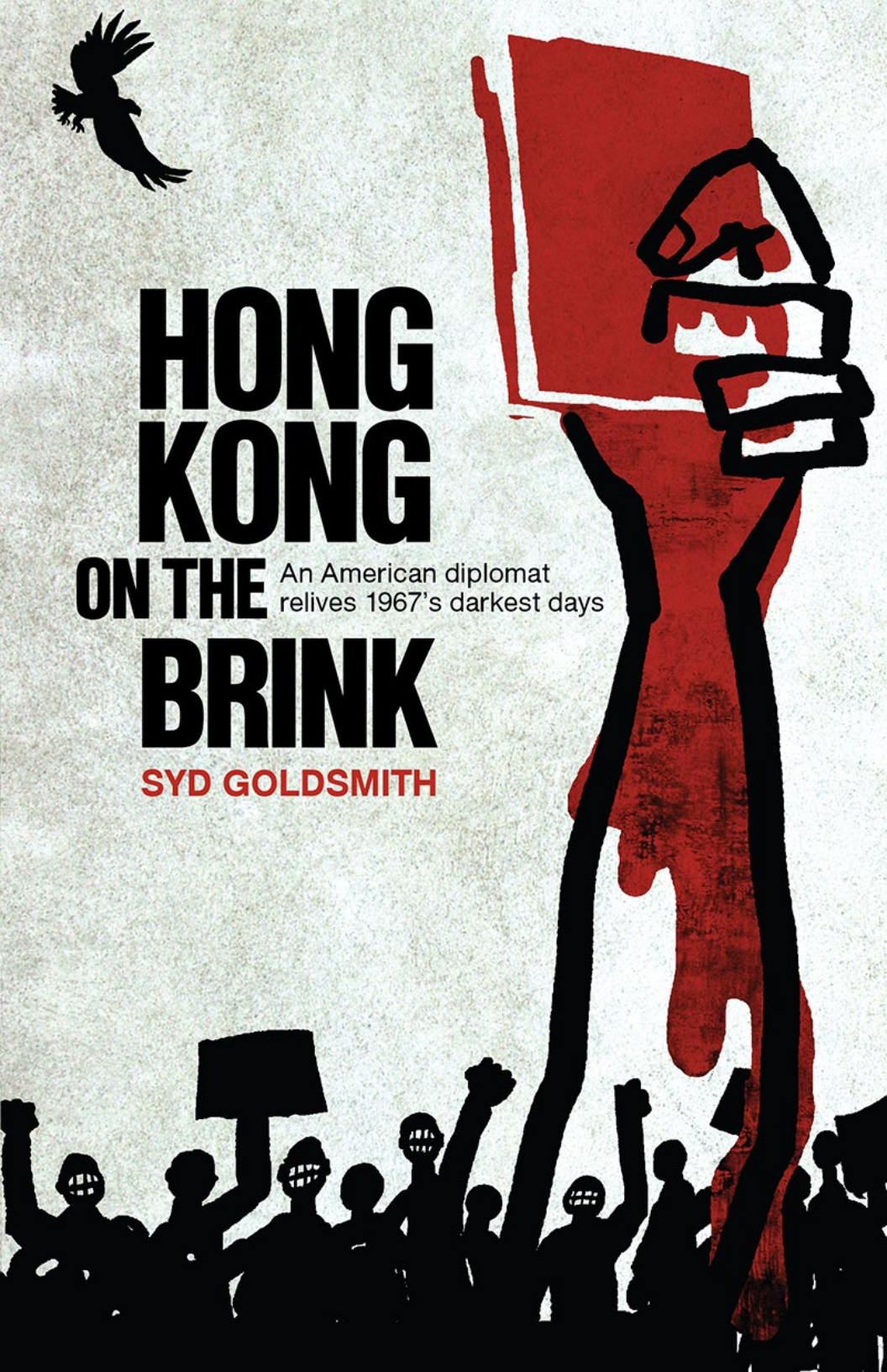

HONG KONG ON THE BRINK

An American diplomat relives 1967's darkest days

SYD GOLDSMITH

HONG KONG ON THE BRINK

by

Syd Goldsmith

BLACKSMITH BOOKS

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CHAPTER 1

Between Two Worlds

BY CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION standards Hong Kong was tranquil. Rampaging Red Guards were not fighting each other in the streets for dominance of chaos they didn't understand. They weren't parading teachers in front of their schools in dunce caps. They weren't sacking the homes of class enemies, smashing every remnant of culture they could get their hands on.

