Vietnamese Refugees in Canada:

A Case Study in Integration

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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of the integration of a Sino-Vietnamese refugee family into Canadian society. It examines, in turn, the exodus of the "boat people", their resettlement around the world with particular emphasis on the U.S.A. and Canada, the history of the refugee family in question, and their adaptation to life in Canada. Finally, an analysis is made of those factors which were important to the integration of this refugee family.

There were a number of reasons for the exodus of the boat people. In the aftermath of the Vietnam war there was a steady decline in the standard of living in the country. Deteriorating economic conditions also influenced the decision of the Vietnamese government to formulate repressive policies against the Chinese minority in Vietnam. The Sino-Vietnamese, or Hoa, controlled much of the commercial activity in South Vietnam. By closing Hoa businesses and encouraging the departure of their owners, the government was able to expropriate a significant amount of money from this group. Deprived of their livelihood and faced with possible deportation to primitive agricultural communes, the willingness of the Hoa to leave Vietnam is understandable. Moreover, relations between Vietnam and China had deteriorated steadily since the end of the Vietnam war. In 1978, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea, whose Khmer Rouge regime was backed by China. Fearing that the Hoa could become a fifth column, the Vietnamese government essentially expelled more than a million ethnic Chinese.

The boat people had difficulties in finding acceptance in Southeast Asia. A fear of communist infiltration and the cost of maintaining refugee camps were reasons for this situation. However, the primary consideration was that governments in Southeast Asia did not want to upset the delicate racial balance in their respective countries. This would likely have occurred had large numbers of ethnic Chinese been allowed to permanently resettle there. Therefore, it was left to China and the developed countries of the world to provide the refugees with new homelands.

The refugee family interviewed in this study, the Trans, were relatively wealthy Sino-Vietnamese from Cholon. In 1979 they decided to leave the country because of the government's repressive policies. Their journey by boat took them eventually to Hong Kong, and in late 1979 they were resettled in western Canada.

The Tran family adapted quickly to life in Canada, although there were significant variations with regard to this among family members. A number of factors contributed to their relative ease of integration. These included, briefly, recognition as bonifide refugees by the government of Canada, the type of their sponsoring group and the help accorded them by members of this group, their good fortune in finding ready employment and the ability of nearly all of the family members to acquire a good level of proficiency in English. The locale in which they were resettled proved conducive to their ease of adaptation, and associated with this was the fact that they were able to formulate linkages with nearby Vietnamese associations. Finally, the socio-economic background of the family played a major role in facilitating their integration into Canadian society. In retrospect it is obvious that the Trans enjoyed more favorable circumstances than did many other refugee families who came to Canada.

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Chapter I

RESPONSES OF THE ASIAN PACIFIC RIM COUNTRIES TO THE BOAT PEOPLE

1.1 Introduction

The twentieth century has been aptly called "a century of refugees".[1] At the end of World War II there were forty million displaced persons within Europe itself. In 1947 when the British partitioned India, fifteen million refugees were the result. When North Korea invaded the South in 1950 another five million people were dispossessed. And in 1954 following the partition of Vietnam nearly a million people fled from the North to the South. Today there remain significant numbers of refugees in the world. There are approximately two and one half million Palestinian refugees, three million in Africa and three hundred thousand in Nicaragua. Indeed, the world's total unsettled refugee population is estimated to be between ten and thirteen million.[2] As Keith St. Cartmail states, ". . . above all it is a century of survivors on the move, mass movements of uprooted peoples that make the Aryan Volkerwanderung of anthropology look like a Sunday school outing."[3]

This chapter is a general review of the refugee problem as it applies to the exodus of refugees from Vietnam. The bulk of the research covers those people who left Vietnam on vessels of one description or another. These refugees will hereafter be referred to as the boat people.

