



# 丹尼爾·關-沃森

Daniel Quan-Watson

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## 理解與尊重是和解的基石

### 從人頭稅受害者到頂級政府公務員

“八十五年十個月零十一天”，丹尼爾·關 - 沃森清楚地記得這個數字，這是從他祖父初來加拿大，到丹尼爾成為首位華裔聯邦政府副部長中間經過的時間。

丹尼爾的祖父關樹贊於1923年5月12日來到加拿大，這個日期記錄在一張人頭稅證明上，那上面還有他的照片：一個12歲的少年，穿著筆挺的西服，眼神有幾分迷茫。那時他不會知道，七周後這個國家就通過了排華法案，此後24年間禁止華人來加拿大，已在這裏生活的華人、包括在當地出生的後代也被區別對待，很多基本權利被剝奪。

丹尼爾說：“無論我祖父，還是當年給他簽發證明的‘中國移民控制官’都絕不會想到，有一天，他的孫兒會做到這個國家聯邦政府公務員中最高階的職位。”更令人唏噓的是總理簽署推薦他擔任副部長文件的辦公室，距離當年通過排華法案的國會會議室僅有幾百米遠——這短短距離，用了八十多年才跨越。

在省級和聯邦政府服務的30多年間，丹尼爾曾在多個部門擔任要職。他在人力資源、文化和生態遺產管理以及原住民事務方面有豐富經驗，是一位富有感染力的領導者，同時對生活充滿熱情，愛好唱歌、打獵、駕駛摩托和飛機並熱衷做義工。但讓他進入大眾視野的，是三年前的一封公開信。

## 反響巨大的公開信

那封信是為回應《國家郵報》專欄作者瑞克斯·墨菲（Rex Murphy）的一篇文章所寫。2020年，隨著新冠在全球大流行，亞裔受無端攻擊的案例急劇上升，人們紛紛聲討種族主義之際，墨菲發表文章為加拿大的“寬容和熱情”辯護，否認加拿大存在普遍的種族主義現象。

在信裏，丹尼爾以冷靜謙遜的語氣表示，他無法代表其他人或這個國家，只想通過講述自己的經歷來回應墨菲關於種族歧視在加拿大現實生活中有多高比例的問題。丹尼爾指出，種族歧視並不總是公開、明顯的，更多時候它們是隱晦的，也正因此它讓受害者受傷，卻難以找到傷口。他形象地將這種隱秘但真實的傷害比喻作“高血壓”。

他列舉了自己經歷的數十件典型事件，從幼時被其他孩子和成人無端嘲笑辱罵，到大學裏被教授挖苦沒有選擇數學或科學專業，職場中被人先入為主地懷疑英/法語能力，在機場、酒店被人想當然地當成行李員、司機，被駐外機構工作人員阻攔使用加拿大公民專用設施等等，他也講述了自己的孩子們遭受的種族主義式攻擊。

與丹尼爾克制平靜的語言形成巨大反差的，是這封信震撼人心的力量。信中所敘述的每件事，對長期在加拿大生活的有色人種而言，都是再熟悉不過的場景。這些事不是孤立和偶然的誤會或衝突，而是一直在不同地點和不同人身上重復發生著，並且它們全都指向種族主義這個主題。這封信有如一石激起千層浪，被迅速傳播，引發廣泛討論。

## 打破平行世界間的隔閡

丹尼爾後來在全球事務部的一場播客中說，他發現“種族歧視對很多加拿大人來說完全不可見，但悲哀的是，它們對於另一部分加拿大人來說卻是如此熟悉的日常。”他的公開信打破了這種“尋常所見”和“了不可見”之間的隔閡，讓兩個平行世界之間有了交流。

種族主義是個沉重且充滿爭議的話題。筆者問丹尼爾，當我們大量討論種族歧視話題，特別是當我們不停討論那些微妙隱晦的案例時，會不會矯枉過正，導致一些人用種族歧視作借口掩飾真正的問題，或另一些人因擔心被指責種族歧視而選擇對問題保持緘默？

丹尼爾說：“這是一個關於整體平衡的問題。”他認為有人會錯誤地把其他問題與種族歧視混淆，因為做任何事時，不同人總會有不同的反應和擔憂。但重要的是雙方坦誠溝通。感到受歧視的人可以設想，假如自己是白人，做同樣的事時是否會受到批評；批評者應反思，自己在做出判斷時，是否有意無意中受到對方種族這個因素的影響。他也指出，因為種族歧視事件的隱晦性，還有大量歧視事件沒被說出來。

