



陳灼明先生 Mr CHAN Cheuk-ming

人稱「深水埗明哥（明哥）」的陳灼明先生是飯店老闆和廚師，多年來向露宿者和弱勢社群提供免費飯餐，成為香港傳奇。

明哥1952年在廣東出生，家境清貧，父母在他小學畢業後相繼離世。他身為家中長子，肩負照顧六個弟妹的責任，十五歲便入行學廚。明哥1979年偷渡來港，在深水埗一間茶樓的廚房工作，不久自立門戶開設大排檔，奈何生意慘淡。大排檔貨商覺得明哥為人正直，於1983年聘請他到「北河燒臘飯店」當大廚。

1995年老闆移民，明哥便與七個同事接手，最初四年生意不錯，但後來經營困難。夥伴為減低成本，非法聘請無證黑工，明哥仗義代為認罪，入獄三月。出獄後同事四散，剩下明哥獨力支撐。2001年美國「911事件」令市道雪上加霜，明哥眼見基層市民生活艱苦，決定將中檔飯店改為售賣平價飯菜，很快以價廉物美打響名聲。

由於明哥堅持以低價出售食物，只能勉強維持收支平衡。到了2008年，香港社區組織協會找他合作推出平價飯券。2011年最低工資實施後，明哥無力負擔額外經營成本，準備結業之際，一群年輕人捐出政府派發的六千元，讓「平等分享行動」與他合作開展飯盒派發活動。

2016年，明哥在大南街的副店「北河點心茶餐廳」因加租而結業，幸得善心業主讓出更大舖位及平租相助，店舖改名「北河同行」重開，同年

Mr CHAN Cheuk-ming, better known as 'Sham Shui Po Ming Gor (Brother Ming)', is a restaurant operator and chef who has become a Hong Kong legend after offering free meals to the homeless and needy for years.

Born in a poor family in Guangdong of mainland China in 1952, Ming Gor lost both of his parents within a short time after he had just finished primary school. As the eldest son of the family, he started working as a chef trainee at the age of 15 to bring up his six siblings. In 1979, Ming Gor moved to Hong Kong as a stowaway and was employed as a helper in the kitchen of a Chinese restaurant in Sham Shui Po. He soon set up his own sidewalk food stall but business was bleak. Much impressed with Ming Gor's honesty and fair dealing in business, a supplier for his food stall hired him as a chef for his newly opened Pei Ho Barbecue Restaurant in 1983.

When his boss emigrated overseas in 1995, Ming Gor took over with seven colleagues. Business was good for the first four years but declined afterwards. When a partner employed illegal workers to reduce costs, Ming Gor pleaded guilty on his behalf and was imprisoned for three months. Once released, Ming Gor was left alone to run the restaurant himself as his colleagues had already left. The economic situation deteriorated after the '911 Incident' in the US in 2001. In order to help alleviate the hardship faced by grassroots people, he converted his mid-range restaurant into one that sold low-cost meals and quickly gained a reputation for its tasty and quality food.

As Ming Gor insisted on selling food at an affordable price, he could barely balance his books. In 2008, the Society for Community Organization collaborated with him to provide meal coupons to the underprivileged. After the introduction of the statutory minimum wage in 2011, the additional costs nearly put Ming Gor out of business. A group of young people donated the \$6,000 they each received from the government, so that Ming Gor and the charity group 'Equal Share Action' could give out meal boxes at his restaurant.

In 2016, 'Pei Ho Dim Sum Restaurant' – Ming Gor's second shop on Tai Nam Street – closed due to high rent. Renamed 'Pei Ho Counterparts', it was reopened after a property owner lent support by offering him a larger shop space at a

「北河（明哥）慈善基金」成立。2018年，明哥把「北河燒臘飯店」遷往昔日「北河點心茶餐廳」的舊舖位，並改名為「北河飯店」，位置恰巧在「北河同行」對面。

明哥帶領的「北河同行」義工團隊來自香港各區，服務對象包括露宿者、流浪殘疾者、獨居老人、少數族裔、難民以至由社署轉介的等待綜援審批人士，每年送出逾六萬個飯盒。在上門為獨居長者送飯時，團隊義工還會留意對方生活上的其他困難並設法解決。