The purposes of this chapter are 1) to review the exodus of the boat people and 2) to explore the reasons they had difficulties in being accepted in other parts of the Asian Pacific Rim. There are a number of factors which contribute to an understanding of these themes, and this chapter will attempt to analyze each of the factors in turn. First, an analysis will be made of the domestic policies of Vietnam which promoted the refugee exodus of 1975-79. The year 1979 is a rather arbitrary limit as the flow of the boat people continues today; however, the greatest movement was between 1975 and 1979. Second, Chinese, Soviet, and United States policies will be examined to determine the impact of power politics played by these three major powers, on the patterns of movement and the volume of refugees. Third, the response of China, the territory of Hong Kong, and the countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan will be reviewed and an analysis made of reasons in each case behind their treatment of the boat people. The boat people were generally refused permanent resettlement in the countries of Southeast Asia. The issue was not available land in most cases, as most countries in the region have vast tracts of unsettled land. Rather, the explanation for the rejection of the boat people is essentially socio-political, and this will be explored in the following pages.

1.2 The Boat People: Composition and Reasons for the Exodus

Between 1975 and 1979 there were relatively few boat people. In 1975 safe arrivals, estimated to be between 50 and 80 percent of departures, numbered 377. The figures for 1976 and 1977 were 5,619 and 21,276 respectively.[4]

These numbers, though increasing steadily, were small for several reasons. Initially, after April 30, 1975 when Saigon fell, the North Vietnamese moved slowly in consolidating their power in South Vietnam. One may speculate as to the reasons for this approach. They likely felt that the absorption of the South had to take place gradually, to prevent economic collapse and possible political revolt. Related to this, North Vietnamese leaders supposedly wanted to begin the process of rebuilding their war-torn country, a process which would be hastened by internal stability. As well, the government undoubtedly wished to attract desperately-needed foreign investment and aid, and political stability would help to achieve this.

Many material goods remained in the South as part of the legacy of the American presence. In the late 60's and early 70's American aid averaged $2 billion per year.[5] This helped to sustain the Southern economy for some time after 1975 albeit at a steadily declining level. Related to this, the U.S. "occupation" had enhanced the development of a strong entrepreneurial class at various economic levels, which later came into conflict with the communist North. Initially, these entrepreneurs manipulated the available material and financial assets to maintain a rather inflated standard of living for several years. This was particularly noticeable in the Saigon-Cholon region, where 40 percent of the population of South Vietnam was living in 1975.

> Foreigners visiting the south in 1976-77 were surprised at how little it had changed . . . . The free market in consumer goods left over from the American occupation operated openly; food markets, retail shops, cafes and some transport remained in private hands.[6]

The first boat people that did leave Vietnam cited a variety of reasons for their departure. The gradual erosion of the standard of living in Saigon was made

worse owing to the need to absorb the large number of rural poor who had fled southward before the advancing North Vietnamese army. In general economic terms, "food was scarce and rationed, the shortage aggravated by severe drought in 1977."[7] At least partly in response to this situation the government initiated some drastic measures. One of these measures was the creation of "New Economic Zones" (NEZ's), or rural labor camps. For many people from Saigon who were forced to work in these NEZ's it was a "traumatic experience . . . sent to work poor land with no help, no money, no homes, no schools, indeed with none of the infrastructure of a community."[8] By July 1976, the Vietnam News Agency reported that 500,000 Saigon residents had been resettled in these Zones.[9] Therefore, a declining standard of living coupled with the bleak prospect (particularly to an urbanite) of life in a NEZ forced some people to make the decision to quit Vietnam.

There were political reasons behind the initial exodus of the boat people as well. Certainly there was a large number of South Vietnamese who had been associated with the previous regime and who were gradually singled out and sent to special prisons entitled "re-education" camps. These were in fact forced labor camps where inmates often lived in extremely poor conditions. As well, ". . . a widening draft was snaring men for border clashes that were rapidly turning into war with Pol Pot's Kampuchea."[10] These factors induced a significant number of people to attempt to flee Vietnam.

It took some time for the full impact of these various measures to be felt, and of course conditions have to be near intolerable before people decide to leave their homeland surreptitiously to face an unknown future. Before 1977, conditions in Vietnam were simply not bad enough to prompt many people to take this step.

The peak period of the boat people migration began in mid-1978 and continued through 1979. By July of that year 300,000 people had fled Vietnam by boat.[11] There were a variety of push and pull factors which produced this movement.

Certainly the deteriorating economic situation played a major role. The conditions, which were poor in 1977, were by late 1978 becoming desperate for some people.

