

## **Aligning Anti-Racism Efforts with Decolonization: Reflections from Organizing in Vancouver's Chinatown**

Yi Chien Jade Ho

In this paper, I draw reflections from my experience organizing with the working-class senior residents and allies in Chinatown, specifically on how we learn to align our anti-racism and anti-gentrification organizing with decolonization. I will foreground the reflections with an analysis of Asian/Chinese racialization's role in the perpetuation of settler colonialism. This analysis allows us to recognize the invisible connection between racism and colonialism and how we can actively work to undo it. As Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua cautioned in their foundational work, *Decolonizing Antiracism* (2005), without an understanding of this connection, anti-racism efforts run the danger of perpetuating ongoing settler colonialism. In the context of fighting against anti-Asian racism, without aligning with decolonization, these efforts can many times become dependent on the colonial legal immigration system that perpetuates further erasure of Indigenous people and lands or buying into the false idea of the model minority and upward mobility. Therefore, decolonization cannot be a mere metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012) nor representational in building an anti-racist community. This chapter aims to show that this work is not only possible but necessary. The work that we have been doing in Vancouver's Chinatown is by no means perfect and we still have so much to learn. But I hope Chinatown as a site of struggle can inspire us to not only learn how to tease out the intricacy of the oppressive systems, but more importantly about how we can collectively and concretely resist, heal, and flourish despite these systems.

### **Positioning Myself**

I was born in Taiwan as a third-generation Han settler. I did not realize my family and my position in Taiwan as settlers and Taiwan as a settler colonial nation until I started learning about Indigenous struggles and our responsibilities to decolonization in so-called Canada. I believe the commitment to decolonization in one place also propels one to pay attention to all the places and lands they have lived in or been to. Certainly, that has been the case for me.

When I was thirteen, my mother and I immigrated to Belize so that I could learn English and one day move to the US. My mother calls Belize our "jumping board" to America. Later I moved to Mexico as a student and became a teacher there after university. As an East Asian woman living in the Caribbean, I faced daily racist and sexist remarks and exclusionary treatment, but I also realized our own racist socialization against Black and other people of colour. In 2013, I came to Canada as a graduate student. As an international student, I experienced further exclusion and exploitation, but more importantly at the same time I started to learn about organizing collectively as a way of making change. I believe it is because of these experiences, I became interested in the work of feminists of colour, anti-racism, and decolonization, and how we can enact these efforts through educating, organizing, and building a community of change and care.

### **Radical Reorientation: Coming to Chinatown, Coming to Luk'luk'i**

In 2016, I was fortunate to be welcomed into an intergenerational group organizing against gentrification and racism in Vancouver's Chinatown. At the time, the group, alongside many Chinatown working-class residents, was pushing back against a corporate landlord's

(Beedie Living) development application in the heart of Chinatown: 105 Keefer St. If the development were to go through, it would add a luxury condo tower in the already rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood.

Chinatown, historically and presently, has often been defined against a backdrop of colonialism, capitalist gain and white supremacy. The area was formed out of anti-Asian racism on dispossessed Indigenous land, a Squamish site called luk'luk'i, a name attributed to the groves of beautiful maple trees that were there before it was clearcut and the community displaced by colonial settlement (The People's Vision for Chinatown, 2017). The notion of "Chinatown" itself stems from a European idea of "an unfavorable neighborhood characterized by vice and populated by an inferior race" (Li, 2003). In the 1800s, Chinese immigrants and migrant workers for the railroads and other infrastructures of capitalist expansion were restricted within the boundaries of this neighbourhood. Canada as a colonial state continues to depend on cheap migrant labour to exploit and extract "resources" from Indigenous lands. But, in resistance and a fight for survival, Chinese immigrants built Chinatown into a place of survival and shelter from white supremacist violence, at least as far as they were able. Therefore, the history of Chinatown is not merely one of exclusion or of an ethnic enclave, but one of resilience, solidarity, and, consequently, "indebtedness" to the support of Indigenous people (Phung, 2015).