Hong Kong was refuge from all this, from the Civil War and all the upheavals wreaked upon China by Mao. For the colonials and the expats, it was the most exciting city in the world, made so by stunning geography and wealth built on the backs of dollar-a-day labor. And on the extraordinary gap between the privileged elite and everybody else.

Set against events in the Mainland, two factory disputes in the British colony were all but inconsequential to the China watchers and most everybody else. They were modest even in daily news value. I probably followed them closer than most, since I was supposed to know what was going on in Hong Kong. Although the small clusters of school kids and workers waving their Little Red Books of Mao

thought at the factory gates caught my attention, it did not initially impress me as serious communist support for the aggrieved workers.

Snaking down Magazine Gap Road to Garden Road, it was impossible not to be aware of privilege. My Chevy Bel Air was a marker. If you owned a car, you were there. All those factories where workers festered and disputes were smothered by the smallest of management concessions were far away. We lived up on "The Peak." No factories there. Insulation. What's the big deal about a factory dispute?

Reeking of invulnerability, I went to my perch in the American Consulate General, confident of a bright future I had done little to earn besides passing a couple of tests. Success on the Foreign Service exams brought me to Hong Kong as a diplomat, and good fortune led me to become the Hong Kong/Macau political officer, responsible for reporting on domestic developments in the two colonies.

That afternoon of May 11, 1967 Allen Whiting called me up to the front office. "Why not take a stroll around the resettlement areas and those factories so you can do a firsthand report of the atmospherics?" A simple request, from the deputy chief of mission.

I wasn't too keen about that. Westerners weren't known for strolls in the resettlement estates, unless they were a police officer leading a platoon of Chinese cops. The recent Steve McQueen film *The Sand Pebbles* brought shivers at the thought of being skinned alive by an angry Chinese mob.

My desire to please a patron who had taken me on as a protégé struggled mightily with my jitters. I wasn't one to

contradict my mother either. I kept my reservations to myself.

Better to take on this assignment with a Chinese companion who knew his way around. I called Sydney Liu of *Newsweek*'s Hong Kong Bureau.

At his suggestion, we headed toward the Tung Tau Resettlement Estate, a sprawling complex of twelve-story buildings allotting twenty-four square feet of living space for each squatter that the Hong Kong government (HKG) moved from hillside shacks into housing. The estate abutted Kowloon Walled City, a lawless warren run by criminal gangs. Close by the far side of the resettlement complex was the site of the dispute, an artificial flower factory fitting tight into a dreary scene.

We walked down a main thoroughfare edging the estate buildings on one side and a concrete expanse awaiting development on the other. Dusk settled in. We took in our surroundings in whispers, with the premonition that the conversation of outsiders could be the spark that sets off an explosion.

Trash fires sprang up out of nowhere; cardboard cartons alight, then tires thrown into bonfires. Quicker than letting out school, a large crowd poured out of the estate buildings, flooding the street and the paved lot on the other side.

Sydney Liu and I were surrounded and challenged before we could back away. *"Faan gwai lo!"* Shouts in the darkness.

Encroaching night gave no protection from being recognized as Caucasian. This was not an area where foreigners came to watch the sunset. Police patrols known for taking bribes were occasionally accompanied by a British officer

in on the take; such was the white man's presence. Prohibitions on hawking and other unlicensed efforts of hungry people to make a living on the streets led to fines, bribery, and resentment of police interference in their grimy affairs.

"Faan gwai lo," literally "Troublesome foreign devil" was a common term describing foreigners in Hong Kong, but never had it been hurled at me like this. "Run for your life" was the message. I could only hope the snarling faces would taste triumph in my fear and let me flee.

Wrong. In seconds. Cacophony of curses. One I understood—*baak pei jyu*—white-skinned pig.

As many people who could closed in, pressed hard against my back and chest and pummeled. The rank just behind them shoved and stretched out to get in a blow. Somebody yelled, "Cop!"

"No. Not a cop!" I shouted.

A tug on my shirt then the pull and rip. The assailants pushed so hard to get at me they couldn't free their arms enough to strike a solid blow. Fists landed, but I would have been propped up even if knocked out. No room to fall. Only pain.