> According to Vietnamese officials, recent devastating storms had destroyed more than 20 percent of the country's estimated rice yield. Thousands of farm-draft animals had drowned, and more than half a million homes were damaged or completely destroyed, with more than 4 million Vietnamese affected.[12]

Not having sufficient food or a place to live was a fundamental reason for a number of these boat people.

Another major reason for this exodus was Hanoi's move against the capitalistic elements in South Vietnam, principally composed of ethnic-Chinese, or Hoa. In March 1978 a decision was announced to abolish ". . . the private trading and commercial activities that had for generations been the principal occupations of 80 percent of the Hoa clustered in the cities of the south."[13] Government troops entered Cholon, the Chinese-dominated section of Saigon (renamed Ho Chi Minh City), began to close down Chinese-operated businesses, and moved the people so displaced to NEZ's.

> Many were involved in business or the professions, or had hopes of advancing themselves in these fields, and perceive that this is not possible for them in modern Vietnam. The alternatives open to them are often farming or physical labor, and these are not appealing.[14]

Indeed, for an urban businessman, going to a primitive agricultural existence in a NEZ was ". . . the equivalent of being sent to Siberia."[15] This exodus therefore included many urban, Chinese capitalists. This was to prove a significant factor contributing to their later adverse reception by other Southeast Asian countries.

Economic hardships also led to deteriorating health standards in South Vietnam. Two reports prepared by the World Health Organization from visits to Vietnam in late 1975 stated that:

> Malaria was endemic throughout much of the south. Tuberculosis was rated as the most serious occurrence in the western Pacific. The reports estimated that there were between 80,000 and 160,000 leprosy cases. Dengue haemorrhagic fever, trachoma, and plague were all described as major problems.[16]

The health care programs in the South were in disarray at the time and officials were not capable of dealing with the problems. The situation was aggravated because a large number of Vietnam's medical staff had departed the country by April 30, 1975. Furthermore, medicines left behind by the departing Americans were now in short supply.

A further reason for departures at this time was the increasing number of social restrictions in South Vietnam. The loss of civil liberties for most Vietnamese included the required use of travel passes, road checkpoints, re-education camps, the use of neighbors as informers, and compulsory political education.[17] As the South became more and more of a police state, many people fled Vietnam simply "to be free".[18]

Another push factor causing the increase in boat people was Vietnam's escalating conflict with the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea. In December 1978 Vietnam invaded that country, producing much unease at home. Young men were being drafted in greater numbers and there was a suspicion among the Hoa that they might be used as cannon fodder in the war. After Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, more of the boat people were comprised of "young men who have fled to avoid service in the army or in labor battalions that are being formed to help

rebuild occupied Cambodia."[19] In addition to this problem, the sheer economic hardships created in Vietnam by the war with Kampuchea drove more people out of the country.

A further push factor came from the Vietnamese government, whose treasury was in desperate need of hard currency. This led to further exploitation of the Hoa.

> The elimination of [the Hoa's] commercial role became in practise a program of deliberate persecution and eviction, capped by the extraction from the Hoa of economic assets amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars in badly needed hard currencies and gold.[20]

After the expropriation of their business assets, Hanoi, after mid-1978, encouraged the ethnic-Chinese to leave the country. A departure tax was put on each individual which brought in further money to the government. "Rough estimates put Hanoi's receipts from the refugee traffic at U.S. $175 million for [June 78 to June 79] - about 2.5% of the total estimated gross national product."[21] Hanoi's total income from both expropriation and taxes has been estimated by one Hong Kong official to be $3 billion.[22]

The pull factors which were operating at this time included letters from relatives who had been resettled in the west, stories of the superior quality of life in these countries, and broadcasts by the U.S. in particular, describing the harsh conditions prevailing in Vietnam. The promise of a better life inspired many people to leave.

There were, therefore, a range of social and political factors which caused people to decide to leave Vietnam. The overriding consideration, intensely and immediately felt at the personal level was, however, economic. When the government closed Chinese businesses in particular, many people lost their traditional

means of a livelihood. This was in large part responsible for the boat people exodus.

