The term "most favoured nation" belongs to the most humiliating era of China's history, the nineteenth century, when first Britain then other colonial traders turned China into a semi-colony. Historians have labelled the most favoured nation principle "a device by which every nation could secure for itself any privilege which had been extorted by some other power in China by force, or tricked from her by fraud, without having to assume the moral responsibility for the method by which the concession had been obtained". (Dennett)

Britain took the initiative first in this immoral venture, but the United States was first in the queue of other nations to seize similar concessions. Like Britain, the United States paid for Chinese goods in opium, while expressing pious disgust at the British opium trade with China. When Caleb Cushing reached China from the United States in 1844 "to save the Chinese" from being the exclusive monopoly of the British, he wrangled the Treaty of Wanghsia from the Chinese, couched in similar terms to those used by the "Great White American Chiefs" in their dealings with the American Indian chieftains from whom they had stolen the land for a pittance. This treaty with China allowed American traders to enjoy all the concessions enjoyed by the British under the Treaty of Nanking. It also established the principle of extra-territoriality which allowed American criminals to be tried in their own courts on Chinese soil.

This then is the background to the nefarious term "Most Favoured Nation Trading Status". The term, long obsolete on the British side, has recently been revived in the United States in connection with China trade, where politicians like Nancy Polosi and Jesse Helms claim the right to dictate to China the terms under which their sacred nation will stoop to trade with a demonised China which refuses to base her laws on those of America or to be dictated to by American politicians. Forgotten are the sins of their American forefathers who sold poison to China in exchange for silk, tea and other prized trading goods. The conditions under which these hypocrites will trade with China are that China must toe their moral line in politics, and allow America once more to dictate the terms under which she will condescend to trade.

Chris Patten put the matter correctly when he said that MFN simply means normal trading relations. There are no favours, but United States politicians have so demonised China that they must hoodwink the American people into believing that their country is taking the moral high ground by leading China into the paths of righteousness, leading them into exercising human rights, as a condition for trading with the demon. Americans have been brainwashed from birth to regard China as the demon, and most believe that but some see the truth, thankfully. I have met Americans who throw up their hands in horror at the thought of any of their kind mixing with communists (presuming that Chinese are communists). An American friend of mine could not differentiate between the three words "Communist", "Chinese", and "Criminal" the three Cs. She used them alternatively when speaking of any Chinese people. When she found that I had such friends, she told me that she would have to break off our friendship. That, I was more than willing to do in fact. Her stupidity was beyond belief. The fact is that, to my knowledge, none
of my friends were communists.

Yes, MPN refers merely to normal trading relations. The United States needs to buy from China; China needs to buy from the United States. Where is the favour? Why does the U.S.A. make such problems in trading? One can only presume that their politicians are afraid that normal relations with China may lead Americans to think that the people of a "communist" state are human beings after all and can no longer be demonised. That would not satisfy the power brokers who use the war cry "democracy and human rights" when they want another war to keep up their arms production. I would not have believed such people existed if I had not come across their kind in Britain in my younger days: when I went from door to door asking people to sign against war and to substitute sanctions on nations that invade their neighbouring countries, a few people slammed the door in my face saying, "We make our living by making armaments". No wonder wars never cease!

Since World War II, the American war machine has used this war cry "democracy and human rights" to kill more than eleven million people and wound or maim untold millions of others, as well as destroy the land, livelihood, and personal property of whole communities. Many American people would not tolerate this if they were told the truth that all this is to gain economic control of the world. They would not be persuaded to fight when the body bags bring back their husbands and sons unless they were persuaded to believe that the fighting is about human rights. At this moment, thousands of Iraqi children are starving or dying for lack of medicine because of an American-induced boycott on trade. No one mentions, and probably not too many Americans know, that those children have been deprived of their human right to eat and live. As I write, people worldwide are outraged at the bombing of a medicine factory in Sudan which supplies half the country with medicines. People have been killed for no other reason than that the American administration has lawlessly pronounced the death penalty on its workers without evidence, without witnesses for the prosecution, without a trial. Independent witnesses have testified to the opposite verdict. But what does it matter so long as the American people are being told that the deaths of their loved ones in Nairobi and Kenya have been avenged? Yet the same people who gave the order to kill dare to demand that other countries observe the rule of law!

