

**Workshop**  
**Vietnamese Community Celebrating 30 Years in Canada:**  
**Achievements, Opportunities, and Challenges**  
**Ottawa, December 16-18, 2005**

**Abstracts**

**Mr. Dat Nguyen**, Publisher - Thoi Bao Newspaper

**Thoi Bao Newspaper: 19 years of serving the Vietnamese community in Canada**

**Thời Báo, 19 năm phục vụ cộng đồng tại Canada.**

Thời Báo được bắt đầu vào năm 1986 và cho đến nay đã hoạt động được 19 năm tại Canada. Bài nói chuyện sẽ tóm tắt cách làm việc của Thời Báo và các lý do khiến tờ báo phát triển mạnh mẽ tại Canada. Đầu năm 2005, Thời Báo đã phát hành tại nhiều tiểu bang Hoa Kỳ qua ấn bản Thời Báo USA. Hiện nay với 7 ấn bản và số lượng in khoảng 42,000 ấn bản hàng tuần đi khắp các thành phố tại Canada và USA, Thời Báo là một trong những công ty truyền thông Việt Nam vững mạnh nhất tại Bắc Mỹ.

Bài nói chuyện sẽ được trình bày bằng tiếng Anh nhằm mục đích phổ biến sự thành công của báo chí Việt Nam đến các cộng đồng bạn và người Canada.

**Mr. Frank Ling**

“BUILDING COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS BRIDGES”  
(Vietnamese-Canadian Community Workshop – December 17, 2005)

**MUSIC**

Mobility	Capable of changing or responding easily and quickly.  Immigration / Job-relocation / Career Adjustment.  (Self-experience: HK/UK/Malaysia/HK/Canada/US/Canada. Architect/Urban Planner/Developer/Consultant) Versatile experience.
Understanding	Self and others: Values, cultural backgrounds, Tastes, habits, social interests. Canadian.  Business objectives and social/political preferences.  (Self-experience: HK/Chinese/Westernized/British vs North American. Partners/clients/contacts)
Substance	Homework: Reading/media/listening/communicating

	(Self-experience: New and diverse roles – Profession/Government/CCNC/OC on Multiculturalism/HKCBA/Police/Hospitals/Museum/University /Glebe Seniors)
Involvement	Care/Desire/Enthusiasm/Opportunities. All inter-related involvements.
	(Self-experience:References/Consultations/Event Invitations/Fundraising/Contacts. Business/social/political – support a WINNER & LOSER)
Creativity	Chinese word for “Crisis” – “Threat/danger vs opportunities.
	Assets: Visible minority / Cultural background / 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> languages & dialects / Mindset / Attitude.
	Win-win situation.
	(Self-experience: Trying harder / Study & work ethics. CCNC: Liberal vs NDP / Police: Racism vs Minority recruitment / HKCBA: Dragon Boat & Operation Full House / Global Economy vs China Market / Forum)
CLOSING	Only one kind of music: “Good music”.
	Requires more than good technique.
	From the heart – believing in yourself as a very important part of Canada.

### **Mr. Hai Nguyen**

While many articles have praised the Vietnamese community members for their success stories in Canadian society during the last three decades, there are still major obstacles facing this special community as they embark on a long and new journey to the future.

The dream for every Canadian youth of Vietnamese descent is quite simple. She wants to have strong family support, good education and to be successful at work and in life. She wants to have a strong and united community that can articulate its needs and mobilize its members to fight for a good cause. And she wants to be a full and equal participant in Canadian society where she can promote and advocate for Canadian values. Thus, she really wants to make positive contribution to this great land.

However, there are major challenges for this vision. To achieve her dream, she must make sure that (i) her Vietnamese language and culture are preserved, (ii) her community has the ability to build its infrastructures and acquire development skills that enable community members to effectively advance its goals and (iii) her struggle against racism will produce significant outcomes.

But as she continues her long and painful journey, she can observe that there are good opportunities waiting for her. She must know that

- (1) Canadian is an open and welcoming society. It has learnt its lessons well for mistakes made against groups of immigrants in the past.
- (2) commitment from all levels of government and communities to provide support and assistance to her and her community in the task of building a cohesive and creative Canada and
- (3) commitment of Vietnamese youth in serving the community and the country.

Clearly, the task ahead is difficult and heavy. But with commitment, resilience and hard work the Vietnamese community across Canada, will accept the new challenges with confidence and optimism because they know that at the end of this long journey, the Vietnamese community will be able to assume its rightful place in a strong and united Canadian family.

