he should be loyal to Hongkong's elected leader, one who is endorsed by Beijing. The Frog laughed and claimed that I am completely naive about politics. 'Donald The Duck will be out of office in a few years. Do you, really, think that he cares about political reforms for Hongkong, reforms, such as Universal Suffrage? And, even if he did care, he would not have the courage to try to persuade Beijing to consider the matter seriously. To fight Beijing over anything would be tantamount to being disloyal to the very people who put him in power in the first place. Donald The Duck, just like the last white Governor of Hongkong, Mr Chris Patten, has a mandate, written by the people that placed him in his present position of power. It would be political suicide for him to try to go against Beijing. If he is concerned about his security,

I suggest that it is of his own doing, a figment of his imagination, brought about, perhaps, by a conflict between his conscience, fashioned by his Catholic teachings, and his duty to Beijing and to the people who placed him in office.'

As The Frog concluded his monologue, I recalled the words of William Shakespeare in his play, Hamlet:

*'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action ...'.*

What a pity, I thought to myself, that that which is most coveted by the vast majority of the peoples of the world is only too often considered by their leaders to be a dangerous abhorrence. For myself, I long have pondered man's continued attempts to free himself of the shackles of politics, shackles that are aimed at enslaving him. For myself, I find it exceedingly difficult to fashion my conscience to fit the colours of the fabrics of the day. I am not a politician of Hongkong and I could never be one because I would be so uncomfortable in such drab surroundings where one's voice may be muffled or even muted, at any time, by the political requirements of day, requirements, determined by somebody, less noble than I but seated in a comfortable chair, who has the power to force me to do that which I know is contrary to the common good. Am I rambling? I shall stop, then.

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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