



不景氣下的 貧老

Destitute elderly in recession

踏入2008年初，港元匯率疲弱，本地物價上揚，造成本港通脹日益加劇。

At the onset of 2008, the Hong Kong dollar was weak, prices went up and inflation was constantly on the rise as a result.

根據政府統計處表示，08年1月份基本通脹率升4.3%，高於去年12月的3.8%，綜合消費物價指數更是持續上升及高企，3月份、4月份、6月份及8月份分別為4.2%、5.4%、6.1%及6.3%。以上數據，究竟對貧乏長者有何深遠影響？

According to government statistics, January inflation rate rose by 4.3%, higher than December 2007 by 3.8%. Integrated consumable price index kept on rising. The increase was 4.2%, 5.4%, 6.1% and 6.3% for the months of March, April, June and August respectively. How far do the above figures affect the lives of the destitute elderly?

於食方面，根據政府統計處二月份公佈，其中豬肉價格大幅升近5成，新鮮蔬菜及凍肉價格也升近2成，月內食品（不包括外出用膳）價格升幅最大，按年升18.9%；其中升幅顯著的食品，計有米（64%）、牛肉（50.8%）、豬肉（48.2%）、罐裝肉類（39.2%）、食油（32.2%）、淡水魚（27.7%）及其他肉類（26.8%）。以上全是日常基本食品，但單單從以上的加價幅度，足見平日綜援長者如何以有限的金錢來度日。

According to government statistics of February, the price of pork rose by nearly 50%. Fresh vegetables and frozen meats rose by nearly 20%. February saw the biggest increase rate for food items (excluding eating outside) at 18.4% annually. Items with more noticeable increase rates were rice (64%), beef(50.8%), pork(48.2%), canned meats(39.2%), cooking oil(32.2%), fresh water fish(27.7%), other kinds of meat (26.8%). Those food items are basic to our daily lives. One can easily see how elderly receiving CSSA struggle on a limited amount of money.

除食品外，其他錄得升幅的類別，包括電力燃氣及水（7.4%）、住屋（6.3%）、雜項物品（5.6%）、交通（3.3%）、衣履（1.4%），由此可見，高通脹之下綜援老人家之生活也甚艱辛。

Besides food items, increases on other necessities were recorded as follows: electricity, gas and water (7.4%), housing(6.3%), miscellaneous(5.6%), transportation(3.3%), clothing and shoes(1.4%). Lives of elderly relying on CSSA are tough under high inflation.

為應付日益只有加無減的生活壓力下，部份長者會於市場用非常平宜的價錢購買營養較低的餸菜，而三餐當一餐的長者更是不勝其數。而交通費方面，以筆者駐守的屋邨為例，有部份長者會因貧乏而選擇不乘搭入邨的小巴，而他們的家中物品也大多破舊不堪的，可見於高通脹下，長者的生活更見沒有保障。

In order to make their ends meet when prices are always going up, some elderly buy less nutritious foods on very cheap prices. Many more even live on one meal a day only. As for transportation, take the estate I station in for instance, some elderly do not travel in the mini-bus that takes them right into the estate they live in. Things at home are dilapidated. Their lives are insecure under serious inflation.

雖然為紓緩通脹，政府於8月開始調整綜援金額4.4%，即獨居健全長者由現時領取\$2,370增加至\$2,475，然而，每月只增加\$105，亦即每日增加\$3.5，此增長實不能追及大幅增長之通脹，對綜援長者實際的補貼幫助不大。同時，在筆者執筆之時，全球正爆發金融海嘯，無論大家有否購買債券、股票，相信升斗小民都極受影響，何況是一班沒有工作能力的長者呢！

In order to ease the impact of inflation, government adjusted the CSSA by 4.4% starting from August. Lone, healthy elderly receive \$2,475 instead of \$2,370. The increase of \$105 monthly, i.e., \$3.5 a day, is a drop in the ocean when compared to the rate of inflation. It helps very little. And, at the time of this article, the global financial tsunami has broken out. Hong Kong people are affected one way or other regardless if they have bought shares, bonds or not. Thus the impact on the workless elderly can be imagined.