Today, in Chinatown, one can easily observe how gentrification brings a new class of wealthier residents with capitalistic values, driven by the redevelopment of land to generate profit. This is a continuation of this city's colonial legacy. Chinatown's history cannot be separated from what is happening now. Learning about Chinatown's history and present, as well as being adjacent to the Downtown Eastside where many urban Indigenous people reside has pushed those of us who organize in Chinatown to question how our fight for belonging in this colonial context has been predicated on the displacement and eradication of Indigenous people. Therefore, the fight for Chinatown requires an understanding of the violent history of colonial displacement and the responsibilities immigrant settlers have on Indigenous land. We desperately need a critique of settlers of colour/immigrant settlers, of people who benefit daily either through coercion or willingness from the erasure of Indigenous people and land but at the same time experience oppression. We need to examine the role Asian immigrants play in the reproduction of settler colonial structure. I contend that teasing out this role is essential to our liberation and to our solidarity with Indigenous, Black and other marginalized people. To do this we need not only to understand our own cultural resources, to connect with our histories, but to also learn about our complacency and formulate a framework on how the colonial structure manipulates our relationship to the state, other marginalized groups and to one another. As Day et. al (2019) posit, this kind of "critical reorientation" calls us to

grapple with the complex interplay of race and Indigeneity, compelling us to challenge Asian settler mythologies—particularly those that celebrate early Asian labor migrants as 'pioneers,' while ignoring their complicity with colonial expansion and the genocidal elimination of Native peoples and cultures (p. 2).

This reorientation has taught me I have not come to "Vancouver, Canada" but I have arrived at Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-waututh lands on Turtle Island that hold a history of flourishing, survival, and struggle that concerns each person who has come to this land, and all of us are implicated in it. This is a reorientation of our relationship as newcomers and immigrants to this land, and it echoes the question Rita Wong (2008) asks, "What happens if we position Indigenous people's struggles instead of normalized whiteness as the reference point through which we come to articulate our subjectivity?" (p.158).

For me, this radical reorientation calls us to question the larger rhetoric of inclusion and belonging through nationalistic immigration processes built on settler-colonial logics (Toomey et al.). Belonging and inclusion look for a seat at the table but do not question the stability of the table or who set it up in the first place. Instead of belonging and inclusion, I want to focus on a reorientation towards connection and responsibility that centers on building accountability and relationship to land and Indigenous people and a recognition that margin is a place of “radical opening and possibility” (hooks, 1990, p.22).

### **Asian Racialization in Settler colonial Capitalism**

On a December afternoon in 2018, a surprisingly sunny day for the usually damp Vancouver winter, a group of us gathered at the intersection of Gore and Keefer to meet Mrs. Kong, a Chinatown resident. Mrs. Kong has lived in Chinatown for more than 30 years. That afternoon she took us on a short tour around Chinatown and told us stories through her own lived experience to highlight the rapid changes of the past few years. We called this a “gentrification tour”. She began the tour by saying, “it feels like this city is trying to push us out, to erase us, but we are still here making sure Chinatown is safe for everyone.” On the tour, Mrs. Kong passionately pointed out where she would practice Tai Chi with her friends, as well as her favourite grocery store, now closed and awaiting a future condo development. Many other affordable and culturally appropriate grocers, restaurants and businesses have also been forced to close in recent years, and in their place: hipster coffee shops, artisanal patisseries, and restaurants of “elevated” East Asian street foods. We finished the tour back on Keefer Street by the Chinese Railway Worker and Veteran Memorial, right beside 105 Keefer St., which had been fenced off by the developer. Mrs. Kong emphasized that this is an important place for her in Chinatown because the monument reminds her of the mistreatment Chinese workers face and the effort early Chinese immigrants put into fighting for belonging in this country. She lamented their belief that building the railroad and going to war for Canada would ensure their belonging, but years after we are still struggling. However, through her own involvement in the housing struggle at 105 Keefer St., she told us how important it is for the community to come together and for marginalized people to raise their voices.