At the same time as people were leaving Vietnam from the South, there was a similar flood of some 200,000 ethnic-Chinese Vietnamese into China and Hong Kong from the North. These people went in part by boat, but most went overland. In this case the reasons for departure were strongly political. Hanoi's relations with Peking grew steadily worse after 1975. In January 1978 Peking issued a statement calling for "the broadest patriotic united front" among overseas Chinese.[23] This angered Vietnamese officials, and they began to see the Hoa in the north as a potential fifth column. In April 1978 Hoa began to flood across the Chinese border, particularly because in the war in Kampuchea between the Vietnamese-backed regime of Heng Samrin, and Pol Pot's republic, China was supporting the latter. Pressure was put on the Hoa by the Vietnamese government in a number of ways. Many were fired from government jobs while others were prevented from conducting private businesses. They were told that their children were not allowed to associate nor attend school with ethnic-Vietnamese children.[24] This situation was aggravated when Vietnam joined the Soviet-sponsored Communist Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in June 1978. This move produced a vehement reaction from Peking.

All these factors taken together led to the Vietnamese Politburo developing ". . . a pathological fear of China and [a] profound distrust of the 3% of Vietnam's population who [were] Chinese."[25] This is consistent with the historical enmity between these two countries. During the first half of 1978 the flood of overland refugees placed strains on China and Hong Kong. The presence of these refugees

inevitably affected the reception of boat people when they began to pour out of the South of the country in increasing numbers in the latter part of 1978 and in 1979.

Between 1975 and 1979 there was an exodus of refugees from both North and South Vietnam. These people were of various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Generally, however, it was the middle-class Hoa who were affected the most, and 60 to 70 percent of the 600,000 boat people were from this group.[26]

1.3 Implications of Chinese, Soviet and United States Policies

The international situation at this time had a significant effect on the exodus of the boat people and their subsequent treatment by other Southeast Asian countries. The actions of the superpowers - China, the U.S.S.R., and the United States, and their policies in vying for power and influence is essential to an understanding of the refugee question.

The American withdrawal from Vietnam and the superpower relationships of the later 1970's had a strong impact on the exodus and treatment of the boat people.

> The deliberate and voluntary withdrawal of American forces from Indochina, the unification of North and South Vietnam, and the declaration of phased withdrawal of American forces from South Korea created fundamental changes in the region. The rise of communist China as an emerging superpower and the Sino-Soviet rift have further complicated the situation in the area.[27]

These changing power structures and alliances prompted Lee Kuan Yew to state that the problem of the boat people had turned into a ". . . great game between the Soviet Union and China, with Vietnam as the third player at the table."[28]

Relations between the U.S.S.R. and China had been strained for some time, deteriorating particularly after Stalin's death in 1953 and the subsequent disagreement between the two countries as to what form communism should take. Furthermore, in the past twenty years the long border zone has seen a significant military build-up, and a number of border "incidents" increased tension in this sensitive area.[29]

Southeast Asia has been a historical area of interest for China, and this has continued into the twentieth century. China has attempted to expand her sphere of influence, providing moral and material support for communist movements and a refuge for overseas communist cadres.

The Soviet Union has not had such an active role in Southeast Asia, partly because of the geographical distance from that country. "Although Soviet interest in Southeast Asia by no means matches her involvement in the Near and Middle East, the U.S.S.R. nevertheless feels that it cannot abandon Southeast Asia to the United States and communist China."[30] This is particularly true because of the geographical nature of Southeast Asia as a ". . . strategic crossroads between East Asia, Australia, and the Indian Ocean Area."[31] With the U.S.S.R. emerging as a world naval power, this area is therefore increasingly important.

The increased competition between China and the U.S.S.R. for influence in Southeast Asia particularly after the relationship between Vietnam and China began to deteriorate, and the refusal of the U.S. to normalize relations with Vietnam led to the latter turning to a willing Soviet Union for economic aid and protection. This was reflected in the initiation of Vietnam into COMECON in 1978.

