

OBSERVATION

PLEASE BE UPSTANDING FOR HIS EXCELLENCY

You do not refer to him as, '*Your Holiness*', '*Your Majesty*', '*Your Imperial Majesty*', '*Your Grace*', '*Your Imperial Highness*', '*Worshipful Liege Lord*', or even '*Sir*'.

The correct mode of address for Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa is: '*Your Excellency*'.

This was confirmed at a reception, recently held in Toronto, Canada, when The Honourable Raymond Chan, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), the Government of the Confederation of Canada, hosted a small gathering to welcome His Excellency Tung Chee Hwa on his first visit to the country.

His Excellency, accompanied by his wife, Betty, just about shook the hands of all those who attended the gathering, held, most appropriately, in the Imperial Room of the Royal York Hotel.

The title of '*His Excellency*' for the Chief Executive of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is indeed grand -- assuming that it is appropriate -- but the 5-minute speech, delivered by His Excellency, was far from excellent, or grand.

In fact, most people could not hear what he was mumbling.

But, perhaps, that was the intention?

What he is said to have mouthed was something along the lines that he hoped the rich Canadian Chinese population, numbering about 500,000 people, in all, according to His Excellency, would consider setting up operations in the HKSAR.

In other words: Bring back the money that you earned in the HKSAR when it was known, simply, as Hongkong, and when the British Raj ruled the roost.

Then, it was more hand-shaking, smiles, and waves to the adoring crowd of about 100 guests, all but a handful, being ethnically Chinese.

It was a time to get one's photograph taken with His Excellency who, to give him full credit, was very patient as he posed for the amateur guest photographers and, on occasion, he showed affection for a particular guest -- whom he had just been introduced.

Mrs Betty Tung, meanwhile, walked a respectful distance behind the great man, waving to the assemblage with an open-hand salute -- which was, probably, an improvement over the backhand salute, which British Royalty employs to signify recognition of '*My People*'.

It would, perhaps, have been more than a little ungracious in the extreme to say that the small cocktail party was a failure, from a diplomatic point of view, for here His Excellency had a wonderful opportunity to send home a message.

But he flubbed the dub!

And the message that the sniggering assemblage took away with them was that here was a Chinese *'diplomat'*, of sorts, that could not deliver an ad lib talk to his own people -- the 5-minute talk was in English, not Chinese, by the way -- and he was only able to mouth his words.

'Probably jet-lagged', was the way one Chinese guest put it.

'Poor man!' said another. *'Give him a little credit: He did get here, didn't he?'*

'But he was driven here so he could not have got lost. Anyway, Toronto is such a small town,' interjected another guest as he held up a handkerchief to smother a giggle.

'Think of it,' said another businessman, *'from a shipping company on its financial knees to the leader of 7 million Chinese people. That's some going!'*

'Of course, who else would the Government of the PRC choose to be the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR if not somebody who owed a favour to the "motherland",' was the retort of a guest, standing within earshot.

And then she went on to say: *'The Chief Executive of the HKSAR is not supposed to deliver policy addresses. His job is to relay the messages of his Beijing masters.'*

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