

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

## Rich Woman, Poor Woman Belilios Public School

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Hong Kong, famous for being both shopping and gourmet paradises, is a prosperous world city. Originally a fishing village, Hong Kong has evolved into an international financial centre. People are living contentedly, having fun shopping comfortably and eating like a king... all in all they are having an easy life.

But even though Hong Kong is said to be an international financial hub, not everyone has a good paying job and a luxurious home like this. Nor does everyone in Hong Kong have the ability to own a shiny sleek car. Each and every coin has two sides, and while you see the better side of Hong Kong, what can you make out of the other side?

Here is one of the oldest urban areas of Hong Kong. There has been evidently some renovation in the area, but how many buildings are actually getting renovated. How could the poor and the penniless afford such a costly renovation.

The elderly of our society are supposed to be retired in their old age. But look... these old women have to collect cardboard and carton boxes. The needy elderly are not just a small part of our society. By 2033 it is forecasted that the number of elders will exceed 2 million, accounting for some 27% of the population.

These old men are lounging in the parks, some even sleeping there. This middle-aged woman is washing dishes in the back alley for a restaurant. How much do you think she earns? Believe it or not, low-skilled workers like these are being paid as little as fifteen Hong Kong dollars an hour. One of these companies is the 'leading global foodservice retailer', McDonalds.

This elderly woman lives all by herself. Having just a tiny amount of money as the old age pension is just \$700 dollars a month, she simply could not afford to have better facilities.

"I live alone. My children are all working. They rarely visit me," says this old woman. Boxes of cough medicine are stacked inside her kitchen. "I bought those when they were at the cheapest," she explains when our reporter asks.

At present there is relatively little retirement protection for the older generation of the society. Don't you think some laws should be drafted to protect the elderly?

After all, in the end, we will all become the elderly one day.

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### **Facts and Statistics**

Population of Elders\*: 85 thousand

Population of Hong Kong: 7 million

Percentage of Elders\*: 12.4% of whole population

Percentage of Elders\* Living Alone: 11.6%

Labour Force Participation Rate of Elders\*: 7.0%

^Up till 2006

\* Aged 65+