聖雅各福群會的「慈惠服務」，對改善全賴有限綜援為生的無助長者貧乏生活而言，確是見證社會的關懷力量，敬盼大家繼續捐助，使備受艱辛困難蹂躪的長者，可跨過此經濟日益惡化的社會。

St. James' Settlement's 'philanthropic services' is a witness of the power of social concern for it aims at improving the lives of the elderly receiving CSSA. We hope that benevolent people of our society will continue to donate so that the elderly, constantly battling through lives on a meagre budget, can survive this time of economic downturn.



我們需要你的捐助
We Need Your Donation

乏交通費回院覆診 盼請支援免誤病情

患上慢性疾病，需要按醫生安排覆診，是必然的；但一些貧而無依的病者，常因無錢乘搭理想交通工具前往醫院而耽誤病情。

「我行兩步，就要停一步呼吸，怎可以步行去巴士站搭車？」患有氣喘病的李伯伯說。「就算搭到車，根本都無力行上醫院睇症啦。」

「點解唔搭的士？因為每次來回都要超過\$150的士費，我怎可以咁奢侈呀！」領取綜援的李伯伯說。「有病錢都要使多些，又話要食好些、穿暖些，錢就是這樣用了。」

「見病沒有轉差時，就打電話多拖延數月再覆診。等儲夠錢，才搭的士返醫院啦。」這是李伯伯與眾多不依醫生指示覆診的病者的寫照。

「倘他們延慢覆診，有可能會誤了病情，令健康更為惡化。」一位社康護士說。「在我們的病人中，有部份人是會由於欠缺交通費而放棄覆診的。」

病患降低生活質素，是必然的。遵醫生指示覆診是改善生活之道。你願伸援手幫助那些無助的病者往醫院覆診嗎？盼請慷慨解囊，捐助本會創辦的「診病交通費支援計劃」，令貧困病者可有足夠交通的費用往返醫院覆診，不致因延誤就醫而影響健康。施善請用支票，抬頭：聖雅各福群會，支票背面請書明捐予「診病交通費支援計劃」，逕寄香港灣仔石水渠街85號。施善查詢：2835-4321或8107-8324。



Help the sick with car fare to revisit the doctor

Chronic diseases call for regular visits to see the doctor. Yet many needy patients often delay treatment for lack of car fare.

"I must stop and catch my breath with every two steps I take. How can I walk to the bus stop?" said Uncle Lee who has asthma. "Even if I could get on the bus, I wouldn't have the strength to walk up to the hospital."

"Why not take a taxi? I would have to pay over \$150 in taxi fare back and forth. How can I be so extravagant?" said Uncle Lee who lives on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. "You have to spend more when you are sick. They tell you to eat better, to dress more warmly. It all takes money."

"When my condition is not worse, I telephone to postpone my appointment to the doctor. I'll take a taxi to the hospital when I have saved up enough money." Uncle Lee is one of many patients who don't visit the doctor as told.

"If they postpone their appointment, their health may further deteriorate due to neglect of their condition," commented a community nurse. "Some of our patients give up coming to see the doctor for lack of car fare."

Illness necessarily lowers the quality of life, and the only way to improve it is to follow the doctor's instructions and see him regularly. Are you willing to lend a helping hand to enable the helpless patients to make their visits to the doctor? Please donate to our newly established Patients Travel Subsidy Plan, so that needy patients will have enough car fare to go to the hospital, and their health will not be affected by treatment delay.

Please make out a cheque payable to St. James' Settlement, and write on the reverse side "Patients Travel Subsidy Plan," and mail it to 85 Stone Nullah Lane, Wanchai, Hong Kong. For enquiry please telephone 2835-4321 or 8107-8324.