數年前幸得車行送贈小型貨車，團隊不用只以手推車運送物資，也可走訪不同地區派飯。團隊又會收集捐贈物資，安排熟悉當區的義工及機構分配予有需要的人士，受惠者遍及全港十八區，新型冠狀病毒疫情至今已派發逾五十萬個口罩。團隊還會定期檢討各項工作的成效，力臻完善，吸引遠至埃及的外國人士前來取經。

派飯十多年，明哥事事親力親為，每天由天水圍的家坐車到深水埗，朝十晚十一地工作，只在農曆新年放假三天，八號風球也繼續派飯，背部因勞損而長出骨刺。某次被腿傷的露宿者追打後，明哥「以柔制剛」，慢慢與他成為朋友，施襲者復原後加入了派飯行列。

明哥生活儉樸，工作服穿了三十多年，從藍色變成灰白。太太多年來與他並肩工作，近年決定辭職，但年近七十的明哥仍未言退，常應邀主持講座分享心得，又客串電視劇集及接受訪問，希望感染更多人，一起貢獻社會。

他認為自己為人心軟，一輩子也掙不到大錢，但每次遇到危機都有熱心人士幫助渡過難關，必須回饋社會。明哥希望繼續探索社企自負盈虧的持續發展模式，並把服務延伸至香港不同區域。

明哥於2013年當選「十大正能量代表」第一名，並於2017年獲嶺南大學頒授榮譽院士銜。

為表揚陳灼明先生對香港之貢獻，現恭請副校長頒授榮譽大學院士榮銜予陳灼明先生。

much lower rent. 'Pei Ho (Ming Gor) Charity Foundation' was established in the same year. In 2018, Ming Gor renamed 'Pei Ho Barbecue Restaurant' as 'Pei Ho Restaurant' and moved it to the former premises of 'Pei Ho Dim Sum Restaurant', directly opposite to 'Pei Ho Counterparts'.

The volunteer team of 'Pei Ho Counterparts' led by Ming Gor came from various districts in Hong Kong. They hand out more than 60,000 lunch boxes each year to street sleepers, homeless people with disabilities, elderly persons living alone, ethnic minorities, refugees, people awaiting Comprehensive Social Security Assistance referred by the Social Welfare Department and others. When delivering meals to elderly individuals, team members also look out for problems they face and try to solve them.

Having received the donation of a minivan a few years ago, the team no longer transports supplies in trolleys only but can also visit other areas to deliver meals. The team will also collect donated items and arrange volunteers and organizations familiar with an area to distribute them to those in need, so that people living in all 18 districts of Hong Kong can benefit. Since the outbreak of the new coronavirus pandemic, more than 500,000 masks have been distributed by the team. Members also regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their work to strive for improvement, and foreigners from as far as Egypt have come to Hong Kong to learn from them.

It has been more than ten years since Ming Gor started offering free meals, but he still does a lot of the manual work involved himself. Ming Gor travels from his home in Tin Shui Wai to Sham Shui Po every day and works from 10am to 11pm. He only takes three days off during Lunar New Year each year and continues to distribute meals when typhoon signal no. 8 is hoisted. Years of physical strain has led to bone spurs in his back. Ming Gor was once chased by a street sleeper who had an injured leg, and he used a gentle approach to make friends with him gradually. His attacker later became a volunteer for 'Pei Ho Counterparts'.

Ming Gor lives simply and frugally. Wearing the same uniform at work for over 30 years, its colour has changed from blue to grey. While his wife – who had worked alongside him for years – decided to hang up her hat, Ming Gor – a soon-to-be septuagenarian – has no plan to retire. He often accepted invitations to share his views in seminars or interviews and had made guest appearances in TV series, hoping more people will follow in his footsteps to do community work.

Describing himself as a soft-hearted person, Ming Gor believed he would never make big money. But whenever he had a crisis, there would be somebody around to help him overcome it. Therefore he had to do something to give back to society. Ming Gor hoped to continue to develop a sustainable, self-financing operational model for social enterprise and extend his service to various districts of Hong Kong.

Ming Gor was elected no.1 of the top ten Ambassadors of Positive Energy in 2013 and conferred honorary fellowship by Lingnan University in 2017.

In recognition of Mr Chan Cheuk-ming's contributions to Hong Kong, may I invite the Pro-Chancellor to present him with the Honorary University Fellowship.