The story has been repeated dozens of times in the past fifty years, in Granada, in Panama, and even more cruelly in Vietnam and countries of Africa as well as South and Central America. Likewise they have pronounced death by starvation on Cuba and demanded that other nations do so, using the United Nations and blatantly breaking its covenants and its resolutions. God knows how long it will be before the Americans themselves and those whom they have persuaded by corrupt means to support them, will open their eyes to this evil. God knows how long it will be before the younger idealists who support the self-styled democrats of Hong Kong will look at the facts of recent history and see how they too are being deceived by the idol worshippers of America who stoop to accepting American trade as a "favour". If the time arrives when the warmongers set their eyes on China, will these idol worshippers be loyal to China or to the United States?
Several years ago, when American politicians decided that it was time to get a share of the new booming China trade, they imposed political conditions on China no doubt to excuse their willingness to trade with the "evil kingdom" as every country that does not toe the American line is dubbed. We in Hong Kong expected everyone to support the revival of trade with the United States, disregarding the misnomer "Most Favoured Nation". Who would imagine that when the Legislative Council decided to send a letter to Washington supporting the renewal of the trading agreement known as MFN, Martin Lee and his party would refuse to sign it, but took the American politicians' line that conditions on human rights must be attached? The letter was sent without their signatures, but with the agreement of all other members. The livelihood of many Hong Kong workers depended on that trade, but those who were prepared to sacrifice the jobs of Hong Kong workers had nothing to lose.

When President Clinton took office the fear that the MFN would not be renewed increased, because Clinton, in his bid for office, made a strong stand for human rights, that being the principle that Americans claim most to stand for. The words "democracy and human rights" are like music in most American ears even those who treat black Americans like second class citizens. The words have become mandates, like the words of the bible with which Christian nations grow up, often without any intention of applying them except in church.

In 1993, Chris Patten already in deep water with China over his distorting the Basic Law, announced that he would go in person to the United States to speak in favour of the renewal of the MFN. When people like Mr. Patten go in person rather than speak openly from Hong Kong, it is natural that some would suspect that he had more on his agenda than support for MFN. Was he there to promote his political package which he falsely claimed gave Hong Kong more democracy (which in fact probably meant only more of the so-called democratic party), or was he there to support MFN with some conditions thrown in. Patten was under suspicion of misleading us by half-truths about his intentions.

It was probably this doubt about the Governor's real purpose in visiting America to support MFN that prompted Allen Lee to moving a motion urging the British Government to support the renewal of MFN on the grounds that failure to do so would cost Hong Kong workers the loss of 70,000 jobs. The debate took place on 12 May 1993. Once again, Martin Lee and his political supporters refused to subscribe, this time abstaining from voting. Martin Lee claimed that renewal of MFN was a matter to be decided between China and the U.S.A., which theoretically it was, but the effects on Hong Kong would have been most devastating. Martin Lee disagreed both with the wording and the timing of the motion, obviously in an effort to find an excuse for not supporting what was worrying every Hong Kong worker likely to be affected. During the debate, Martin Lee said: "No lobbyist for China's MFN renewal will be listened to unless he or she believes in human rights and makes a point of mentioning that." Had he given this advice to Mr. Patten for his visit, and had Patten raised human rights conditions? Did he not know that the use of human rights conditions were sheer hypocrisy, or was he taking part in that hypocrisy?
Speaking on Allen Lee's motion, Mr. Ngai Shiu Kit quoted from SUN Tzu, "Know the enemy and know yourself." It appeared that Martin Lee knew neither. Ngai blamed Hong Kong's politicians, undoubtedly referring to Martin Lee and his supporters, for being "pawns used by foreign forces" and called them a "group of hypocrites shouting slogans without really having the public interest at heart." He was right, because nothing proved more their contempt for the people than their efforts to attach trade and workers' livelihood with human rights that their friends in the United States talked of but did not practise.

During that debate I said, "I feel disappointed that Martin Lee seems to be saying, "We know it is useless to talk to the U.S.A. about MFN because the result is a foregone conclusion! It is most unusual for Mr. Lee to give up a fight because he thinks he will lose the battle." Indeed, Martin would always go on fighting well after losing a battle, simply because he was never prepared to admit error or cede defeat, even when proved to be wrong. In my speech I mentioned the colonial background to MFN and said: "This colonial arrangement has not changed very much, but now it is disguised in fancy wrappings called human rights .... Interference by other countries is neither justifiable nor beneficial. Now President Clinton has brought a new vision (he had refused to take part in the Vietnam War, or found a way to escape it) and I trust he will live up to his promises to the people".

