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**"We want to be treated equally"**

By: King-mong Chan

"We want to be treated equally." This is what many participants of our monthly community meeting in Cantonese said when we gathered on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Oppenheimer Park House. Discrimination is an ongoing issue for the Chinese community and racism occurs not just from people on the streets but also at service agencies (see May 15<sup>th</sup>'s CCAP article titled, "Discrimination Against Chinese People" for more background information).

At our meeting, we discussed possible actions and steps that we could take to address the discrimination goes on in the Downtown Eastside. Changes that the participants thought would help resolve some tension was for service agencies to have hiring policies to hire Chinese-speaking workers and volunteers. This would include dialects like Cantonese and Mandarin, although it needs to be recognized that many Chinese-speaking community members speak other dialects as well.

The Chinese-speaking members of the Downtown Eastside are just like every other member of our dear Downtown Eastside community – we all have our own stories. Unfortunately, the language barrier prevents the sharing of these stories in both directions, leading to misunderstandings, "othering," and divisions. As Velma Demerson wrote in her article titled "WE ARE ALL EQUALS," which was published in the June 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Carnegie Newsletter, "the vibrancy and compassion of the neighbourhood will be undermined if citizens are treated as outsiders."

Through our community meetings, it is apparent that the Chinese community faces similar challenges as the wider low-income community in the Downtown Eastside – rising expenses (i.e. rents, food) yet without a corresponding increase in income. Some Chinese-speaking members of the community, even seniors, don't receive any financial assistance from the government.

In the last part of our meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, I spoke to the group about the activist work that others in the community are doing, including the Social Justice Zone Campaign, as well as the impact of gentrification in our Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. I think many Downtown Eastside residents are aware of the division and racism in our community; the article written by the Dugout volunteers, published without the original swear words in the June 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the newsletter is further evidence of that. My hope is that we seek to resolve concerns from all sides and to increase understanding among all ethnic groups; then we can fight together in a common struggle against forces that oppress the low-income community as a whole regardless of one's ethnicity.

## “我們要被一視同人”

作者：陳敬望

『我們要被一視同人』。這是在 5 月 23 日聚集於日本花園的每月粵語研討會內許多與會者所提出的。『歧視』在華人社區內是一個持續的議題，而種族歧視不只發生在街上，甚致在服務機構內（更多背景資訊請參閱加麗基社區行動計劃 5 月 15 日的一篇名為『被歧視的華人』）。

聚會裏，我們討論了可行的方案和步驟去解決持續在市中心東端的歧視問題。與會者認為解決一些服務機構的張力，可改變聘請政策。聘請講華語的中國人及義工。雖然華人社區內，許多人是講其它中國地方的方言，而廣東話及國語是包括在內的。

市中心東端講華語的居民，就像我們東端社區的每一個人，我們都有自己的故事。然而，好不幸因語言障礙，阻礙我們相向性地與人溝通和分享這些故事，從而引起誤會，繼而『他者化』和分化。正如 Velma Demerson 的文章，刊登於 6 月 1 日版的『加麗基通訊』內名為『我們大家都是平等』。文章提及『如果公民被視為外人，活力和同情的鄰社將被削弱』。

通過研討會，市中心東端普遍低收入社區面對費用上升，（即如：租金，食品）也同樣明顯出現在華人社區，然而他們都沒有相應地增加收入。部份講華話的社區居民，甚致長者，他們得不到任何政府的經濟援助。

在 5 月 23 日會議最後一部分，我對與會者講及高檔化對東端鄰社的影響和在本社區的積極工作，包括『社會公義區運動』。我覺得許多住在市中心東區的居民也感覺到我們社區存在分化和種族主義。由服務機構 Dugout 的義工寫的文章，原文刊登於 6 月 1 日發行的刊物進一步證明這點。我期望我們要尋求解決各方所關心的和加強各族裔之間的了解。繼而我們可以一起去爭取及抵抗欺壓，因為我們大家，不分種族，都被欺壓。