或許丹尼爾的背景註定了將由他來開啟兩個平行世界間的交流，因為他一直穿行於其間。他在英裔養父母撫養下長大，獲得白人擁有的資源和支持。與此同時，在養父母羽翼覆蓋不及之處，他飽嘗了因華裔面孔而招致的非難和攻擊。獨特的人生經 讓丹尼爾成為一位富有同理心的正直之人。

## 以華裔身份為榮

丹尼爾從小就知道自己的生父是華人，但直到步入中年，因為相關法律條款的改變他才得以通過查詢文件記錄找到生父家族。令他欣喜的是他在擔任國家公園管理局首席執行官期間，親眼見證溫哥華唐人街被認定為國家歷史遺址，並在那裏找到家族足跡--他的叔祖父曾在溫哥華唐人街開過餐館。

盡管因華人面孔曾遭受數不清的歧視傷害，丹尼爾仍然珍視自己的華裔身份並引以為榮。2018年，當他被再次任命為聯邦副部長時，他通過總理向總督提出請求並得到應允，在那份將作為歷史記錄永久保存的任命文件中，把他生父的姓氏“關”加入他的姓名。

新冠疫情期間，很多華人公務員感覺受到攻擊，為了表達對同事以及其他華裔人士的支持，丹尼爾決定在所有場合都開始使用“關-沃森”這個姓氏。他在多個論壇對有色族裔公務員說，他知道這樣做會讓他也成為種族歧視者的攻擊目標，但任何想要攻擊他們的人，都不能繞開他。

## 理解與尊重——實現和解的基石

丹尼爾代表加拿大政府與第一民族、因紐特人和美蒂斯人進行了200多項原住民條例和憲法權利的談判，領導過500多起關於重大憲法訴訟和歷史性損害賠償案件的和解談判，為促成原住民與加拿大政府的歷史性和解立下汗馬功勞。

當他被問到贏得原住民信任並促成和解的關鍵是什麼時，

丹尼爾說：“理解與尊重是這一切的基石。”他講了自己與一位原住民酋長談判的往事。當時丹尼爾帶著一份他認為非常合理的政策方案去拜會酋長。耐心聽完丹尼爾的介紹後，酋長講述了他部落的歷史。

一百多年前，加拿大政府曾將他的族群強行重新劃分，至今很多族人仍感到憤怒，有人主張徹底推翻這些改變。但族中長者認為，如果這樣做，必將再次拆分族群，那麼他們和百年前的政府代表有何兩樣？酋長說，長者們告訴他：“我們比一百年前強迫拆分我們族群的人更高尚，所以我們不會再做出拆分族群的事，我們會一起向前邁進。”

酋長的話讓丹尼爾深受震撼。他反思自己原先設想的種種理由，找不出一條來反駁酋長的意見，因為他無法憑自己的標準去要求這個族群重復他們曾經歷的悲劇。於是他回到當時任職的卑詩省政府，對省府內閣說，他之前的方案錯了，請求他們同意更改，並得到了允准。與原住民的交流，讓丹尼爾學會以全新角度去看待曾經熟悉的事務。他總結說，重要的是“帶著尊重去傾聽，並且隨時準備著推翻原有的觀念和想法。”

正如丹尼爾在那封公開信的末尾所說：“我們擁有堅固的價值觀和充足能力去解決種族主義難題，並且會比任何人都做得好。”勇敢而誠實地說出歧視事件，讓所有人看見它們，這是受害者得以療愈，也是改變這種狀況的開端。就此意義而言，以自身經歷喚醒所有人，讓人們開始正視和討論繫統性種族主義問題的丹尼爾，值得每個加拿大人對他說一聲：“謝謝！”



祖父母一家

Daniel's grandparents Helen and Donald Quan and his cousins



丹尼爾的父親

Daniel's father Jim Quan



與養父母參觀軍艦博物館

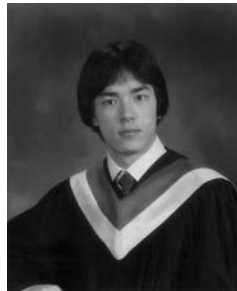
Aboard the HMCS Haida, the Royal

Canadian Ship and National Historic Site with his parents Ronald and Margaret Watson