"I'm not police. I'm a missionary studying Cantonese." They pounded my shoulders and cursed. Drew salt blood from a cut lip. I tried to cover my face with my arms. Much of me protected by the crush of the crowd. Fists flailed. They only hurt so much. Lucky the crowd pressed in so close. Still conscious. Pummeling I would never forget. Maybe not badly hurt. "I'm a missionary. Please."

Was it an argument that developed among some of my attackers? Howls drowned out the details. More shouting. Helpless. Leadership emerged. The strikers closest to me

stopped. "We should let him go." Five or six men took charge and formed a V in front of me. "Follow." They plowed through the crowd. Left me some distance away. Dazed and desperate to be somewhere else.

Cut tongue, garnished with blood and salt. Shirt ripped hanging loose. Wallet still bulging in my pocket. Mob not robbers. Get a cab, a bus, get out of here. Desolate deserted road.

Some distance on I hailed a cab. It slowed to a halt in front of me. Stares. I approached to open the door. The driver took off. No blood on his back seat. Keep on going. Another taxi sped away as I flailed at it. I ran after it, yelling *"Gauh meng ah!*— Help!"

What had happened to Sydney? I lost sight of him when I broke and ran from the mob. Need him now. Alone, not quite running, not quite walking. Emptiness.

Until I turned to look back where I came from. In the distance people were running in my direction. No idea how many, how many seconds before I heard the screaming. Fright becomes icy shivers. Goosebumps. No place to hide. Getting closer.

A space between buildings. Maybe a foot and a half wide. Wedged myself in sideways. Scraped an elbow. Turned my shoulders to the walls. Faced the street. Shudder in the heat. At least it would be one on one. Two couldn't get to me unless one stood on the shoulders of the other.

Howling chorus of a stampeding mob. Almost on top of me now. Brace! Brace!

CHAPTER 2

Serendipity

NO RHYME NOR REASON explains how it came about that I was a newly minted Foreign Service Officer (FSO) assigned to the American Consulate General in Hong Kong in 1965.

Had I not listened to my parents' advice to finish college before making career decisions, I would have asked for leave from Columbia in 1958 while still a junior, to become the assistant to the principal flutist of the New Jersey Symphony. My passion for music probably meant that I would have been deliriously happy earning the princely sum of $2,000 a year, never to return to that ivy-laced path to prestigious employment.

Were it not for a casual stroll across campus with the unremembered college classmate who asked, "Why don't you take the Foreign Service Officer exam next month?" I would not have been aware it was being offered. Thanks for setting me on a path I would follow for thirty years.

That written test was much like the Scholastic Aptitude Test taken by college-bound high school students. Montclair High gave me advantages taking those kinds of tests. It was considered to be the best public school in New Jersey, good

enough to get me accepted into Harvard, but another test led me to Columbia. The navy offered a full tuition scholarship there, plus a $50 monthly stipend and an officer's commission upon graduation. I didn't have it in me to ask my parents to pay for Harvard when I had won a free ride to a top college.

The written Foreign Service test was just another exam in the testing universe. Surviving the orals was another matter entirely. I was just twenty-one, and the average age of candidates actually entering the Foreign Service was ten years older. The winnowing process was said to be excruciating. I was told that some 36,000 candidates took the written test in 1959. Depending on the budget, about one in eight were offered the oral assessment in those years. Approximately 500 of the original candidates would be placed on the register and 100 to 150 eventually would become FSOs. Many career officers were only hired after years of trying.

I had three months to agonize about the oral exam, scheduled for March, 1960. I knew almost nothing about the wider world beyond staring stupefied at Sputnik from the corner of Broadway and 116th Street in October 1957. I didn't read a newspaper. I didn't read *Time* or *Life.* Perhaps the best benefit of my college education was realization that my only hope was to get The News of the Week in Review section of the Sunday *New York Times.* My parents subscribed. I read it voraciously those thirteen weeks. I tried to memorize all the news fit to print and almost forgot about flute practice, though I was still taking lessons with the late great Julius Baker.

When I went into the small room of some nondescript government office building for that oral exam, the three senior officers who were to decide my fate were cordial enough. One enjoyed the upper-crust name "Donovan Quay Zook" that still sticks in my mind. Another such memorable FSO was quoted in *Time* (November 30, 1962) as saying, "I am the sixth Outerbridge Horsey and my unhappy son is the seventh. In fact, the only trouble with any new post is explaining the name to people."