It is difficult to determine to what extent the influence of the Soviet Union lay behind the expulsion of the Hoa in Vietnam. Certainly there were economic and security reasons for Vietnam to promote the exodus. However, some analysts argue that the forced expulsion of Hoa from North Vietnam into China was a plan on the part of the Soviets to de-stabilize China, and to force her to utilize troops on her southern border that would normally be stationed next to the U.S.S.R. The angry reaction of China to Vietnam's move is also certainly based on economic considerations in part, but reflects as well a growing concern about ". . . expanding Soviet influence in Vietnam."[32]

The expulsion of the Hoa may have also been backed by the U.S.S.R. on the grounds that it would promote resentment against ethnic Chinese in other Southeast Asian countries and thereby indirectly against China as well. Moreover, there would be a general destabilization of those countries faced with a massive influx of unwanted people. To review Soviet involvement and refugee flow, consider the following. In June 1979, Vietnam joined COMECON. In July, the biggest group of refugees to date landed in Malaysia. In November after the Vietnam-Soviet friendship treaty was signed, the number of refugees jumped to 20,000. More than 70 percent of these boat people were of Chinese descent.[33] If the Soviets could promote instability and cause a possible power vacuum, they would no doubt be happy to move in and take over the role now being played by the Americans. The Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kwan Yew,

> . . . accused Vietnam and the Soviet Union of playing a racialist card for strategic advantage in that part of Asia, using the flood of mainly Chinese refugees to stir anti-Chinese sentiment and thereby set up a Russo-Vietnamese sphere of influence.[34]

Indeed, the expulsion of the Hoa served a variety of purposes at the same time.

> That policy removes an unwanted racial minority; it provides an important source of revenue to one of the poorest governments in the world; and it destabilizes the entire Southeast Asian region - which presumably suits both Vietnamese and Soviet policy.[35]

As Southeast Asia had been, since the end of World War II, generally within the American sphere of influence, the Soviets would no doubt be happy to expand their power in that region at the expense of the United States. Indeed, the Soviet Union blamed the refugee exodus on the U.S. *Pravda*, for example, stated that the problem of the boat people dates from the time when ". . . U.S. imperialism dominated the south of Vietnam."[36] More important, the Soviets were concerned about the increasingly positive relationship developing between the U.S. and China, particularly after January 1979 when the Americans officially recognized Peking. The Soviets would no doubt have liked to undermine this relationship, and the boat people were a convenient weapon.

The new relationship between the U.S. and China in the late 1970's had important ramifications for Vietnam's population. The Americans wanted to promote and expand their influence in Asia as a part of their containment policy directed against the Soviet Union. As well, American business interests wanted to have access to China given its incredible consumer and development potential. The reluctance on the part of the United States to offend China and jeopordize their goals in that country accounted in part for their hesitancy to normalize relations with Vietnam. This is an added factor which drove Hanoi into Moscow's orbit, and increased the exodus of the boat people.

China also had reasons to maintain good relations with the United States. As former U.S. Attorney-General Elliot Richardson noted, "China's leaders want the United States to play a major role in Asia to head off the Soviet domination of the

region."[37] China's policy was not so much generated out of affection for the U.S. (they were on opposite sides in both Korea and Vietnam after all) but more as a show of resistance to the U.S.S.R. As well, although China has the world's largest standing army with 3.95 million personnel, its troops are poorly equipped. China wanted to have access to Western military technology, particularly to defend itself against the Soviet Union.

> The Chinese hope apparently is for a renewed Soviet-American cold war which would put new economic and military burdens on Moscow. The Soviet forces would thus be diverted from the Chinese border and China would be under less pressure to spend its natural resources on military modernization. China thus hopes to prevent any improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.[38]

The vying for power between these three states was one factor which caused Hanoi to encourage the boat people to leave.

The resulting situation in the late 1970's was rather bleak for potential boat people in Vietnam. Hanoi was not under much pressure to be receptive to demands on the part of ASEAN countries to halt the refugee exodus, as there was little interdependency between Vietnam and ASEAN. "A Hanoi that has ties only with the Soviet Union is sure to go on behaving, as it is now doing, as the 'rogue nation' of Southeast Asia."[39] Therefore, Vietnam was able to continue to push out its unwanted citizens with little worry in terms of retribution.

The composition of the boat people and their reasons for leaving Vietnam has been reviewed in order to understand their later impact on other Southeast Asian countries. The examination of the role of the major superpowers involved in the region is necessary to explain in part the reasons for the exodus and the long-term nature of the problem as well as the difficulties in finding a solution. The next

section of this chapter will investigate each of the major Asian countries involved in order to determine what their reaction was to these refugees and the reasons for their subsequent treatment of them.