一周歲時

Age 1 Year Old



高中畢業照

High School Graduation



與伯父及家人合影

Daniel's Uncle Bill Quan, his oldest uncle



和女兒出席溫哥華唐人街國家歷史遺蹟  
認定儀式

Daniel and his daughter at the Vancouver Chinatown National Historic Site Designation (2017)



於聖蘇瑪麗國際大橋  
頂端

Climbing on top of the International Bridge at Sault Ste-Marie



騎著哈雷摩托往返  
渥太華和埃德蒙頓

On the Harley Davidson  
- many Ottawa to  
Edmonton journeys on  
this bike



於自己的飛機前留影

Daniel and his airplane in Savannah, Georgia



2012年與總督及全體副部長於總督府合照  
The Governor General and all Deputy Ministers of the Government of Canada, Rideau Hall, 2012



清理被雪崩埋沒的道路  
Daniel clearing avalanche paths in the Rocky Mountains – with a cannon



國慶日在班芙騎行  
Riding in the Canada Day Parade in Banff, Alberta 2018



與西北地區長官Bob McLeod及原住民酋長Perry合影  
At the Vimy Ridge Centennial with Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeod and AFN National Chief Perry



於聖羅倫斯河原住民考古遺址  
At an Indigenous archaeological site on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River



見證溫哥華唐人街國家歷史遺蹟  
Vancouver Chinatown National Historic Site Designation, with Daniel as CEO of Parks Canada



與妻子和母親合影  
Daniel, his wife Jayne and his mother Linda



手執加拿大150年  
的公園指南  
Holding two Canada 150 Editions of National Geographic Guides showcasing Parks Canada



## **Understanding and Respect Cornerstones of Reconciliation —Daniel Quan-Watson**

### **From Head Tax Payer to Top Civil Servant**

“Eighty-five years, ten months and eleven days.” Daniel Quan-Watson is very clear about this number. This is the time between the day his grandfather arrived in Canada and the day Daniel became the first Chinese Canadian to be appointed federal deputy minister.

Daniel’s grandfather, Quan See Dan, arrived in Canada on May 12, 1923. This date is documented on a head tax certificate with his photograph: a twelve year-old child, wearing a crisp western suit, looking a little confused. He didn’t know at the time that a Chinese Exclusion legislation would pass in seven weeks’ time, preventing any Chinese from entering Canada for the following 24 years. The Chinese already here, including those born in Canada would be discriminated against, and would lose their basic human rights.

Daniel commented that “Neither my grandfather, nor the Controller of Chinese Immigration who signed his Head Tax certificate would imagine that one day his grandson would be one of the top federal civil servants.” Ironically the office where the Prime Minister signed a recommendation for Daniel to become a deputy minister is merely a few hundred meters from the House of Commons where the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed - a short distance that took over eighty years to traverse.

In his 30 plus-year career at the provincial and federal levels, Daniel has worked in many different capacities. He has expertise in human resources, cultural and ecological heritage management, and indigenous affairs, a highly influential leader with a passion in life - he loves singing, hunting, motorcycles and piloting as well as volunteer work. It was, however, an open letter that brought him into the public eye three years ago.

### **An Open Letter that Went Viral**

Daniel wrote the open letter as a response to a National Post column by Rex Murphy. The global pandemic in 2020 had led to an alarming rise in unprovoked anti Asian violence. As people denounced racism, Murphy defended Canada's "tolerance and enthusiasm", denying that racism was common in Canada.

In his letter, Daniel calmly and humbly shared his personal experience to refute Murphy's assertion that Canada was not a racist country. He pointed out that racism is not always overt and blatant. Often it is subtle or hidden, harming the victim even when there is no open wound. He likened this hidden but real harm to hypertension.

He listed dozens of typical incidents that he himself has encountered, from taunting by other kids to insults by adults. In university a professor mocked him for not studying math or science, in workplaces contacts underestimated his English or French competency, in airports and hotels he was mistaken for a porter or driver, at Canadian missions abroad he was harassed for using facilities restricted to use by

Canadians, etc etc. He also addressed his own children encountering racism.

