

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.

It had, always, been a dream of Solicitor Wong, when attending classes at The University of Hongkong, that he would emerge from his discipline as a solicitor, an officer of the High Court of Hongkong. His father had encouraged him in his academic pursuits and, today, he has his own office in the Central Business District of Hongkong, a wife as elegant as any queen in history, and a handsome son. But herein is the rub: Nickolas, at the age of 12 years, did not appear to have an interest in the law.

'Nickolas does not appear to be interested in the law,' he mentioned to Judy, one evening. 'Is there something wrong with him? I mean, he is normal, isn't he? 'Yes, dear. He is very normal. He is a 12 year-old boy who likes to play football, have fun with his play station, and study girls. Yes, he is very normal.' This did not sit well with Solicitor Wong, however, and he complained: *'But he does not seem to be interested in my profession. Should we encourage him just like my daddy encouraged me?'* Judy looked up from her gossip magazine and said: *'What do you have in mind?'* The immediate reply: *'I could introduce him to Lord Denning.'* Judy said: *'I think that he died in 1999, didn't he?'* Solicitor Wong was quick: *'Of course, I know that he is dead, now, but I meant his famous decisions when he was Master of the Rolls in the early 1960s.'* *'Oh, I see what you mean, my dear. Do you think that a 12 year-old boy is ready for such heavy reading?'* Solicitor Wong said: *'Well, I was, wasn't I? Now look at me.'* Judy said, simply: *'Yes, dear.'* Conciliatory remarks from his wife, such as *'Yes, dear'*, did not sit well with this society officer of the High Court. *'Look, here, Judy,'* he reopened the conversation, *'I was just finishing my shower in the club, the other night, when a couple*

of ethnic Indians were talking about their children. Now, usually, such people are not worth my time – except when they are my clients, of course – but on this occasion, I was taken aback when I heard the following:

Indian Number One: Yes, my daughter, at the age of 20, after graduation with high honours from UCLA, took a job at Lehman Brothers in New York and, after 8 months with this firm, she telephoned me from New York and said that there was something terribly wrong with the firm. This, mind you, was more than 2 years before the balloon went up. She is, really, a brilliant young lady. On the telephone from New York, she only said: *‘Dada, I have to come home. Lehman Brothers is not for the likes of us. And, anyway, it is going to be difficult for me to find a husband in this place’.*

Indian Number Two: She sounds remarkable. Of course, she could not find a suitable husband without your help. You are arranging it, I hope. I suppose you have met my son, haven’t you?

Indian Number One: Of course I have, Babu. A fine-looking chap! **Indian Number Two:** Well, when he was just born, Raj, only about 2 minutes old, mind you, could talk. Really! I was there to witness it!

Judy was flabbergasted on hearing this story. She did not know what to say for a full minute, and, for a woman to be dumbfounded, it is, really, very rare. However, since the story was supposedly out of the mouths of some ethnic Indians of Hongkong, it was quite likely to be an accurate rendition of the conversation. Solicitor Wong, then, asked his wife: *‘When Nickolas was born, how long was it before he started to talk?’* ‘Well,’ replied Judy, *‘he did cry a lot as soon as he was born.’* ‘But he did not talk, didn’t he?’ questioned the enquiring solicitor. *‘No. He did not utter anything, other than crying for many months, after his birth.’*

Solicitor Wong was, now, certain: He had to do something to help his son, Nickolas. After all, no ethnic Indian of Hongkong should outshine the fructus naturales of an officer of the High Court of Hongkong.

He remembered his father’s sage words of yesteryear: Man proposes; God disposes.

But, then again, he reasoned:

Sometimes, even God needs a little prodding from an ambitious father.

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