

卑詩省政府為什麼要向華人道歉？

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“這些諮詢論壇舉辦目的是收集卑詩省的華人社區團體，個人和由於過去的錯誤歷史而受到影響的後人家屬的意見。”

以上是省政府自己寫出來的諮詢目標。無論負責這項工作的廳長在中文媒體上講得多漂亮和及脫離事實，又或個別廣播媒體如何配合廳長的言論，白紙黑字的事實是，這次諮詢的對象只是華人，諮詢的目的是究竟政府的道歉動議的措辭應該怎樣寫。

廳長今日雖然因為受到社群壓力而把“教育及紀念項目”在諮詢期間列為道歉目標，但事實是，在召開第一次諮詢會時，“教育及紀念項目”並沒有被列為目標，廳長也表明政府沒有 budget (預算)。

這次卑詩省政府向華人道歉，對華人社群的地位，又或對社會多元族群和諧，若果省長和她的廳長依然執迷不悟，仍以“速贏”的心態辦事的話，那麼這次道歉所造成的傷害將會多於得著。

自由黨政府向華人社群就歧視歷史作出道歉，源於省長辦公室幕僚所撰寫的一份向多元族裔社群拉票的策略，其中提到就歷史錯誤道歉作為“速贏”的拉票策略。當這份策略書去年被揭露後，主流媒體和社會輿論都猛烈抨擊這種有違道德及政府誠信的政治手段。因為，政府並不是真的因為歷史錯誤認為需要道歉，而是要利用為剝削華裔歷史表面道歉的欺騙手段，騙取華裔感情和選票的策略。

自由黨的“速贏”策略經媒體大幅報導而深入人心，為這次政府的道歉行動造成重大陰影。省民由於先入為主，會認為省府道歉只是拉攏華人

的政治策略，而非卑詩省真的需要道歉。莫說是西人，很多華人都只知道有人頭稅而不知道卑詩省政府和議會從前對華人做過甚麼歧視性的事。再加上人頭稅追討賠償的聲音獲得媒體廣泛報導，而省府又沒有真正出力向主流社會確認和講述卑詩省不光采的歷史，以及道歉究竟是怎樣一回事，普羅大眾都會以為道歉只是自由黨政府的拉票手段。有些人甚至會因為政府可能會向人頭稅苦主再次作出賠償而感到不安和不滿，他們會想，聯邦政府不是道歉及賠償了嗎？政府經常缺錢及財赤，為何現在省府又要再次賠償？這些不滿除了指向省政府，亦會禍延華人社群，認為華人貪得無厭。

大家只要在網上看看英文媒體報導下面的讀者留言，又或聽聽英文電台聽眾的意見便可以了解這些不滿的聲音有多響亮。

這亦是為什麼省府只向華人社區宣傳而不願向主流講述華人被歧視的歷史，因為她們心知很多非華人都不認同，會令自由黨得不償失。這亦正是“速贏”動機的根本問題，若果道歉真的是從真誠，從和解角度出發，整件事政府根本便不會是這樣處理。

在民主社會，每一個人都可以向政府提出訴求，人頭稅苦主絕對有權提出賠償訴求。不幸的是，傳媒在報導這次卑詩省道歉時卻經常把目標和標題鎖定在人頭稅。這是因為省民，包括傳媒都對卑詩省過去歧視華人的史實缺乏認知。

省政府想向華人道歉，不諮詢主流社會的意見，卻要華人提出道歉的話應該怎樣說，這實在是天大的笑話。政府辦事如果真的有誠意，對當事社群必不會如此不尊重！

政府道歉，究竟是代表誰道歉呢？究竟為什麼要道歉？究竟是道歉甚麼呢？

省政府是代表卑詩省民向華人社群道歉，但若果 90% 的省民既沒有被諮詢，亦不知道從前的省政府做過甚麼壞事，那究竟這是道甚麼歉？難道廣大華裔社群可讓省政府代表沒有悔意或不滿的大部份省民道歉麼？

若果省府這次向華裔道歉仍然是依照上次日裔的道歉模式的話，那麼便會是由華人廳長向華人道歉，亦即華人跟華人道歉。（兩年前，省政府向日裔加人道歉，道歉動議由日裔廳長在省議會宣讀。省長簡蕙芝當時沒有出席參與。）