Daniel's restrained and calm wording in the letter belie its shocking power. Every incident described in the letter is familiar to any person of colour who has lived in Canada for any length of time. These are not isolated misunderstandings or conflicts. They happen repeatedly to many people in many different settings, and they all point to racism. The letter touched a nerve and was quickly and broadly shared, sparking widespread discussions.

### **Breaking Down Barriers between Parallel Worlds**

Later Daniel would say on a Global Affairs Canada podcast that “these are things that are way too invisible, to way too many Canadians. And sadly, way too familiar to another set of Canadians, and I think the challenge is to break down the too-familiarity on the one hand and the too-invisible on the other hand as parts of those conversations.” Indeed those who experience racism frequently and those who don't see it are like people living in two parallel worlds.

Racism is a serious and controversial subject. The writer asked Daniel when we focus on racism, in particular the subtle racist acts, could there be an unintended effect of people using racism to avoid dealing with other issues, or perhaps to avoid being labeled a racist, people can be reticent about addressing issues?

Daniel said, “this is related to the overall balance of the issue.” He acknowledged that there are people who confuse other issues for

racism, because in every situation, people can have different reactions and concerns. The key is honest dialogue between both parties. When one feels discriminated against, we can ask ourselves, if I were a white person, doing the same thing, would I still be criticized. And the instigator can reflect whether their perspective was intentionally or unintentionally affected by race. Daniel added that because racism is often hidden, there's much that has yet to be disclosed/discussed.

Perhaps Daniel's background has destined that he would bridge the communication between these parallel worlds since he lives between these worlds. He was raised by adoptive parents who were the descendants of generations who had immigrated to Canada from Scotland, England and Wales, enjoying the support and privilege of white people. At the same time, his Asian face has given him challenges that his adoptive parents could not shield from him. This unique life experience has made Daniel a man of empathy and integrity.

### **Proud to be Chinese**

Daniel has always known his birth father was Chinese. But it wasn't until in recent years, when legislation had changed, that he was able to obtain information about his "birth father's family". He was pleased that Vancouver Chinatown was recognized as a national historic site while he was CEO of the National Park Services. And it was there that he found his "birth family's" footprint - his great uncle ran a restaurant in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Despite being a target of racism because of his Chinese appearance, Daniel values and is proud of his Chinese heritage. In 2018, when he

was re-appointed deputy minister, he requested from the Governor General via the Prime Minister and was given permission to add his birth father's name "Quan" to the appointment document, forming part of the permanent record.

During the pandemic, when many Chinese-Canadian public servants felt that they were being attacked, Daniel decided to start going by Quan-Watson on all occasions to show his support for those colleagues and others of Chinese descent. He said publicly, in many forums to all public servants of colour, that he knew that he was opening himself up to become a target for racism as well, but that anyone who attacked others would have to deal with him too.

### **Understanding and Respect - Cornerstone of Reconciliation**

Daniel represented the Canadian government in negotiating over 200 Indigenous People regulations and constitutional rights with First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. He has led the settlement negotiations of more than 500 major constitutional lawsuits and historical damages cases, and made great contributions to the historic reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government.

When asked how he earned the trust of the Indigenous People, he said "understanding and respect are the cornerstones of everything." He spoke about a time when he proposed what he felt were reasonable new policies to a Chief. After listening patiently to Daniel, the Chief shared his people's history.

Over a hundred years ago the government strong-armed new policies that arbitrarily designated status to members of his community, and people are still bitter and angry about that. Some people suggested abolishing these policies, but the Elders felt that a change would tear the community apart again. If they did that, they're no different from the government of a hundred years ago. The chief said that the Elders told him, "But we are better than that, so we will not tear our community apart again. We will build it forward together."

The chief's words really moved Daniel. He could not think of one argument to refute the chief because he could not ask the community to relive something that has traumatized them already. When he returned to the Cabinet of the Government of British Columbia where he worked, he admitted he had been wrong in his previous work and asked them to change it, and they did. Working with Indigenous peoples has taught Daniel to look at things with an all new perspective. He concluded that it's important to "listen with respect, and be prepared to change every concept and idea."

As Daniel concluded in his open letter, "we have the values and the abilities to address (racism) and to do it better than anyone else from what I have seen around the world." Speaking out with courage and honesty, showing everyone the reality so that victims can heal, can begin the change for the better. For shedding light on racism with his own personal experience, so that we can begin confronting and talking about systemic racism, Daniel deserves a heart-felt "Thank you!" from every Canadian.