Mrs. Kong’s lived experiences and remarks at the Chinese Railway Worker and Veteran Memorial call attention to the specific ways Chinese immigrants and their racialization have been positioned in the settler-colonial capitalist system. Many Asian American and Indigenous scholars (Tuck & Yang 2012, Day 2016, Wong 2019, Fijikane & Okamura, 2008, Phung 2015, Byrd 2011) have been mapping out the relationship formations underlying settler colonialism. Their formulations take the conversation on settler colonialism beyond the mere binary relationship between Indigenous peoples and white settlers to include an interrogation of the roles racialized others play within the system. Amongst these scholars, Iyko Day (2015) contends that the process of racialization is essential and internal to settler coloniality and its fellow traveller, capitalist progression. As capitalism strives for limitless market expansion, settler coloniality supports that goal and seeks to seize Indigenous lands to be commodified, often through the exploitation of racialized labour. In this conception, settler colonial relations are, as Glen Coulter (2014) posits, “the inherited background field within which market, racist, patriarchal, and state relations converge” (p. 14). By clarifying the process of hierarchical racial formation within settler colonial capitalism, we can understand the interconnection as we fight in different areas of this process and move away from resistance approaches that perpetuate the continuation of settler colonial capitalism.

Based on this formation, Day (2016) proposes a triangulated settler colonial capitalism relation, settler-Indigenous-alien. The term “alien” is to emphasize African slaves, Asian migrant labour and other racialized labour’s “historical relationship to North American land, which was exclusive and excludable to alien labour forces” (p.26). This formulation is not to equate the experiences of Black people and Asian or other racialized people but to understand settler colonialism’s inherent dependence on racialized alien labour, in the forms of forced migration and deportable labour, for its reproduction and continuation of Indigenous dispossession. Day’s framework offers a nuanced understanding of the process of racialization in the settler-colonial triangulation and how each positionality either assists or hinders the reinforcement of white settler colonial capitalism. Day (2019) further emphasizes that the categories are not meant to be fixed but to point out “the role of territorial entitlement that distinguishes them. In this sense, these positions should not be understood as identitarian categories but rather a political orientation to Indigenous land” (p.10). With this background in place, I will now dissect the specific ways Asian racialization has manifested and the particular role it holds within the relational system of settler colonial capitalism. I add to this conversation by proposing *manipulability* and *commodifiability* as two of the key features of Asian racial formation.

Asian racial formation manifests in two prominent racial stereotypes: on the one hand, we are the “model minority” succeeding in climbing the ladder of class mobility. On the other hand, we are the “yellow peril” that infests the pure white society with our foreign and uncivilized customs. Although being praised as successful, we are also perpetually foreign and can be expelled anytime. The racial imaginary of the “yellow peril” in English-speaking colonial North America developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Asian immigrants came in larger numbers as cheap labour (Kawai, 2005). The term conveys fear and undesirability of Asian migration by equating the population with “diseases, vice and destruction” (Day, 2016, p. 7), and thus a threat to white colonial nation building. Early Chinese immigrants faced extreme legal, spatial, and material limitations, such as the Chinese head tax and Chinese exclusionary act, and were relegated to the ghettoized Chinatown. This racial imaginary entered a new stage at the end of WWII by positioning Asian immigrants as a “model minority,” able to achieve economic success while standing out as exemplary citizens of their purported hard-working and law-abiding nature. Although this racialization process of yellow perilism and the myth of model minority may seem to represent two distinct historical stages, in actuality they exist on a spectrum forming a racial limbo with fluidity to be both model minority and yellow peril. Day points out the two stereotypes work together as “complementary aspects of the same form of racialization, in which economic efficiency is the basis for exclusion or assimilation” (2016, p.7). In other words, we should understand these two seemingly oppositional racial imaginaries, one denotes positivity and the other negativity, as existing in an inseparable dialectic relationship, holding each other accountable for the maintenance of white supremacy (Kawai, 2005; Okihiro, 1994).

As a result, people racialized as Asian assume a position of what I call a “racial limbo,” a racial space with the illusion of upward class mobility and proximity to whiteness through seemingly voluntary assimilation, but at the same time living under the threat of removal, creating what Harsha Walia (2021) calls a “fantasy of inclusion” that requires high dependency and buy-in into the settler colonial state processes. This “vague purgatory status” (Park Hong, 2020) makes the Asian racial role highly manipulable to be used to pit against other racialized groups or to take the blame for capitalist failures, evident in the Vancouver housing crisis and the call for the ouster of Chinese foreign buyers as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of anti-Asian violence. It is an insidious design that makes it attractive for many of us to opt in. It is

a design to erase who we are and self-police when any of us act outside the parameter of a good immigrant. In 2020, after a Filipinx labour organizer went on a CBC interview to raise a concern about the inadequacy of short-term assistance like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and to advocate for long term solutions to make workers' lives better, she faced strong racist and misogynist blowback with many calling for her deportation. The loudest opposing voices in the campaign were mainly other Filipinx immigrants saying that she had shamed her immigrant community by being "ungrateful" to the Canadian state.