### **Dr. Hoa Van Suong**

#### **A Thirty-Year Journey in Science and Technology of a Vietnamese in Canada**

My experience in thirty years (1975-2005) work in Science and Technology in Canada will be presented. The talk will discuss the reasons why I went into Science and Technology, the thought process along with the way, and the different aspects of Science and Technology, particularly in Mechanical Engineering. A perspective on the relative position of Science and Technology in Canada, as compared to its position in the developing countries, particularly in Vietnam, will be discussed.

### **Professor Raymond Le Van Mao**

#### **The young Vietnamese Canadians: educational trends, strengths and weaknesses.**

During almost two decades (1975-1995), young Vietnamese refugees had made tremendous efforts to achieve success in their studies, taking as living models their parents who did every possible sacrifice to provide them with, at least, the minimum conditions for a decent life in the new society. The resulting success stories could be measured by the most enviable university degrees and the high positions obtained in the workplace.

Since the present generation of young Vietnamese (second generation) does not feel anymore such a pressure, they have a more relaxed and relaxing view of what they want to do in the future. As an essentially positive result, the Vietnamese community has spread over all sectors of activity, so that its integration into the Canadian society can be more completed.

However, young Vietnamese Canadians may suffer from many problems:

- Identity problem which is quite common to all new immigrants. In some cases, this may evolve toward a personal crisis when the parents (or the community) cannot explain in an acceptable manner the apparent contradictions between the old traditions and the modern way of thinking and behaviour in this advanced society.
- Political problem which results from the fact that our mother land is still under an authoritarian regime.

- “Normal problems” of the youth (drug addiction, school drop-out) can be exacerbated by a sense of shame when other family members don’t show any comprehension and readiness to help.
- Finally, young Vietnamese Canadians have to understand that in the context of global market and globalization of many aspects of our modern life, they are quite advantaged with respect to other persons. In fact, being a highly qualified professional who also knows Vietnamese language and traditions is an important asset for his or her career, once the Vietnam motherland is completely open to trade exchange and other types of exchange with Canada.

**Prof. Louis-Jacques Dorais**, Université Laval, Québec

### **Some Statistical Data on the Vietnamese in Canada**

Based on data from the 2001 Canadian census, this presentation will outline some demographic characteristics of the Canadian Vietnamese: geographical distribution, gender, age, knowledge of English, level of formal schooling, participation in the labour market, unemployment rate, and mean income. Some of these statistics will be compared with data from the 1991 and 1996 censuses, to illustrate the economic and social progress of the Canadian Vietnamese over the years.

**Ms. Ngo Thuy Van Phuong**

### **Opportunities and Challenges for Common Aspirations of a Free and Democratic Vietnam**

“diaspora”: A dispersion of a people from their original homeland. For most young Vietnamese people, growing up in North America has been all they have ever known. Most know that their parents left Vietnam after the war ended in 1975 to seek a better life. Our parents had to start their lives again from the ground up. We might not define ourselves as immigrants, refugees, or diaspora and for the last 30 years, it has become easy to forget where we and our parents came from.

What did we leave behind? There are currently 86 million people in Vietnam, whose GDP per capita is still \$500 US though there is a 90% literacy rate. What is not well known is the Social Republic of Vietnam’s poor human rights record. In 2004, the United States designated the Social Republic of Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern. The communist government strictly controls the press, domestic newspapers, television and radio stations. Direct criticism of the communist party is forbidden. The communist government maintains strict control over access to the Internet. Individuals are arrested for vaguely worded crimes against “national security”, for disseminating peaceful criticism of the government or calling for multi-party reforms in written statements or through the Internet. Political trials are closed to the international press corps, the public and often the families of the detainees. Defendants do not have access to independent legal counsel.

In comparison to the Canadian context in the last two years alone, the people in Vietnam could never have the benefit of a Gomery Inquiry or an Arar Inquiry which investigated government conduct. There are no democratic principles in Vietnam of a multi-party

Parliament where the Liberals, the Conservatives and the NDP sit alongside the Bloc Québécois and engage in Parliamentary debate. We enjoy freedom of information, a free press and can surf the Internet to our heart's content.

Take a moment to consider that everything we take for granted is inexistent in Vietnam. As Vietnamese people living in North America, do we have a moral or social responsibility to do anything? Through a dialogue about the current situation in Vietnam, this panel will discuss what role North American Vietnamese can play.