I wondered how Sydney Goldsmith could mix with those names. Mr. Zook asked how I felt about working with people of different religions and cultures. Lucky for me. "My high school friend, Roger Bove, brought me into the Young People's Fellowship of the Episcopal Church in Montclair, and I was soon offered the presidency. I never understood why because I'm Jewish and everybody knew it." I couldn't miss the surprised looks on my inquisitors' faces, so I added, "I think I can work with anyone."

The other two examiners were the hatchet men. "Would you assign a black as an ambassador to a black African country?" Why or why not? What considerations? Then there were the rat-a-tat machine-gun questions about anything and everything. The best answers I could come up with most of the time were "I don't really know, but I would speculate. . . ."

By the time the two-hour grilling was over I didn't want to smell anything near my armpits. I was certain to be told to try again when I knew something about the real world. "Have a seat outside please." In those days candidates were told on the spot whether they passed the oral assessment.

I was free to chew my fingernails for as long as it took the three examiners to conclude that I didn't make the cut.

I chewed as my guts grumbled for well over an hour. The examiners came out the door deadpan and approached the bench where I sat. "Congratulations." They offered their hands in turn. "Next step is the security clearance and then you will be put on the register, with a deferral for your navy service." I could barely mumble some words of thanks.

It seemed so arbitrary that I passed the orals the first try. Were they looking for a few younger FSOs? Was it because I expressed pride about becoming a navy officer when few were serving? Was the Foreign Service looking for some Jewish candidates to parry charges of anti-Semitism? My parent's friends asked how such a nice Jewish boy could even consider joining the Foreign Service; it was so anti-Semitic, guilty of turning away desperate Jews fleeing the Nazis.

Those of you who needed a security clearance for a government job know that the process can be daunting. First, there is the "statement of personal history." List all residences and schools you attended from 1 January 1937. I was born in 1938. I couldn't provide a 1942 Richmond, Virginia address in 1960. I couldn't name the elementary school I attended in Jamaica, New York from 1943 to 1946.

The amount of juvenile information required for an adult security clearance was less than amusing. Good thing my parents were still alive and able to help.

More striking was the kind of information the special agents sought and the amount of time they devoted to the task. All our neighbors were interviewed and asked whether there was any indication that I might be a homosexual. By

the time I was finally cleared, nine months had passed. I had been in the navy with secret clearance for much of that time.

That wasn't the end of it. After almost three years of service in the navy and top-secret clearance as a cryptography officer, I was offered appointment in the Foreign Service in April 1963—subject to a renewal of my clearance. I still have a carbon copy of a deposition I gave at the State Department Office of Security in New York on June 17, 1963, after it was "brought to my attention by Special Agent HANREHAN that, during interview by the Department of State representative at Athens, Georgia, on October 26, 1960, I am reported to have stated that I was never approached regarding a homosexual act to my knowledge. The date of said interview was subsequent to the first incident which I have related in my statement of June 4, 1963, as having occurred in the summer of 1959."

I had been approached at Columbia's West End Bar and shoved my harasser off his bar stool, and again on a bus returning from navy training. Both times I was in uniform. I categorically denied active or passive participation in any sort of homosexual activity, and offered to submit to a polygraph examination.

To my surprise, the security clearance came through much faster this time. President Johnson's facsimile signature certified that he appointed me as a Foreign Service Officer in September, 1963, less than three months after my sworn declaration of heterosexual propriety. Perhaps that certificate will become a collector's item a century from now, because President Kennedy was still alive and in office that September.

As a result of another one of those tests for nerds, the State Department offered me an immediate leave of absence to attend Columbia's Russian Institute on a National Defense Foreign Language Fellowship. With intensive Russian training and a graduate degree before I would even start working with State, there wasn't a shadow of doubt that I would become a Cold War specialist in Soviet affairs.

By the time I finally came on active duty in the Foreign Service in April 1965, five years had gone by since I'd passed the oral exam at the age of twenty-one. In the interim, I had served in the navy, been through the Cuban Missile Crisis, gotten a Master's degree in Russian history and—expecting an overseas assignment—set a June 13th wedding date to Barbara Blaker. She was a nurse introduced by her classmate, my cousin Sharon. My mother, always hinting that it was time to get married, was ecstatic.

