

TRAVELLING WITH TARGET

THIS SHANGRI-LA HOTEL IS A DUD

Part One

Oi! How Does One Get One's Suite Cleaned ?

Members of this medium travel every year, spending a month or so away from the company's home base in Hongkong.

The reasons for these journeys are in order to learn how life in Hongkong differs from that of other parts of the world as well as how life in various countries has changed, over the year(s).

In the last week of September, London was selected as the destination for a week's stay at that which **TARGET** (泰達財經) pre-assumed was a five-star hotel.

This London hotel is operated by the management of a hotel group that is quite popular in Hongkong where it has the reputation of being a luxury five-star hotel.

TARGET discovered, some years ago, that carefully selecting from amongst the best, international hotel groups with operations in the 416 square miles that constitute the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, pays dividends because, inter alia, it was possible for the management of the selected hotel group to know and to understand of the requirements of this medium, during the stay of its senior personnel abroad.

This medium always states, when making enquiries, leading to preparations to book a suite or room at a hotel that a representative of **TARGET** Newspapers Ltd would be visiting, the hotel's management is so apprised of this medium's intentions so that there are no misunderstandings.

In early September, **TARGET** contacted Shangri-La at The Shard, London, and booked a suite for the period, Saturday, September 22, 2018, until Saturday, September 29, 2018.

Members of this medium have stayed at hotels, operated by Shangri-La Group of Hotels, for many a year, and with very positive results.

But staying at Shangri-La at The Shard for that week in September was close to a disaster!

It is highly unlikely that this medium would be staying there, again.

Further, it would have to be a very cold day in the midst of an icy winter that this medium would even consider, staying at a Shangri-La hotel, again.

The Arrival At Shangri-La At The Shard

Arriving at 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 22, the Reception Counter of Shangri-La at The Shard, being located on the 35th Floor of The Shard – a composite building, comprising a large commercial complex, complete with offices, shops and restaurants – **TARGET** was informed that £100 (about \$HK1,030) would be added to the cost of the suite on a daily basis.

When asked as to the reason for this additional charge, the receptionist stated only that it was required that pre-authorisation for the additional charge was mandatory.

Due to the 15 hours that it had taken **TARGET**'s representative to travel from Hongkong to London, as well as the lateness of the hour, without giving this matter of the £100 much of a consideration, the mandatory demand was met; and, **TARGET**'s representative was shown to her suite on the 41st Floor of the building.

On arrival at the suite, it took another 20 minutes before **TARGET**'s one suitcase was delivered.

After taking a shower and installing a laptop on the desk, provided by the hotel, as well as obtaining access to the hotel's Wi-Fi, all of which activities was in preparation for the following day's work, **TARGET**'s representative noted that it was about one o'clock in the morning of Sunday, September 23.

Jet Lag Spares No Man

Jet lag takes its toll of all men and women: **TARGET**'s representative is no exception to the rule.

Having had only about four hours of sleep and still feeling exhausted, in addition to being very hungry, there was ample time to unpack and prepare for the day's work in the comfort of the suite – or so it was, initially, supposed.

At precisely 8:00 a.m., **TARGET**'s representative exited the suite and went to the 35th Floor where the lone restaurant of the hotel is located.

The traditional breakfast, The English Breakfast, offered at Ting Lounge, as this restaurant is called in the mornings, comprised:

Two eggs, sunny side up
Bacon
Blood Sausage
Hash-browns
Mushrooms
Toast
Tea

Having eaten her fill, **TARGET**'s representative left the hotel in order to stroll round the surroundings of the hotel and to partake of the morning air.

Returning to the hotel at about noon, it was discovered that nobody had cleaned the suite, brought in any clean towels, or even remade the bed.

The electronic '*Do Not Disturb*' sign had never been activated and so **TARGET**'s representative was somewhat at a loss to understand this very annoying situation.

TARGET promptly left the suite in order to partake of luncheon at Borough Market, located opposite The Shard, returning to the hotel about one hour later.

The three-room suite, still, had not been touched, with the dirty towels, remaining on the floor of the bathroom, the bed, still, had not been remade and the room had not been cleaned.

After vacating the suite in disgust, once again, **TARGET**'s representative found herself, sharing the lift with a lady staff member of the hotel, wearing a black suit. She was informed about the situation and was asked if she would be so kind as to inform the housekeeping staff to clean the suite.

With a smile, this lady replied, cheerfully: '*Certainly!*'

At 3:30 p.m., on returning to the hotel, it was discovered that the situation in the suite had not changed, at all: The three rooms had not been touched by housekeeping; nothing had been changed since this medium's representative went to eat breakfast at 8:00 a.m., that morning.

In desperation, **TARGET**'s representative telephoned housekeeping in order to try to understand whether or not it was the hotel's practice not to clean guests' bedrooms/suites and, if so, how was one to obtain fresh towels, etc.

The housekeeping staff member who answered the telephone explained to **TARGET** that the hotel's practice was to clean rooms in accordance with standard procedure.

When a guest checks out of the hotel, the rooms are cleaned, and fresh towels are brought, this medium was informed.

TARGET's representative, then, asked: '*I am going to be staying in the hotel for seven days! Are you not going to clean the rooms of my suite for seven days?*'

Housekeeping staff member: '*You want your room to be cleaned?*'

TARGET: '*Yes! And now, please!*'

(In fact, something similar to this situation had happened to this medium on one other occasion, in Okehampton, England, some years ago, when staying for one week in the town's local hotel.)

At about 4:30 p.m., a Polish lady knocked at the door of the **TARGET**'s suite and explained that nobody had instructed her to clean Suite Number 4108.

That was the reason, she explained, that the suite had been left as it was for the entire day.

Her mien was such as to suggest that it was a guest's responsibility to give instructions as to how a suite should be cleaned and at what time!

The Next Day

At about 9:30 a.m. on Monday, September 24, after eating breakfast, **TARGET**'s representative ventured to the Reception Desk on the 35th Floor of the hotel in order to obtain a hotel request form – or something – so that Suite Number 4108 might be cleaned and made presentable without disturbing her as she prepared her reports that had to be sent to Hongkong on a daily basis.

The 30-year-old lady (**TARGET**'s assumption as to this lady's age) at the Reception Desk asked **TARGET**'s representative, very curtly: '*What time do you want your suite cleaned?*'

Somewhat taken aback by this question, having been mouthed by, clearly, an exasperated employee of the hotel, **TARGET**'s representative blurted out, almost unthinkingly: '*9:30 a.m.*'

The employee: '*Daily?*'

TARGET: '*Yes, please.*'

The lady (**TARGET** is making another assumption, here, by using this nomenclature for this hotel employee), then, informed **TARGET**'s representative that the hotel's '*cleaning lady*' would come to the suite, every morning at 9:30 a.m., and, if there was nobody present, she would clean the suite.

The employee, her voice, now, laced with sarcasm, asked: '*Will that suit you?*'

Whatever happened to the concept of the genteel upbringing of the British female?

Obviously, gone ... and nearly entirely forgotten.

A question that **TARGET**'s representative could not help but ask herself, at this juncture, was whether or not she was being verbally punished for (a) being ethnically Chinese and/or (b) occupying Suite Number 4108 by herself.

God help us, all, for the imperious attitude of staff of some hotels!

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