1.4 Responses to the Boat People in the Asian Pacific Fringe

1.4.1 China

China received a relatively small number of boat people; they numbered in the tens rather than hundreds of thousands. However, the total number of refugees (both overland and by boat) that had entered China by the spring of 1978 was approximately a quarter of a million.[40] The Chinese government initially seemed to have accepted these refugees willingly and resettled large numbers of them. It was aided by the fact that the bulk of the refugees were ethnic-Chinese, and were therefore easily absorbed into the Chinese way of life. However, problems did begin to appear. The cost of resettlement was estimated to be approximately U.S. $1,100 per person, and this level of expenditure was a strain on China's resources. School and medical facilities were not adequate, and the feeding of these people placed a large burden on state farms in southern China.[41] Indeed, Peking eventually took the unprecedented step of asking the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for resettlement aid.

It is important to recognize that China was not immediately capable of dealing with the large influx of refugees. Nor was Peking willing to maintain an open-door policy. "China has passed the word that the 200,000 or more refugees who have already crossed the border are more than it wishes to handle."[42] Therefore, when the number of boat people increased dramatically in mid-1978, they found

that they were not welcome in China because of the large numbers of overland refugees already there, who were straining the government's resources. Some ASEAN countries later suggested a repatriation of the boat people to their mother country. This solution was not acceptable to the Chinese government nor, it is supposed, to the majority of the boat people themselves. Consequently, an additional variant to China's role as a recipient country was that it allowed refugees to cross its borders to resettle in a third country. As well, China aided some 25,000 boat people who followed its shoreline northward. For both these groups their principal destination was the already crowded territory of Hong Kong.

1.4.2 Hong Kong

Like China, Hong Kong was something of an exception among Asian countries in its treatment of the boat people. "Only Hong Kong has sustained a consistent policy of not turning refugees away (apart from "illegal" immigrants), of offering sanctuary and succour to those in need."[43] This was not easy for Hong Kong. In the first five months of 1978 there were only 241 Vietnamese boat people in the territory.[44] However, by 1979, 85,326 boat people had entered Hong Kong.[45]

Hong Kong is a crowded colony, a fact made worse by the influx of boat people. In 1983 Hong Kong had a population of 5.2 million with an average density of 4,712 persons per km^2.[46] Even this figure is misleading as the majority of the population is clustered in a relatively small urban area. For example, in the district of Kowloon the density is 144,000 people per km^2, making it the most crowded urban area in the world.[47] When the boat people began to pour in, Hong Kong's resources were strained even further.

There are a number of reasons for Hong Kong's surprisingly positive reaction to the boat people. First, the ethnic composition of the refugees was a factor. Eighty-five percent of the boat people entering the territory between 1975 and 1979 were ethnic-Chinese, and seventy-five percent spoke Cantonese, the language most commonly spoken in Hong Kong.[48] Many of the people in Hong Kong had histories similar to those of the boat people. Their parents or grandparents had fled southern China because of the upheavals there through the twentieth century. This "kinship" may have predisposed the residents of Hong Kong in their attitudes toward the boat people, and certainly it must have at least produced a degree of empathy.

A second reason for Hong Kong's positive reaction to the boat people may have been the colony's long involvement with refugees. From 1949-50, for example, Hong Kong absorbed more than a million refugees fleeing the communist revolution in China.[49] This situation was not unlike that faced by many South Vietnamese. In 1979, the number of illegal immigrants in Hong Kong (how the number was arrived at is not clear) was 89,241. Legal immigrants for that year numbered 94,557.[50] In addition, the Hong Kong border police routinely stop a considerable number of refugees who cross the seventeen mile-long border with China. In the first seven months of 1979, for example, 46,000 people were picked up by the border patrols.[51] Therefore, the authorities in Hong Kong were accustomed to refugee pressure, and were familiar with the techniques of processing and resettling them.