I doubt that Barbara was aware of how deep a void she had to fill. I had loved Peggy Strum ever since she was thirteen and I was seventeen, for nearly ten years. She had loved me too, coming to see me in Montclair under the pretext of visiting my sister Linda. We read the comics together in bed, innocently. It was in the days before birth control, when I was keenly aware of statutory rape, proven by pregnancy. More, I strongly believed in protecting the girl I would marry, which meant clothes on. True to the double standard, girls I would never consider marrying were fair game during that period I was waiting for Peggy to come of age.

We didn't really date until she was a senior in high school and I a senior in college. Could there have been any doubt where we were headed when I asked her what she wanted

for her birthday that November and she said, "To be engaged." We didn't need to announce it. All who knew us were certain we would marry someday. We were all over each other on the benches in Riverside Park, clothes still on.

I loved her so deeply—but not so desperately as to overcome my fear that the exorbitant cost of long-distance telephone calls from the Navy Supply School in Athens, Georgia to her home in Brooklyn would swallow my entire ensign's pay of $222.30 a month. Had I called as often as I wanted to talk, it would have cost much more than that.

So I assumed that she would understand and we would pick up our love when I returned for Thanksgiving. I didn't call that summer. To this day I do not really understand why I was so stupid.

Peggy didn't want to continue that fall. She would give no reason. I had no capacity to understand how she had felt all that summer. She never let me see her again. Five years loved, five years lost. Still trying to bury the pain when Barbara came along.

Only navy discipline kept me from alcohol and drugs. Some sense of pride that I did not need help kept me from being overwhelmed by depression that would not go away. I took what little advantage I could of the brainy but prudent graduate-school girls I met during my stint at Columbia's Russian Institute. Their bright babble turned me off. My devastating loss of Peggy left no room to accept them for who they were.

Barbara came along as an amiable and good companion, largely because she didn't annoy me with idle talk and accepted any activity that I proposed. Then there was my mother's subtle influence in the background. Endless praise

for this lovely Jewish girl. It's time to take a wife. You don't want to be alone. Not in some faraway place like Hong Kong.

It came to be that I convinced myself that I loved or accepted Barbara enough to have her be my bride. My best man would be beside himself that he was unable to stop me from staring out at Tamiment Lake that wedding day until I was twenty minutes late for the ceremony.

Once we were engaged, Barbara moved in with her "knight in shining armor"—me—and three other guys who shared a rental house in the nation's capital while I went to the A-100 initiation course for new FSOs. She waited for me to come home and cooked while I was indoctrinated in the ways of the Foreign Service. We studied strange cultures, foreign gestures, and driving techniques to break away from a kidnap attempt.

Towards the end of the course we were interviewed about our interests and assignment preferences. Mine were obvious. The personnel officer gave every appearance of being attentive and sympathetic to my request for assignment to Moscow.

He waited until I finished talking about my aspirations to become a Soviet expert. Then he spoke, "We don't send first-tour officers to Russia. We have more Soviet experts than we will ever need, and you wouldn't like the pecking order anyway. Now where do you want to go?"

I was still trying to collect myself when he added an explanation. "The Russians are expert at exploiting our frailties. An attractive woman entices a young married FSO and he will do anything to avoid having his infidelity exposed, because it's the end of his career and probably his

marriage too. Blackmail works even better with homosexuals. Maybe you heard about Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, the British double agents who fled to Russia. We have our cases too, so where would you like to go?"

I hadn't given a thought to alternatives. Where had I been? To Guantanamo Bay, Istanbul, Catania, San Remo, and Bastia on the USS *Bristol,* DD 857, a World War II destroyer that was my shipboard home in the navy. "What about Japan?" I asked.

The personnel officer sized me up. "You look more like a Chinese type than a Japanese type to me. What would you think of an assignment to Taipei, or possibly Hong Kong with some Cantonese language training?"

I didn't know anything about either of those places, so, "It sounds fine to me."

Steve Lesser got the assignment to Japan while I was assigned to Hong Kong. Steve had struck me as quite shy during the course of our training, almost reticent. Later I learned that he had the right kind of reserve for Japan and I did not. I was much more suited to serve in Chinese cultures. I never learned whether the personnel officer was prescient about these personality traits or just filling a roster of job vacancies.