What this smear campaign revealed is not only the buy-in and the obligated gratefulness to the colonial state but an active concealing of the Asian working-class struggle and existence which was made more urgent and apparent by the global health crisis. Asian immigrants are dispersed throughout the class spectrum, but issues of working-class immigrants, migrant workers, seniors, and refugees are rarely discussed in mainstream discourse. This concealment allows the continuation of exploitation of labour power and commodification of Asian culture to be further exploited in the settler colonial capitalist expansion. State policies prioritizing multiculturalism also abet the process of commodification and further colonial exploitation by constructing deterministic cultural and racial differences and identities to fit into "unproblematic neat cultural packages" (Valle-Castro, 2021, p.96) to be consumed and controlled. Canada was the first country to implement multiculturalism as a state policy in 1971, around the time the model minority myth took hold. Both the adaptation of multiculturalism and the idea of the model minority conveys an end to the overt exclusionary immigration rules and racist treatment such as the Japanese internment camps that caused havoc in the lives of Japanese immigrants and families. However, as Walia (2021) points out, multiculturalism works in tandem with other racial formations to mask racial hierarchy and elevate national unity by using "grammars of culture and ethnicity" (p.194), thus boiling down historical and present colonial capitalist violence and expansion into mere discussions of inclusion, diversity, culture, and ethnicity.

Chinatown has become one of the prime locales for the culmination of these intersecting and interdependent processes. The ongoing gentrification depends on the erasure and invisibilization of working-class Chinese and other marginalized people to ease the process of displacement, while commodifying orientalist ideas of Chinese culture for capitalist gain such as real estate development. Many new condo buildings or luxury businesses going into Chinatown would make sure they have a splash of red paint, an auspicious color in the Chinese tradition, or a Chinese translation of the business, but with no working-class Chinese people in sight. In 2017, working-class residents organized to oppose a new City plan, Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan (CRAP for short)<sup>i</sup>. This plan used language such as "revitalization" and "preserving Chinatown's unique heritage," but in reality, it would heighten displacement and increase land grabs by removing barriers to development permits with no requirement for affordable and social housing. It would also further remove community members from decision making processes. The open houses held by the City to discuss this plan were marked by inadequate notice for residents, a lack of translation services for the multitude of residents who don't speak English, and a blatantly disrespectful decision to hold them during Lunar New Year. One senior activist, Godfrey Tang, expressed that the City's plan to revitalize Chinatown, in reality, is a replacement – "replacing Chinatown with another culture" (The People's Vision for Chinatown, 2017). This proposed replacement process was occurring alongside the proposed development at 105 Keefer St. Neighbourhood activists had been pushing back against the condo development since 2014 as working-class residents and other community members of the Downtown Eastside rose up to fight for their survival, showing their strength and a rooted

presence that cannot be erased despite the insidious systems working against them. In 2017, the campaign had a historic win when the development proposal was rejected by the City for the fifth time. This victory and the process of community organizing signals a collective critical consciousness of the marginalized as well as a refusal to be manipulated, commodified, and replaced by an empty colonial and capitalist redefinition of place and culture.

### **Learning to Decolonize our Struggle**

At the debriefing meeting following our win, one of the seniors stood up and shared that she had not previously believed that anyone would listen to what Chinese immigrants have to say. She thought we should just be quiet, keep our heads down and not make waves, but throughout the campaign, she learned that we have something important to say and when we say it together, we are powerful. Another senior shared that she used to feel isolated and alone in the city. She always thought there was animosity between Chinese and Indigenous community members. But, experiencing support from Indigenous people and other allies from the Downtown Eastside in the 105 Keefer St. fight she felt we have gained important friendships and that we need to fight for them just as they fought for us.