A third reason for Hong Kong's acceptance of the boat people was political, that is, refugee policy for the colony was formulated in Britain rather that in

Hong Kong itself. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was elected to office partly on her anti-immigration stand. When the boat people exodus became severe, the British government allowed the refugees to land in Hong Kong, at least in part because the colony was deemed preferable to Britain itself in terms of a sanctuary for immigrants. This display of sympathy at long-distance allowed Britain the leeway to condemn Hanoi while showing compassion for the boat people. The officials and people of Hong Kong, however, had to bear the brunt of this policy.

Eventually this approach created some problems for Britain as well as Hong Kong. When the issue of resettlement placements came up, Britain had difficulties in moving the refugees from Hong Kong. A reporter noted at the time that:

> . . . Britain will stand little chance of persuading the rest of the world to give Hong Kong the help it amply deserves unless Britain is prepared to give a lead in resettling refugees from her own crown colony.[52]

The result was that the resettlement of boat people in Hong Kong was relatively slow compared to other Southeast Asian countries. For example, Hong Kong's resettlement figure by 1983 was 76 percent, compared to 91 percent in Malaysia and 96 percent in Indonesia.[53] The boat people were therefore in Hong Kong for a relatively long period of time, and this eventually put some stress on the colony's humanitarianism.

One source of stress was the pressure put on Hong Kong's treasury. Although the UNHCR helped support the refugees, the government itself was faced with significant expenditures. "The amount spent on refugees in Hong Kong so far - more than U.S. $10 million - is unlikely to be recovered from either the UNHCR or Britain."[54]

Competition for jobs also produced tensions between the boat people and the residents of Hong Kong. To offset the cost of their upkeep many refugees were allowed to work in the colony while awaiting resettlement. They were generally anxious to work and often undercut the local employees by working for lower wages. "The fact that both Illegal Immigrants and Vietnamese refugees are used as cannon fodder [sic] by some of Hong Kong's factory owners in search of cheap labor is a social problem."[55] In an already competitive labor market this new source of competition was resented by many Hong Kong residents.

A further source of stress in Hong Kong was that the boat people were not always model refugees. Some of the aggressive, survival-oriented habits acquired in Vietnam since 1975 were offensive to people in Hong Kong. As well, in the early 1980's there were demonstrations in some of the refugee camps, either against officials because of delays in resettlement or more commonly, between groups of north and south Vietnamese. These actions no doubt undermined the level of tolerance hitherto shown towards the refugees in Hong Kong.

The colony's position was made more difficult when countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand began taking extreme measures to prevent the boat people from landing there. The result was that Hong Kong, which had grudgingly retained an open-door policy, experienced an increased influx of refugees. "As its neighbors adopt more extreme measures to deflect Vietnam's exodus of refugees, Hong Kong clearly faces the prospect of having the human influx funneled here."[56] These circumstances led to the feeling, as was the case in Malaysia in 1978, that Hong Kong was being punished for the compassion that it had shown. This sentiment was particularly acute in Hong Kong because of the rela-

tively slow rate of resettlement. The colony's Chief Secretary Sir Jack Cater stated at the time that "we should not be penalized by receiving a lower rate of resettlement than countries which have taken a less humanitarian line."[57]

Eventually the stresses produced by the increasing presence of the boat people in Hong Kong led to a hardening of attitudes, for it was held that "Hong Kong is overcrowded and congested as a colony and therefore the responsibility of supporting thousands of refugees continues to impose a strain on the community and is even seen as a threat to social progress and stability."[58] These opinions now manifested themselves in several ways. Ships from Hong Kong began to avoid the refugee boats so they would not feel obligated to pick up survivors. One Hong Kong shipping executive remarked that ". . . we do everything to keep [our ships] out of the areas where they're likely to encounter boat people."[59] Within the colony there were also serious calls to ". . . tow them out to internatonal waters", as Malaysia and Singapore were doing.[60] Furthermore, changing attitudes resulted in legislation in 1982 which meant that ". . . all Vietnamese refugees who arrive in the colony after [2 July 1982] will be incarcerated in closed detention centers on outlying islands under armed guard."[61] However, in comparison to the measures taken by other Asian countries, these strictures were mild. Hong Kong continued to provide a safe haven for boat people.