**Ms. Ngo Thuy Van Thy**

“The Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) is a non-profit community-based organization, which has three main objectives: to maintain solidarity among the Vietnamese associations across Canada as well as to harmonize their activities for a better achievement of their common objectives; to work for the preservation and development of Vietnamese culture and for the enrichment of Canadian culture; and to foster the spirit of mutual help and community responsibility.”

As per the census data of 2001, there are approximately 151,410 Vietnamese people residing in Canada. Vietnamese youth make up a large percentage of the Vietnamese population and are often forgotten during the consultation and decision process regarding matters that affect their community.

Some people think that in recent years we've lost our sense of community. All sorts of reasons have been advanced to explain the decline of community involvement in Canada. However, the bottom line is that the younger generation of Vietnamese youth and young professionals are much more willing to get involved in their communities than we give them credit. As such, the Community should play a more active role to better reach the younger generation and motivate them to participate in the community organization's activities. More importantly, the Community should think of different ways to promote active, meaningful youth participation by inviting them to participate in the decision-making process. The Community should commit to being open to young people's suggestions, actively seeking their input, and finding appropriate ways to ensure their full participation.

As a young professional, I will provide various recommendations and suggestions to help motivate and encourage Vietnamese youth to be more involved in their community.

**Dr. Nguyen An Lac**

Achievements by the Vietnamese Community in Canada as well as in several other countries are impressive while Challenges remain numerous. How do we assert our presence in the Canadian nation while conserving our identity and our traditional values? Some issues will be presented to stimulate thoughts and discussion. What opportunities are opened to individual Vietnamese Canadians for personal fulfilment and for contribution to the collective? Some relatively immediate and realistic ideas will be presented in addition to some far-fetched dreams.

### Sơ Lược Nội Dung

Thành quả của Cộng Đồng Người Việt tại Canada và nhiều nước khác thật đáng hãnh diện trong khi Thử Thách vẫn còn rất nhiều. Làm sao để xác định vị thế của ta trong Cộng Đồng Canada mà vẫn duy trì được bản chất và truyền thống? Một vài vấn đề sẽ được trình bày để khởi động sự suy nghĩ và thảo luận. Những Cơ Hội nào đang mở ra trước cá nhân và Cộng Đồng Người Việt? Vài ý kiến tương đối thực tế cũng như vài ý nghĩ xa vời sẽ được trình trước cử tọa.

### **Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang**

In their three decades of existence, the Vietnamese-American community, now 1.2 million strong, has made significant contributions to the social, economic and cultural fabric of America. Their civic participation has however lagged behind other ethnic communities. There are very few Vietnamese-American community-based organizations with funded programs and staff. The few that exist tend to be very small and not sustainable. The community's response in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina highlights this imbalance in development. Within the first month after Katrina, Vietnamese-Americans across America rapidly mobilized resources estimated at US \$40 million in cash and in kind towards emergency relief. This initial outpouring of sympathy has quietly evaporated for lack of a stable infrastructure that could sustain long-term, strategic initiatives. In 1998 Boat People SOS launched Neighborhood Empowerment and Support through Teamwork (NEST), a model to build civil society within the Vietnamese-American community. After seven years, a dozen of new organizations have been formed and many more have gone "mainstream." This model and some of its achievements will be presented.

### **Ms. Nhung Thuy Hoang**

Nhung Hoang will discuss what it means to achieve as a boat person, a new immigrant and a woman arriving in Canada in her mid-twenties. She reached certain goals: she got a degree in sociology and law; her parents came to join her in Canada; she got married and had a child. Nhung practiced law in Ottawa for more than ten years, primarily serving the Vietnamese community and did volunteer work for various charitable organizations. She also published articles, poems and has appeared on local and national media. She will discuss some of the barriers that she had to overcome and some of the opportunities that she found in Canada. To Nhung, achievement can mean more than just material or academic success.