The process of 105 Keefer organizing also became our collective journey to learn to decolonize and align our struggle with Indigenous struggles. This journey includes both our own empowerment as well as repositioning our relationship with the colonial state and with our Indigenous neighbours. We had to learn to re-establish our intergenerational relationships between elders and youth and had to find ways to facilitate relationship building and knowledge exchange. Together, we needed to re-envision and reclaim Chinatown not as a mere ethnic enclave, but as a place of safety, collective care, and connection. We also needed to refuse the demarcations imposed by multiculturalism and embody the history that Chinatown has not been an exclusive space only for Chinese people, having always been shared by Japanese, Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized people. Its boundary has been porous and flexible although the official border has been restricted.

Throughout our years of organizing together, we began to set up practices and make conscious space in our meetings, actions, and gatherings to facilitate discussions and decision-making processes that allow all of us to imagine and grow together as a community of resistance and care. Khasnabish and Haiven (2014) describe this as the development of radical imagination, as imagination is not an individual possession but a process to be practiced collectively and co-inhabited through sharing of experiences, stories, and ideas as well as learning of the past and history and constructing what the future can look like. In 2017, after two years of hosting teatime discussions and house visits, the seniors and youth organizers put together the *People's Vision*<sup>ii</sup> outlining a strategy for Chinatown's social and economic development that centers on the needs of marginalized people in and around Chinatown. Throughout this process in conjunction with the 105 Keefer St. campaign, members also got together to carry out power analyses of different levels, so that our vision is not narrow but includes an understanding of the systemic issue underlying our struggle, to understand where we should apply the pressure of our collective power.

To loosen the colonial hold means to decenter the dominance of English in our organizing and to make our space accessible to the seniors. The members of our group spoke mainly three different languages – Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. Some can understand all three, some only speak one or two – all at varying levels of proficiency. All our meetings and gatherings were conducted alternating Cantonese and Mandarin with whisper interpretation for

people who needed a translation. This helped our members feel comfortable speaking up without worrying about challenges in communicating in English. Language accessibility was also one of the biggest struggles when we participated in city processes. Every open house, city council hearing and development board meeting, we had to fight tooth and nail for the city to provide proper translation and interpretation. When they failed to do so, the youth organizers provided interpretation for our seniors on our own, just to be scolded by white meeting attendees saying we were disrupting their meetings. When our seniors spoke in the city council hearings, they were restricted to the same time limit as English speakers even though they needed more time for interpretation. The lack of language accessibility at the City level unmasks the racist foundation that Vancouver is built on. However, our members did not waver, our seniors took up every space possible and spoke loud and clear in Cantonese and Mandarin condemning the City for its lack of accountability and for allowing gentrification and displacement to wreak havoc on people's lives.

Being able to communicate in their own languages and participate in city processes and collective actions, members of our organizing group felt more and more emboldened to share their own lived experiences and place-based knowledge. At the same time, we were also able to have meaningful discussions about how to ensure our fight to remain in Chinatown is not exclusionary but connected to the larger decolonization effort. We needed to first interrogate and unlearn what the colonial state has taught us about each other and undo the prevailing racial stereotypes about Indigenous people, other marginalized people, and ourselves and the land we are on. We began to read territorial acknowledgement out loud in unison together at the beginning of all our meetings and gatherings<sup>iii</sup>. We translated the land acknowledgement to Mandarin and Cantonese. Since it was difficult to find the exact translation, "acknowledgement" becomes "we give our thanks out loud" for being on Coast Salish lands belonging to the Musquam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Wauth nations, and "unceded territories" became as literal as "lands that have been taken without agreement." We started doing this practice not just because it is a necessary protocol, but also because it grounded our meetings and all our collective decisions while creating room for questions and discussions. When we started this practice, we did not hear any of the seniors comment on it, but everyone agreed to keep doing it. Finally, one day in one of our regular weekly meetings after we read the territorial acknowledgement together, one of the seniors raised her hand and asked, "what do we mean when we say Chinatown is on the land that was taken without agreement from Indigenous people?" She went on to ask, "does this mean that Chinatown is not Chinese people's, but we are on someone's land that was stolen from them?" From there the group got into a discussion on the history of the traditional land Chinatown is on and how Chinatown was formed. We then proceeded with our meeting. One of the agenda items that day was to give a response to the city about a temporary modular housing being built on the edge of Chinatown. Different members were giving their thoughts, and then the same senior once again spoke up, "As per our discussion earlier, we should ask the Indigenous people about what they think about this since this is their land. Who are we to make this decision? And if this project is going to prioritize housing for Indigenous people, then it is our responsibility to support it."

