# [***IMMIGRATION NIGHTMARE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF BIGOTRY IN HONG KONG***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47K8-BFJ0-0002-P1M1-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

On Friday December 20, my domestic helper and I drove out to Chek Lap Kok airport to meet a Swissair flight arriving from Manila.

My helper was very excited about this, as her two daughters were coming to join us for Christmas. What started out as a joyful event turned into a nightmare thanks to Hong Kong immigration.

The plane arrived at 11.08pm. By 12.15am we knew that something was wrong, as the girls had not appeared and the airport was beginning to look very deserted. I went to a Customs officer on the ground level of the arrivals hall to ask if he could help me. He said he could not do anything, but I could pick up a phone across the hall. When I reached it, there was a sign that it was out of order. I then went up to the departures level to try and find a Swissair representative. Perhaps the girls had missed the flight. The departures hall was completely deserted, but a policeman directed me to a Cathay Pacific representative. She went out of her way to find out that the girls had indeed landed in Hong Kong and were being held by immigration. By this time it was 12.45am. The extremely helpful Cathay representative gave me a number to call, and said to try in 10 minutes.

At this point, my helper was frantic with worry, as one of her daughters is only nine. I phoned on my ***cell phone*** to immigration, who told me that they were holding the girls. I was then interrogated as to who I was and asked to give my identity card number, which I did. They asked several other questions, both of my helper and me. I asked if they would at least tell us the nature of the problem. No. I asked if their mother could be allowed in with the girls. No. How long would this take? They didn't know. I offered to sign a letter of support or anything else that they felt was required. No. Both of these young people had valid passports and return tickets to the Philippines. In fact, the younger girl had been born here.

Finally, at 1.40am we were told that they would be out in 10 minutes. This stretched out until 2.20am. At last they came through the doors, exhausted and terrified. Merry Christmas.

I would like an explanation, through these columns, from the head of the Immigration Department as to why his officers felt it was in the interests of Hong Kong security to frighten two young girls for almost three hours. How many questions could they possibly ask? Why could their mother not be allowed in with them? Why would they not tell us what the problem was?

This is just another example of the bias and bigotry that exists in this city. If these girls had been my children, this would not have happened. Hong Kong, world-class city? I think not.

WENDY R. NESBITT

Mid-Levels

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