### **Mr. Trà Lũ**

#### **Sách Báo Tiếng Việt ở Canada trong mấy năm qua**

##### *1. Sách*

- Những tác giả có sách mới trong mấy năm qua ở Montreal, Toronto, Alberta, British Columbia...
- Tình trạng ra mắt sách, bán sách
- Tình trạng sách VN từ quê nhà sang

##### *2. Báo*

- Các loại báo : bán tuần san, tuần san, bán nguyệt san, nguyệt san
- Tiêu thụ : báo bán, báo cho
- Radio = báo nói, DVD = báo hát

### 3. *Tương Lai của Sách Báo Việt Nam tại Canada*

#### **Publications in Vietnamese Language in Canada in Recent Years**

##### 1. *Books*

- Overview of authors and their new publications in Montreal, Toronto, Alberta, British Columbia...
- Book launches and sale of books
- Books from Vietnam

##### 2. *Periodicals*

- Types of periodicals: semi-weekly, weekly, biweekly, monthly.
- Circulation: periodicals for sale and for free distribution
- Radio = talking periodicals; DVD = 'singing' periodicals

##### 3. *The future of publications in Vietnamese language in Canada*

#### **Mr. Tran Duc-Chi & Ms. Tran Dung-Chi**

The presenters will share their personal experience as employees of the Public Service of Canada. They will focus on the following topics: why they chose a career in the field of information management / information technology, the conditions and opportunities have helped their career advancement, the obstacles that they have run into, their thoughts as a Vietnamese-Canadian public servant, and finally their recommendations for Vietnamese-Canadians who would like a career in the Public Service of Canada. Both presenters will alternately and individually address all above topics.

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#### **Cấu trúc:**

Dung-Chi và Đức-Chi sẽ cùng nói chuyện xen kẽ và sẽ dùng tiếng Việt. Cấu trúc của bài nói chuyện:

1. Trường hợp nào đã đưa tôi vào ngành tin học - điện toán, và làm cho chính phủ liên bang?
  - Đức-Chi
  - Dung-Chi
2. Điều kiện, cơ hội nào đã giúp chúng tôi đạt thành quả trong việc làm?
  - Dung-Chi
  - Đức-Chi
3. Những khó khăn chúng tôi gặp phải trong môi trường làm việc
  - Đức-Chi
  - Dung-Chi
4. Cảm nghĩ của một người công chức Canada gốc Việt.
  - Dung-Chi
  - Đức-Chi
5. Đóng góp cho những bạn đang làm cho chính phủ hoặc có dự tính làm cho chính phủ liên bang.
  - Đức-Chi
  - Dung-Chi

### **Mr. Tuan Tram**

In tune with the themes of Opportunities and Challenges, “The Vietnamese-American Experience in the United States” presents highlights of the aspects of being Vietnamese in US society, economy, and culture; and how these diversities can help or hinder one’s progress in personal and professional lives, as well as in educational and economic achievements.

Through his personal experiences, Mr. Tram will present the diversities between being Vietnamese and being American; and will share the techniques for coping with or overcoming any obstacles, perceived or realized.

### **Ms. Vo Bich Quyen**

#### **"Reaching Out and Building Networks"**

Networking is an invaluable tool to any great community effort. Ms.Vo emphasizes the importance of building a solid foundation of vision and mission so that networking becomes a seamless step in the process of performance. Ms. Vo discusses the marketing business model and applies it to networking in the Vietnamese North American community; she discusses the power of networking through her community experience of "Doing More With Less," achieving results with limited resources.

### **Dr. Vo Van Truong**

A brief review of our academic activities will be given before we describe, in very broad terms, our research topics that evolved around the optical properties of materials and thin films, and their numerous applications (energy, telecommunications, sensing, imaging, metrology, optical microcircuits...). Specific examples of application of our own research will be given, namely in smart windows, advanced materials fabrication in microgravity, and the design of new optical instrumentation for measuring materials properties. We will also share a few thoughts on difficulties encountered by researchers and some basic issues to be addressed in order to stay competitive in an increasingly complex research world. Particularly, in relation with the theme of the workshop, we will comment briefly on language and cultural issues in scientific endeavours.

### **Mr. Trinh Quoc Tuan**

- Làm lại cuộc đời từ dưới con số không;
  - Tại sao tôi có may mắn được đón tiếp nồng hậu ở Canada;
  - Làm sao để mẫu người như tôi được chấp nhận bởi xã hội Canada trong bộ quân phục;
  - Đối với cộng đồng người Việt và những khó khăn mà tôi gặp phải;
  - Cảm nghĩ của một người cảnh sát Canada gốc Việt.
- 
- *How I rebuilt my life from below zero;*
  - *Why I was so warmly welcomed in Canada;*
  - *How a typical person like myself can be accepted in Canadian society in uniform;*
  - *How to deal with the Vietnamese community, and the difficulties that I encountered;*
  - *Feelings of a Vietnamese-born police officer.*