That was a particularly impactful moment for me as a young organizer, to witness the reorientation of a Chinese elder's relationship with Chinatown, who holds a strong sense of place in Chinatown, a place which she depends on, and to open up space for solidarity and Indigenous leadership. Although in many contexts territorial acknowledgement has been co-opted to be tokenistic and performative, when it is practiced respectfully and intentionally, it has profound

pedagogical and transformative potential. This kind of “reflective territorial acknowledgement,” as Malissa Phung points out, is an important “first step towards building Indigenous and Asian relations, particularly in situations of racial conflict and colonial misapprehensions” (2019, p.20). This practice enabled us to situate that the ongoing displacement is part of a settler colonial capitalist process that continues to displace and erase Indigenous presence and our indebtedness to the original stewards of the land we are now living on.

Nevertheless, as Phung states, while this is a necessary first step, more needs to be done to bridge the two communities. We realized that it is still difficult for many Chinatown elders to fully participate in Indigenous and other social movements and cultivate any personal relationships with the people they might see in their daily lives in Chinatown due to language barriers and racial trauma. We started organizing social gatherings in which people could come together to share traditional foods and stories through interpretation, building personal relationships in a safe space. We also organized the seniors to attend many important indigenous-led actions such as the Annual Women’s Memorial March that brings attention to missing and murdered Indigenous women and all women and gender diverse people in the Downtown Eastside, so they know that they can be a part of a community of change outside of our own organizing.

Lastly, since a lot of learning opportunities like workshops and reading groups are often inaccessible to the seniors, the youth organizers gathered materials and set up various workshops with the elders to discuss topics like capitalism and the housing crisis, dehumanization and discrimination, as well as understanding colonialism in Canada. We always had fruitful and many times heated discussions. One of the lessons that I gained from being a part of these workshops was that the elders hold embodied knowledge and lived experiences of being in the oppressive systems. They might not have the same political language to describe them, but it does not mean they cannot have this type of political discussion. They all felt them, experienced them, and resisted them. They just needed a place to name, to reflect, to grow, and to see the possibility for change. Grace Lee Boggs (2016), Chinese American philosopher and activist in the Black liberation movement, emphasizes the importance of reflection in the process of resistance and cautions against thinking of racialized people only as an “oppressed mass” but, rather, people capable of making collective “moral choices” (p.149) and accountable to develop “self-consciousness and a sense of political and social responsibilities” (p.152). Although our work still has a long way to go and it is often messy and slow, we constantly witness our collective growth and when many would see low-income Chinese seniors as merely a helpless population steeped in conservative mindsets, the senior members would exercise their own agency in becoming change makers of their own lives as well as better allies to the First People of the land they now depend on.

### **Conclusion: Moving Forward with Decolonizing Anti-racism Efforts**

With the recent rise in anti-Asian rhetoric and violence, it is especially important to draw the connection between colonialism and racism. This surge in violence is not just a momentary condition but it is situated in the history of the racial foundations of settler colonial capitalism. Without situating our struggle in this connection, our anti-racism effort can be easily co-opted and manipulated. The face of gentrification today in Chinatown is no longer only the white cooperate developers, but also the Chinatown capitalist elites. They have been using the wave of stop anti-Asian hate to advocate for “cleaning up” Chinatown by adding more police presence to criminalize the unhoused people in Chinatown and neighbouring Downtown Eastside. This is a



sinister part of the new form of gentrification in Chinatown by using the seemingly progressive messaging of anti-racism and “cultural revitalization”, which activist Vince Tao appropriately names “gentrification with Chinese characteristics” (Lowe, 2019). Without understanding the intricate way Asian racialization can be manipulated and commodified to advance colonial capitalist gain, it is very easy to buy into rhetoric such as “cultural revitalization.”