可喜的是，在這次卑詩道歉，我們的華人社團再沒有像上次聯邦自由黨平反人頭稅那樣，盲目地附和政府。無論是維多利亞或是溫哥華的華人大社團，都紛紛在諮詢會前後公開發表聲明表達立場。很明顯，他們都認為單單在諮詢會中跟廳長表達並不足夠，亦不能接受省長沒有實質的空洞道歉。而這些聲音亦迫使政府要“補票”，匆忙在道歉目標中加上“教育及紀念項目”。

政府道歉只能造一次，華人無需著急而促成政府“速贏”道歉，要達致真正的種族和解，省政府必須首先花時間向廣大省民確認和解說本省不光彩的歧視歷史，以史為鑑，避免日後重蹈覆轍。華人社群包括媒體必須齊心，努力迫使省府辦成有廣泛省民接受、有意義和有效應的道歉及和解。

在教育方面，長期為社區和解奔走多年的朱偉光其實在 2012 年 4 月，便已經成功推動由代表全省學務委員的卑詩學務委員協會通過決議，

要求省教育廳把本省華人及原住民歷史列入教材。省政府稍後宣布會把原住民的歷史列入教材，但華人歷史則欠奉。

對於現在的省民，擁有豐富購買廣告宣傳經驗（包括在主流電視黃金時段落購買半小時廣告）的自由黨政府其實可以在報章購買全版廣告，以及推出電視廣告介講述卑詩省的歧視歷史和為什麼要向華人道歉。

此外，朱偉光致力提倡政府考察、研究、保護及修補有關早期華工的重要遺跡，我認為華人社群亦應該大力支持。我更希望自由黨政府不要給我看扁，能夠給我們一次意外驚喜。

Source: <http://www.straight.com/news/579326/gabriel-yiu-why-bc-government-apologizing-chinese>

THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION WAS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM THE ABOVE WEBPAGE, WRITTEN BY MR. WING-ON GABRIEL YIU HIMSELF.

Gabriel Yiu: Why the B.C. government is apologizing to the Chinese

by Gabriel Yiu on Feb 3, 2014 at 9:51 pm

The following is the stated mandate of the B.C. government's process for giving an apology to the Chinese community:

“These consultation forums are intended to seek input from British Columbia’s Chinese community associations and individuals and family descendants of those impacted by past historical wrongs.” □

No matter how spiritedly the minister responsible talked in the Chinese media, the black-and-white truth is this apology consultation only targets Chinese people. Its scope is merely to seek input on the wording of the apology.

The minister, Teresa Wat, may claim that the government is also looking for input on "education and legacy", but the fact is that this topic is not included in the original mandate. "Education and legacy" was only added in the middle of the consultation due to community pressure.

Unless the premier and her minister are willing to abandon their "quick-win" mindset, the B.C. apology could damage not only the image of the Chinese community but also the harmony of our multicultural society.

The B.C. Liberal government's proposed apology to the Chinese community originated from its multi-ethnic outreach strategy cooked up in the premier's office. The leaked strategy included the stated tactic of using apologies for historical wrongs as a "quick-win" trick.

When the B.C. Liberal "quick-win" strategy was exposed, the unethical tactic was widely and roundly condemned by the media pundits and the general public. It's because the government does not intend to undertake an apology out of genuine belief and remorse, but does so as a deceitful plot to exploit historical wounds and sentiments so as to con votes.

Thanks to the media's widespread coverage, the B.C. Liberals' "quick-win" strategy was exposed and known to the general public. It has since cast a dark cloud over the B.C. government's current apology initiative.

Rather than believing the apology is just and necessary, many British Columbians perceive the B.C. apology as merely a political strategy to get ethnic support. This perception is not limited to the general public; a great many Chinese Canadians know only about the Chinese Head Tax but have no idea what other wrongs the province and its legislature have done to Chinese people in past centuries.

In addition, because of the failure of the province to publicize B.C.'s past discriminatory policies—which are the only legitimate reasons behind the government's proposed apology—the public has no idea what the apology is about except that it's the B.C. Liberals' "quick-win" plot to seek Chinese support. News of Chinese head-tax families seeking compensation (or "tax refund" in their words) simply confuses the public more as the Chinese appear to be just greedy.