Allen Lee reprimanded Emily Lau for opposing the renewal of MFN without human rights conditions. He advised her, "If we want to press for human rights we should go to China, not ask the United States to intervene." How true! Emily does not know her enemy or her friend. Would she object if the U.S.A. were to invade her country, or drop bombs on China as the U.S.A. does so often indiscriminately? What does she know about China?

The day after this debate, which was widely supported by all except the Martin Lee camp numbering less than 20 percent of members at that time, Governor Patten met the Legislative Council to report on his mission to the U.S.A. to "lobby for MFN". He told us that during his visit he had met many members of the administration, politicians and officials in financial and trade affairs, as well as President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore. He claimed that he had explained the implications of non-renewal of MFN, but found widespread concern about human rights, market access and arms proliferation, but that they had agreed not to discuss the constitutional affairs of Hong Kong because of the on-going Sino-British talks. It is noteworthy that he mentioned the same point that Martin Lee had emphasised in the debate the previous day, that it is useless to talk about MFN if one does not support human rights at the same time.

During his speech to the Legislative Council, Patten mentioned several times that he had objected to "heavily qualified renewal" of the MFN by the United States. Mrs. Miriam Lau was quick to remind him that we were talking about "unconditional" renewal, and she asked him to clarify why he had used the term "heavily qualified renewal". Had Patten agreed to some qualified renewal conditions, she wanted to know. He then insisted that he had
asked for "unconditional" renewal. His answers were not convincing, and it is an indication of the trust Patten had lost among all except Martin Lee's party that no one really believed he had not stepped down from our demands. I questioned him again on that point. He still hesitated in his reply, but claimed that he had only used that term because he hoped that if the pending Mitchell-Polosi Bill demanding conditions succeeded, he hoped that the conditions imposed would not be heavy. He had no mandate to agree to any conditions, since most legislators did not accept the idea of linking trade with internal affairs, the exceptions of course being Martin Lee's camp. It was clear that Patten was not open and forthcoming in his replies to questions.

Emily Lau, who must be counted in the Martin Lee camp in everything except that she is even more radical and sometimes irrational, asked a question on this occasion that would have made any patriotic Chinese groan. She wanted to know from Patten, "Was there anything else he had told the American President that America could do to help Hong Kong in this very difficult transitional period, for example, passports...an area in which Britain is so reluctant to help?" When the Governor replied, quite rightly in this case, that President Clinton recognised that matters under discussion were for the present and future powers, Emily Lau pushed the matter further by saying, "What I want to ask the Governor is whether, apart from trade, there are other areas in which America can assist Hong Kong. Maybe the Governor mentioned political reforms, maybe that is an area he thinks America can assist us." What kind of assistance Emily wanted on the internal matter of China's constitution for Hong Kong, and internal matters of the future Special Administrative Region Government, it would be hard to imagine. Maybe she pictured the American President as Batman rescuing the innocent! Surely Hong Kong and China had had enough of rescuers in the colonial era who came to rescue but stayed to exploit! That blind adulation of another foreign power such as Emily's is hard to visualise. To her question the Governor replied that he had concentrated on matters in which America and Hong Kong could assist in prosperity in the region. Whether he really meant that is anyone's guess, but he was not as naive as Emily to admit to seeking American interference in China's affairs.

In fact, it was not necessary to ask Patten to speak up to seek assistance from America. She had done her best to spread anti-China propaganda throughout the western world, giving lectures, speaking on radio, television, in the press and passing herself off as the champion of democracy. A good and forceful, if not at times hysterical speaker, she was the delight of all westerners who hated China: that included some politicians who know little or nothing about China except what dissidents tell them.

In fact, during the years both before and after reunification with China, Martin Lee also travelled the world preaching the doctrine of gloom and doom for Hong Kong in 1997. Because of Martin and Emily, some people to my knowledge were afraid to visit Hong Kong for that euphoric time in history when the stolen territories were handed back to their rightful owner. I had invited three relatives to attend the ceremony, and they told me that their friends had tried to dissuade them from attending because this pair had declared that it would be the end of the rule of law, that there would be tanks on the streets, and arrests would be made. Martin Lee went so far as to say that he was practising fasting to prepare him for prison life after 1997.
Emily Lau had prophesied that she would be imprisoned, while Szeto Wah was obviously looking forward to sacrificing himself as a martyr to his cause. With all the propaganda it is not surprising that the number of tourists in 1997 slumped to an all time low. I gave my promise to my own visitors that nothing would happen, and they laughed when they arrived and found Hong Kong enjoying its celebration, in spite of the heaviest rainfall in years. I told my guests to dispel the lies that had been spread and on their return they were living proof of the real facts.