However, in our effort to connect anti-gentrification and anti-racism struggle with decolonization, we have learned to radically re-orient the positionality of immigrants to expose manufactured belonging and dependency on settler colonial logic that aims to perpetuate colonial control and capitalist exploitation. We began to rely on community building and collective caring as well as deepening our understanding and relationship with Indigenous people and the land we are on. This is a humbling way to relate to the land we have arrived at, to offer gratitude and assume our responsibility for the care of this land through our own lived cultural resources and strength. This repositioning also offers the potential to open space for solidarity down to the most practical details. This vision has helped us feel less alone and that our immigrant history and resistance are connected and have shared solidarity with everyone else—we are no longer just one group of people fighting for what is good for us, but we are deeply implicated in each other’s struggle and survival. For me, this is liberating.

## Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.thevolcano.org/2017/02/12/cut-the-crap/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://chinatownaction.org/>

<sup>iii</sup> The Chinese translation of the territorial acknowledgement used in our meetings and gatherings: 我們鳴謝我們是在 瑪斯昆 (Musqueam)、史戈米殊 (Squamish)和塔斯里爾-沃特斯 (Tsleil-Waututh)這些西岸原住民族從來沒有同意交出的領土上

## References

- Boggs, G. L. (2016). *Living for change: An autobiography*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Byrd, J. A. (2011). *The transit of empire: Indigenous critiques of colonialism*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Crompton, N. & Leung, L. (2017). *Chinatown and the persistence of anti-Asian racism*. Vancouver: N.O.P.E.
- Day, I. (2016). *Alien capital*. Duke University Press.
- Fujikane, C., & Okamura, J. Y. (2008). *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawaii? i*. University of Hawaii Press.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston: South End Press.
- Hong, C. P. (2020). *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. One World.
- Kawai, Y. (2005). Stereotyping Asian Americans: The dialectic of the model minority and the yellow peril. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 16(2), 109-130.
- Khasnabish, D. A., & Haiven, M. (2014). *The radical imagination: Social movement research in the age of austerity*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Lawrence, B., & Dua, E. (2005). Decolonizing antiracism. *Social justice*, 32(4 (102), 120-143.
- Li, Peter S. (2003). Chinese Diaspora in Occidental Societies: Canada and Europe. In Hoerder et al.'s (Eds). *The historical practice of diversity: Transcultural interactions from the early modern Mediterranean to post-colonial world*. New York: Berghahn Books. P. 134 - 151.
- Lowe, N. (2019). Class Struggle in Chinatown: Ethnic Tourism, Planned Gentrification, and Organizing for Tenant Power. *The Mainlander*.  
<https://themainlander.com/2019/07/16/class-struggle-in-chinatown-ethnic-tourism-planned-gentrification-and-organizing-for-tenant-power/>
- Okiihiro, G. Y. (1994). *Margins and mainstreams: Asians in American history and culture*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Phung, M. (2015). Asian-indigenous relationalities: literary gestures of respect and gratitude. *Canadian Literature*, (227), 55-55.
- Phung, M. (2019). Indigenous and Asian Relation Making. *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*, 5(1), 18-30.
- The people's vision for Chinatown: A community strategy for social and economic development. (2017). Retrieved from: <https://chinatownaction.org/>
- Toomey, N., Ho, Y. C. J., Del Vecchio, D., & Tuck, E. (2020). Reconciliation through kits and tests?: Reconsidering newcomer responsibilities on Indigenous land. In *Indigenous Reconciliation and Decolonization* (pp. 61-77). Routledge.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society*, 1 (1), 1-40.
- Wong, R. (2008). Decoloniasian: Reading Asian and first nations relations in literature. *Canadian Literature*, (199), 158-180.
- Valle-Castro, M. (2020). Reconciliation as rationalization of state violence: Activist performance as resistance to TRC politics in Chile and Canada. In *Indigenous Reconciliation and Decolonization* (pp. 94-105). Routledge.
- Walia, H. (2021). *Border and rule: global migration, capitalism, and the rise of Racist nationalism*. Haymarket Book.