

OBSERVATION

BARONESS LYDIA DUNN GOES SHOPPING IN NEW YORK

Baroness Lydia Dunn, like all women, likes to do her share of shopping, especially when she travels to New York.

She was there in March and stayed at what New Yorkers call a *'boutique hotel'* in Manhattan.

The Mark Hotel, located at 25 East 77th Street, is not the most expensive hotel in the world, but it does its best, charging \$US425 for a single room (about \$HK3,306) per night, to a junior suite at \$US650 (about \$HK5,057) per night, to a one-bedroom suite at \$US1,125 (about \$HK8,752) per night.

This is Baroness Lydia Dunn's type of hotel; Management of The Mark takes special care of its ennobled and world-famous guest.

She is relatively unknown in The Big Apple so it must have been a bit of a change for her, being able to move round this large city, without having to be unduly concerned about her looks for fear that, if a lock of hair were to fall out of place, it might be reported in some medium.

In London, where she is now a resident, she goes to the office of John Swire and Sons Ltd, daily, she told her Chinese friend in New York.

She is a Director of this company, which is the controlling shareholder of publicly listed Swire Pacific Ltd.

When she was in old Hongkong, prior to the assumption of sovereignty by the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in July 1997, she was the Number One Lady.

To her credit, she was the only ennobled lady in the history of the former British Colony.

That she well deserved the great British honour is unquestioned, but one wonders as to the true reason that she left those 416 square miles, prior to the advent of the PRC Government, recovering the territory and renaming it the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the PRC.

Of course, Baroness Lydia Dunn is highly unlikely to bare her soul and tell it all, but it is a safe bet to assume that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for there to be 2 tigresses on one mountain.

Mrs Anson Chan Fong On Sang, the HKSAR's Chief Secretary for Administration, while never having attained the high social status that the British Government bestowed on Baroness Lydia Dunn, is, in her own right, quite a lady.

She must be regarded, in terms of her power, to be Baroness Lydia Dunn's equal in the HKSAR, today, relative to the power that Baroness Lydia Dunn wielded when she was Hongkong's top lady.

One may conjecture that Baroness Lydia Dunn, realising that the writing was on the wall, so to speak, quit Hongkong at the peak of her political career for fear that the downhill run could be a fast and slippery one.

This is a bit of a pity, actually, because one could imagine that Baroness Lydia Dunn could well have contributed quite a bit more in Asia, and especially in the HKSAR.

But she chose to leave the HKSAR in favour of London and a prestigious directorship in John Swire and Sons Ltd.

What is surprising about this extraordinary lady is that she successfully competed in the old Hongkong, in a man's world -- and won, hands down.

But she was not willing to fight the good fight when the PRC Government assumed sovereignty over the former British Colony: She left the field with honour, leaving her *'throne'* to Mrs Anson Chan.

And that, one may say, was a good choice of a successor.

Of course, it is possible that Baroness Lydia Dunn does not appreciate the politics of the PRC Government, and feared how such an authoritarian government might intrude on the Chinese population of the HKSAR, that population, having been weaned on the milk of an emerging democracy, albeit in its neophyte stages.

If this was the case, then there was good reason that she should have stayed on in the HKSAR in order to work for its 7 million human population.

Who knows: She may have even been awarded the Golden Bauhinia Award -- which is considered, by some HKSAR tergiversates, as equal to being ennobled by the Queen of England..

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