This was an assignment for which I had absolutely no background or qualifications. I didn't know any Chinese and hadn't taken a single course on China in college or graduate school. My only feel for China was my mother's admonitions during World War II. "Millions of Chinese children are starving. Finish up all the food on your plate."

I can still wonder what rhyme or reason led me to Hong Kong in 1965 . . . and now forty years living in Chinese places.

CHAPTER 3

Musical Honeymoon

I COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED what I would be getting into, both before and after that day in May 1967 when I cowered in fear of an early obituary.

The briefing papers I read in Washington in 1965 said nothing about the Cultural Revolution. Though Hong Kong was the epicenter of our efforts to gain intelligence about China, there was no hint of the paroxysms of violence that would soon engulf China for a decade. If you believe that all the king's horses and all the king's men are unable to predict cataclysmic upheavals, this was a good example.

Least of all could I conceive of Hong Kong under attack by Red Guard–inspired leftists. About half the population of nearly four million had fled the Chinese Civil War or subsequent upheavals. Hong Kong was refuge. For communist China, it was the goose that laid the golden egg. Trade with and through Hong Kong was the PRC's largest source of hard currency. There was no thought that the British authority there might be challenged or forced to kowtow or abandon the colony. The most I could claim as a prognosticator was that Hong Kong was achieving a degree of success by transforming itself into a free-trade

manufacturing center for export of cheap labor-intensive goods like textiles and plastic flowers.

This would be an orientation and training assignment. I would be rotated among the four functional cones of the Foreign Service: political, economic, consular, and administrative; four to six months for each. The personnel people had agreed that it might be a good idea to have a Caucasian FSO in the consulate general who could speak the local dialect. I would get six months of Cantonese language training.

Before setting off for Hong Kong, I was treated to a two-month stint on the German Desk in the State Department. The desks are where we coordinate all aspects of relations with other countries. The assignment would have been unremarkable save for a request from the German Foreign Ministry for clarification of an unsourced news report that Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Washington) intended to visit China. Since travel there was prohibited, did that signal a change in US policy to isolate the communist regime?

My reply would need appropriate clearances. I went around asking questions of people who would send me on to other people; on and on to people who felt obliged to express concern and their importance in the clearance process. Views ranged from, "That's impossible," to "The senator is a nutcase communist who always wanted to go to China." Twenty-six initialed clearances later, I had achieved a one-sentence consensus response: "We have no information concerning Senator Magnuson's plans about a possible visit to China."

That's how I learned why the State Department was called the Fudge Factory. The experience had a profound influence. I shunned country desk jobs throughout my entire Foreign Service career, sometimes kicking patrons in the teeth by declining pleas to follow in their footsteps.

Most useful during that temporary stint in Washington, I learned that I could travel by ship to Hong Kong on my government orders without being charged leave for all those days at sea. Though air travel was readily available, we had the option to take this boondoggle. For Barbara and me, it would be our honeymoon, since I was allowed only one day off from the A-100 training course when we were married.

Regardless of rank, the regulations allowed minimum available first-class passage. The American President Lines people knew just how to handle those government bookings. Take note of the request and delay the reservation formalities until the last minute. That allowed non-government passengers to book the cheaper first-class staterooms and left the really expensive luxury travel to feed off the government teat. We were booked into a lovely stateroom on the upper deck of the SS *President Wilson,* with an ocean view and a rather large invoice to the State Department.

This was an extraordinary subsidy for American President Lines and a big gift to us. The seventeen-day voyage across the Pacific from San Francisco to Hong Kong counted as on-duty travel time and amounted to more paid leave than I would earn in a year.

The *President Wilson* started life as a planned World War II troop transport, but construction was canceled in December 1944. It was completed and chartered to American

President Lines in 1948, to become a luxury liner for round-the-world cruises.

The *Wilson*'s 18,962 gross tons and 609-foot length looked very impressive compared to the 2,200-ton destroyer that was my previous seafaring experience. The USS *Bristol* (DD 857) had five-inch-gun mounts. The SS *President Wilson* had two swimming pools and a deck where you could walk most of the circumference of the ship all day long. As a navy supply officer, I knew the allowed expenditure was $1.09 per day per sailor for three meals. There was no limit to how much you could eat on the *Wilson*—prime rib, gravy-soaked mashed potatoes, baked Alaska, delicacies even sweeter.