Since our government has been in the red and suffering from a lack of funding for even necessary services, some might feel uneasy or angry. That's because they think the government may apologize and compensate for the head tax a second time. These people may not only be dissatisfied with the provincial government but may also resent the Chinese community for their apparent never-ending demands and redress.

One only needs to read the comments posted below related news stories on the English-language media websites, or listen to the phone-in comments of the mainstream radio station to feel these dissatisfactions.

This also explains why the B.C. government wants to promote the apology for historical wrongs only in the Chinese community but not in the mainstream. It's because it knows very well that a great many non-Chinese are ignorant of the true history in B.C. and would resent the apology and redress.

The B.C. Liberals fear they would lose rather than gain support by consulting the larger public. That is also the fundamental thinking behind their "quick-win" strategy. If the Liberals are genuinely working for reconciliation, they would handle this matter very differently.

In a free democratic society, everyone can appeal to the government. The families of head-tax payers have every right to state their demand.

The unfortunate thing is that due to a lack of understanding of B.C. government's history of discrimination toward the Chinese people, the provincial government has conveniently turned the B.C. apology into another round of head-tax redress.

The B.C. Liberal government hopes to apologize to the Chinese community without consulting the mainstream society. It also wants the Chinese to write the wording of the apology for them. What a farce! This is not only a lack of integrity and competence, but also respect for the related community.

When the government apologizes, who does it represent? Why apologize? Apologize for what?

The provincial government is obviously representing British Columbians, but if 90 percent of the population were not consulted and do not know what wrong our B.C. governments had done in the past, what kind of apology is that? Should the Chinese community accept a B.C. apology without remorse from the majority of the population who were kept in the dark about B.C.'s past wrongs against the Chinese?

If the B.C. government follows the precedent it made in the apology to the Japanese community two years ago—with a Japanese-Canadian cabinet minister apologizing in the legislature (Premier Christy Clark did not participate in that event)—then we will see a Chinese-Canadian cabinet minister apologize to the Chinese community.

An upside is that unlike with the failed federal Liberals' head-tax redress in 2005 that offered no apology or compensation, some major Chinese community organizations in Victoria and Vancouver have learned their lessons. Some no longer play the cheering squad and rally behind the government uncritically. Although they were invited and participated in the government consultation, they also issued public statements expressing their positions and demands to the government.

Apparently, they do not think merely telling the responsible minister at the consultation forum is adequate; they are also dissatisfied with the premier's hollow apology that has little substance. These voices have forced the government to take remedial action by adding "educational legacy efforts" into the objective of the consultation.

Governments can only apologize once and Chinese-Canadians do not need to rush in to endorse the B.C. Liberals' "quick-win" apology. In order to achieve genuine racial reconciliation, the B.C. government must spend time and effort to educate the general public about past discriminatory history of this province so that we could learn from it and will not repeat it. The Chinese community should unite and

encourage the government to implement a meaningful and effective reconciliation and apology that British Columbians as a whole would accept.

As for the aspect of education, with the great advocacy work of Bill Chu, the B.C. School Trustees Association already passed a resolution in April 2012 requesting the education ministry to incorporate the history of B.C.'s indigenous people and Chinese into the learning objectives of the B.C. school curriculum. This includes their contributions and the adverse effects of B.C.'s policies on their communities.

Although the B.C. government later announced its plan to incorporate indigenous peoples' history into our school curriculum, the B.C. Liberals ignored the BCSTA's request concerning the history of Chinese Canadians.

Even if B.C. would eventually adopt the BCSTA and the Chinese community's request, it is also necessary for adults to learn about our shared disgraceful past. Since B.C. Liberals are the experts in government advertising (which includes buying half-hour prime-time TV advertisements), they should advertise through full-page ads and TV commercials informing the public of B.C.'s discriminatory past and why the province is apologizing to the Chinese community.

Furthermore, with regard to Chu's tireless advocacy to get the government to survey, study, protect, and restore some of the more important archaeological sites of the Chinese pioneers, I urge the community to support his meaningful and timely initiatives.

Lastly, I hope the Liberal government can surprise me by proving me wrong by acting admirably on a true and genuine reconciliation for the people of B.C.