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**"All the Chinese are Rich!"**

By: King-mong Chan

One myth I often hear from others in the community, apparently to justify discrimination, is that the Chinese people in the food lines are rich, live with their family in their million-dollar homes, and that most of them don't live in the Downtown Eastside. This myth says that Chinese people do not need to be in the food lines but more importantly it leads to the view they *should not* be in the food lines and are stealing our food.

The Chinese community is in various aspects, just like other ethnic communities in that some members are rich and some are poor. Most of the Chinese people in the food lines are seniors, which means the *maximum* government income support they could receive would be almost \$1,300 monthly or about \$15,600 annually. This amount is even less based on various factors, including the number of years they have resided in Canada after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as well as their marital status (and partner's income support from the government if applicable). Although these rates may generally be higher than welfare, they are not high incomes; thus, it's not difficult to see that people living on such incomes may need to be at food lines to supplement their income in light of other possible costs such as medications. Saying that the seniors' family will always take care of them not only dangerously uses an ethnic stereotype but also ignores possible financial consequences that arise from familial conflict. Furthermore, according to data from the 2006 census, almost 30% of all Downtown Eastside residents identify as Chinese; these residents are among those in the neighbourhood's food lines.

We, as a community, may have different cultures, backgrounds, and practices. Some members of the Chinese community here grew up without much formal education because the government in China did not want the people to be a threat to their power. They also lived through a time where everywhere they saw people dying of hunger and starvation due to famines. This experience has profound effects on their sense of whether they will have enough food for the day and the near future. Let us always remember that each person has their own story.

The Christmas season is fast approaching and as it is one of the high times for acts of charity, I know there will be people of all ethnic backgrounds in the lines for Christmas dinners, gifts, and other items. I ask that we have a compassionate heart and remember that "united we stand, divided we fall." One of the free market's tactic to weaken resistance against its oppression is to divide and conquer. We are divided when we are distracted from focusing on the same force that is oppressing all of us. And it will take of us to fight against this force and win.

## ” 所有華人是**有錢的!** ”

作者：陳敬望

在社區裏，我好多時都聽到別人所說的『虛構的事』來辯解歧視。就是：那些在領取食物處的華人是**有錢的**，他和他們的家人居住在百萬元的房屋內，和他們大多數不是住在東端市中心的。這『虛構的事』是他們不需要到食物處領取食品。更重要的是引伸到另一個觀點是他們不應該到那處領取食品和他們是偷取『我們』的食品。

華人社區在各方面與其他族裔社區都相似，有富人和窮人。大部份到食物處領取食品是長者。這表示他們每月可以領取到政府最高的支助是約\$1,300或是每年約\$15,600。因着不同因素，如：從18歲後，他們在加國居住了多久？婚姻狀況(配偶有否領取老人金)？因而這個金額是會被扣減的。雖然，這個數目普遍是高於其它福利金，但因他們不是高收入人士。所以，好明顯依靠這些收入去生活的人是需要依賴食物處以補助及減輕其它開支，如：藥物。話雖如此，長者的家人會照顧他們，但用一種定形的民族觀念來處理是危險的。這存在着漠視和可能因家庭衝突而影響長者的財務狀況。再者，根據2006年的人口普查，接近30%的市中心東端居民是華人。這些人便是其中在附近食物處的人。

在一個社區裏，我們可能有不同的文化、背景和習俗。我們有些人生長於沒有機會接受教育的社會，只因為中國政府不想人民有威脅政府權力的可能。我們有些人經歷過嚴重大饑荒，到處都看見很多因飢餓而死的人。這經歷因而影響他們對今天和未來是否有足夠的食物的感受。讓我們常常都記住每一個人都有各自的故事。

聖誕節將會好快來臨，而這節期是其中之一個慈善行為的高潮。我知道將會有不同種族、背景的人排隊吃聖誕餐、領取食物、禮物或其它物品。我希望我們會有一個同情心及記得：『團結可以挺起，分裂就會跌倒』。自由市場其中的一個策略來減弱阻力就是：分裂和擊敗。當我們的焦點被轉移，不在那壓迫我們所有人的勢力，我們就被分裂。要勝過那股勢力，我們要團結！