Whether hungry or not, Barbara and I stuffed ourselves as a matter of shipboard routine. Gluttony at the troth, calories savored. With the cooperation of a Pacific Ocean as smooth as our porcelain tableware, we kept all those glorious meals down. It showed.

But we could only eat, drink, walk the decks, play shuffleboard, see the shows and stay in bed so many hours a day. We didn't socialize a lot and kept pretty much to ourselves. I didn't use the library either, betraying avoidance of reading as leisure. I didn't even bring any books about Hong Kong, complacent that I had read the briefing papers in Washington. There would be plenty of time to learn about Hong Kong once I got there.

I sensed beforehand that seventeen days at sea with no responsibility for the ship could present a serious challenge to a former navy seafarer. Though this was to be a honeymoon trip, my thoughts on filling the days turned inevitably to the flute and music. Between the demands of new

employment in the Foreign Service and Barbara's move-in, I had hardly touched the instrument in months. I couldn't help but brood on how many times one of the great passions of my life ended before it even started.

By 1951 I had already given up two instruments and gotten a D in Mr. Pinter's required eighth-grade music class. The three classmates who joined me to haul the classroom door out of school, across the street past the Carnegie Library and up Bellevue Avenue past a row of elegant houses turned into professional offices all got Fs. Maybe the D was because I was more musical than my friends and otherwise kept my mouth shut. They merit most of the credit for driving our hapless music teacher to the nuthouse.

Not long after that I was standing anxious before Antonio Sant Ambrogio, a stern wiry man with a bristly mustache, a stubble garden on his cheeks and a cigarette in his mouth.

"Why do you want to take violin lessons?" he asked.

His voice wasn't harsh, but his intense dark eyes under heavy brows made me feel very small. I looked away, towards the grand piano that dominated the dimly lit living room. An open violin case, two bows and some music labeled Beethoven were on the lid. A cello case sat against the wall under a picture of a symphony orchestra.

"I need to have some culture," I said, repeating the explanation my parents gave for bringing me here.

Mr. Sant Ambrogio asked my age. Thirteen. "You're too old to begin violin lessons."

For a second, the scene froze in place: stern teacher, spurned student, stunned parents.

My father, who took violin lessons until he was almost seventeen, broke the silence. "Why?"

"Because he won't learn to play well enough before graduation to appreciate the music, so he'll give it up the minute he leaves high school, if not sooner."

Before any of us could understand why a music teacher was turning away a student, Mr. S continued. "It is possible to learn to play the flute well enough in a few years to want to continue. When I was in the Saint Louis symphony before the War, I took some lessons from the principal flutist. Georges Barrère was the best of his era. I can teach your son the flute."

My first assignment as a new flutist was to blow across the lips of coke bottles until Mr. S could procure an instrument for me. "Make a good sound," he said. "If you want to create a scale and play a tune, take eight bottles and fill them with different levels of water to make an octave."

I liked that idea. Eight bottles of coke just for me, but my parents nixed that. "One bottle will be sufficient for you to perfect your tone. You can fill it to different levels and experiment."

Before my next lesson dad presented me with a shiny new silver-plated Armstrong flute. "It cost $138, so you should practice a little every day." That sounded expensive to this thirteen year old, but serious flutists think about instruments at car prices, and string players compare the price of their dream instrument to the cost of a mansion.

It was only a few weeks before Mr. S made it clear that I should be practicing a lot more than that little bit every

day. He would stand beside me with a conductor's baton over my head and say, "We do *solfeggio* first. Now *do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si-do.* If the note is *la* you say *la.* In tempo now. Get the rhythm right. No. That's a dotted quarter. Again." He would tap the grand piano with the baton and clap time. I couldn't keep up with him.

Eventually Mr. S would stop clapping, stare straight at me until I became very small, and ask, "Did you practice this like I told you to?" Silence. "You don't know how to count. You won't understand the music or play it right if you don't do *solfeggio."* Clap clap clap. "One two three. In time now."

Looking back from the perspective of my honeymoon on the *Wilson,* I realized that he was trying with a passion bordering on desperation to teach this lazy Goldsmith kid to be a flutist.

On our second day at sea I left Barbara basking in the sunshine on the Promenade deck, went back to our gorgeous minimum-available first-class stateroom, and took my flute out of a suitcase to see if I could revive my on-again off-again love affair with the instrument and its music. It was only a few minutes before determination to show that Mr. S had not failed grabbed me and held sway over the voyage.