



保護海港協會有限公司

Society For Protection Of The Harbour Limited

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The Honourable Donald TSANG Yam-kuen, GBM, JP,
Acting Chief Executive,
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,
West Wing, Central Government Offices,
18 Lower Albert Road,
Central, Hong Kong.

14th May 2005

Dear Acting Chief Executive,

**Re: Children's Illustrated Story Book
"The Adventures of Victoria"**

We refer to the recent public attacks by Government Officials on the above children's illustrated story book which our Society as a registered charity has published and is distributing to educate the young children of Hong Kong on the importance of protecting Hong Kong's environment and the harbour. The book is intended for children between the ages of 5 and 10.

The Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands ("the Secretary") and Mr. Thomas M.T. Tso, Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands), have publicly and repeatedly castigated the book through the news media including radio programmes alleging that there was a serious problem with the story book as it contains important factual inaccuracies harmful to children. As such attack is totally unjustified, we regard this as a most improper action for such an official to take.

By a letter dated 27th April 2005, the Secretary even threatened to write to the primary schools which had agreed to help us publicise and distribute the book to their students.

We refer to our responses enclosed herewith which completely refute such allegations. In the circumstances, the actions of the Government Officials are completely unreasonable and unbecoming of an honourable government.

It is also inappropriate for the Secretary to threaten to write to the school principals. It is very unfair and improper for the Government to drag schools into the matter as it would put school principals and teachers into an impossible position faced with such a letter from the Government.



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We are shocked and extremely disappointed that senior Government Officials should launch such an unwarranted and unjustifiable public attack on a children's story book.

As you may know, our Society was formed ten years ago to protect and preserve Victoria Harbour. It is regrettable that to do so, we have had to oppose the Government's reclamation policy and even had to resort to the law courts to do so.

During this time, 584 hectares of reclamation had been gazetted and would have been committed, proceeded with, or even completed by now but for the opposition by our Society. Even the Court of Final Appeal in its judgment last year supported our work. We believe that we are and have been fulfilling a useful environmental protection function for Hong Kong.

In pursuance of our work, we have produced this book after eight months of hard work and at substantial expense in order to impress upon our young children the importance of protecting Hong Kong's environment and the harbour.

We can understand why some Government officials may be sensitive to some of the factual background and our comments and statements, but these facts are accurate and our comments and statements are made fairly. There is no material inaccuracy in the book even though the Government may disagree with our point of view and our conclusions.

The Government is of course free to present their point of view and explain their case to the public, but it is wrong and unreasonable for the Government Officials to claim that our Society is misleading the people only because they disagree with our point of view and our conclusions.

In order to have a speedy resolution of this dispute, at our request a number of respected community leaders have independently and objectively reviewed the book in the light of the criticisms by the Government Officials. They have come to the conclusion that in their view "the story book is not misleading. The factual contents of the book are without any material inaccuracy and the comments and statements in it are fairly made. The Government's complaints are trivial and inconsequential."



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We list out in the following their names and titles and enclose herewith the form of letter that each of them have signed.

Mr. Edward Chan, S.C.

The Honourable Alan Leong

Professor Johannes Chan, S.C.

Ms. Gladys Li, S.C.

Dr. Robert T.Y. Chung

The Honourable Margaret Ng

The Honourable Dr. K.K. Kwok

Bishop Joseph Zen

We feel confident that an objective review by you will lead you to the same conclusions. If so, we rely upon your sense of justice to act fairly in order to undo the damage that has been caused to the publication and distribution of our book.

We refer to the well-researched article "How to lose a Harbour" published in the 2nd May 2005 issue of the internationally respected Time Magazine (copy enclosed) which fairly stated the devastating impact of the continuous reclamation over the past 160 years on the harbour. From this article it is clear that the Government's policy of reclaiming the harbour is demeaning Hong Kong in the eyes of the world.

We sincerely offer our best co-operation to your Government to protect and preserve the harbour in the true spirit of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance and the Court of Final Appeal Judgment and to plan the future development of the harbourfront in the best interest of Hong Kong and for the benefit of our future generations.

We shall be grateful for an opportunity to meet with you for an amicable discussion of this matter and our future co-operation with regard to the harbour.

Yours sincerely,

For Christine Loh,
Chairperson