These two, Lee and Lau, have lost so much face by their ill-conceived predictions, when the troops arrived and were greeted with songs and dances, when the tanks kept out of public sight during darkness and still remain out of sight, when the soldiers behaved so well that they were greeted as better neighbours than some drunken British solders had been, in fact when nothing changed, that they are now trying to gain face by predicting that, although their prophecies did not come true in 1997, they will come true in the future. Only those who want to believe that will do so. China has fallen over backwards to keep out of Hong Kong administrative affairs. Those who take the trouble to watch the brutality of some police in other, western, "democratic" countries must admit that Hong Kong compares well with any country. Maybe one day the supporters of the Martin Lee camp will realise that they have been deceived by promises on social issues by a party that has an "oppose China on everything possible" agenda. China is facing enormous odds, not only in caring for 1.3 billion people, but also natural disasters unseen for at least half a century. Are these anti-China elements not ashamed to see their fellow countrymen struggling with the forces of nature, while they search for petty political issues on which to make life more difficult for China? Are they not ashamed to see how Hong Kong is struggling against financial demons who probably live in the country they so adulate, attempting to destroy the livelihood of Hong Kong and our 'Asian neighbours? When the financial problem began in Indonesia, Martin Lee, always ready with a sound-byte, blamed that on lack of democracy. That may well be true, but how then does he explain the financial downturn of Japan and South Korea, which claim to be democratic? His words betray the shallowness of his thoughts.

On the motion in 1993, Martin Lee and his party were well defeated. But as time went by and the elections were due to take place in 1995, Martin Lee had to repair his fences, because his opponents would certainly use his conditions on MFN threatening the loss of jobs for the workers: he made the unbelievable decision to go personally to the United States to plead for the renewal of the MFN. Such a change of heart could be only a vote-seeking exercise. But why did he have to visit the United States to make his plea when the Legislative Council normally undertook this task? Was it merely for party power, or was there something else on his agenda. Had he not said in 1993, "No lobbyist for China's MFN renewal will be listened to unless he or she believes in human rights and MAKES A POINT OF MENTIONING THAT". Had he told the people of Hong Kong that he was lobbying for MFN unconditionally, but in the U.S.A. had he
agreed to add conditions? He was not likely to admit if that was so, but after his visit the pressures of the "human rights" activists in the United States were stronger than ever. Martin had set himself up as a crusader on an MFN mission he had always opposed! From that time onwards, every politician, every official who visited China, even Clinton himself in 1998, took it upon themselves to tell China how to run her own country. Yet, MFN was renewed every year! The plot has worn very thin. America needs China's trade even more than China needs America's. Hong Kong, and likewise America, would suffer most if MFN were to be cancelled. Nevertheless, the United States still continues with the charade that trading is a great favour, and propaganda to the American people still pretends that their Government is pushing the demonised China into introducing human rights. China sees human rights as providing food, clothing, housing and other necessities, and accomplishing that is a long-term task.

What fun it would create if one day China were to delay accepting MFN, or were even opposed to it, on the grounds that the United States is flouting human rights by denying food and medicines to Cuba and other "rogue" states, or, to bring us more up-to-date, for bombing the essential medical supplies factory in a poor country like Sudan, killing an unknown number of innocent people in the process, and judging the manufacturer guilty merely on suspicion or hearsay, or implication in the Nairobi bombing, without evidence, witness or trial, the very abuses of human rights of which the United States continually accuses other countries. The human rights activists need a mirror to look at their own faces so as to see themselves as others see them.

One can only hope that the time will come when the member countries of the United Nations will reject the call to arms of the United States which has all too long used the word United Nations as a synonym for the United States whenever it wanted an excuse to attack another country. In this respect I look forward to a time when my own country, Britain, will stop behaving as a "running dog" for the United States' war machine.

To people like Martin Lee, my advice would be to read more about the world today. I would like to add that my argument is not against the American people, but against those who mislead them, and the media that misinform them. There are plenty of books written by conscientious Americans exposing the manipulation of thought practised by politicians, but they are not easily found on bookshelves. But read they must as politics become dirtier and dirtier, and more and more in high positions become wealthier and more powerful, as the poor of the world become poorer and weaker with scarcely a democratic voice to speak up for them.

Yes, MFN has been a myth from the beginning nearly two centuries ago. Now is the time that the facts must be made known.