Though basic elements of humanism played a significant role in the general attitude towards the boat people in Hong Kong, there were political pressures as well, particularly on Britain. For example, ". . . the British blockage of Jewish refugees trying to reach Palestine [1945-48] is still remembered. This, and Hong Kong's fear that international criticism could affect exports, account for the col-

ony's reluctant humanitarian stance."[62] In any case, the acceptance of boat people into Hong Kong was in marked contrast to the policies of other Southeast Asian nations.

1.4.3 Thailand

The number of boat people who arrived in Thailand was relatively small, with approximately 20,000 landing there between 1975 and August 1979.[63] Their reception initially was relatively positive, as opposed to the later 1970's. To understand this change in attitude, other factors affecting Thailand during this time must be considered.

Thailand experienced a massive overland refugee influx between 1975 and 1980, when approximately 450,000 people flooded across its borders. After the communist Pathet Lao took charge in Vientiane in 1975, a massive flow of Hmong (Meo) hill people crossed the Mekong River into Thailand. Many of these people had fought for or supported the CIA against the Pathet Lao in the 1960's and early 1970's, and were justifiably afraid of retaliation. Later, these people were joined by large numbers of lowland Meo as persecution did take place. Also, included in the 450,000 refugees were 150,000 Lao who, in 1975, entered Thailand.[64]

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot's leadership took control in Cambodia. Because of the incredibly harsh policies instigated against the populace there were relatively few refugees who were able to flee into Thailand; i.e. most in opposition to Pol Pot, real or imagined, were liquidated.[65] However, when Hanoi invaded the newly-named Kampuchea in December 1978, a flood of refugees was pushed westward into Thailand by the advancing Vietnamese army. "The resulting 1970-79 wave of refugees from Laos and Kampuchea overtaxed the patience and

resources of the Thai government, already burdened with caring for 150,000 refugees."[66] The Thai response was to forcibly repatriate 45,000 Kampucheans, to an unknown fate at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Subsequent outrage on the part of world opinion produced an abrupt change of policy. The resulting "open-door" approach produced an influx of 270,000 Kampucheans by November of 1979.[67]

Thai treatment of the boat people cannot be considered as distinct from their treatment of the refugees in their country in general. Initially, the boat people were resented by the government at least in part because of their humiliation at having to reverse their refugee policy. Thailand had simply been trying to avoid the entire problem.

> The Thai's, who have a common border with Laos and Cambodia, feel they could easily be drawn into the Indochina conflict and the Sino-Soviet brawl that envelopes it. This explains their ruthlessness in forcing Cambodians back across the border.[68]

The Thai's must have felt that they were being drawn into developments over which they had very little control. Consequently, although they had to accept the situation, they did so with little grace. It was in this charged atmosphere that the boat people sought refuge.

Another factor producing anti-refugee sentiment in Thailand was the added security problems posed by the influx. "Thai leaders also warn of a more serious threat to national security, saying that among the refugees are a heavy sprinkling of communist spies and deep-cover penetration agents."[69] Indeed, Prasong Sunsiri, a Thai official with the elaborate title of National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Squadron Leader, claimed that "ten percent of Vietnamese refugees are spies."[70] Although this figure is likely exaggerated, the essential point is that the massive influx of refugees was a hindrance to the maintenance of

internal security. This was a sensitive point after the occupation of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese, at which time Thailand became a front-line state against Hanoi's seeming expansionism.

A further cause of Thai resentment against its refugee population was the cost of their maintenance. ". . . The refugees impose a financial and administrative load . . . that is only partly lightened by international assistance."[71] Indeed, between 1975 and 1979 the Thai government spent $25 million on its refugees. This financial burden on a relatively poor country produced serious animosity towards the refugees, including the boat people.

Perhaps the most visible part of the refugee problem in Thailand in 1979 was the number and the nature of conditions within the refugee camps. ". . . The squalor, misery, and hopelessness inevitable in the present camps - which in Thailand have existed for years - can only make them breeding grounds for trouble."[72] There are not only health risks posed by these camps, but also security problems. Certainly Thailand has reason to fear communist insurgency. Not only is it a front-line country bordering communist-held Laos and Kampuchea, but in 25 of 71 Thai provinces communist insurgents control at least some areas.[73] There were also racial problems presented by the camps. Vietnamese camps in particular were ". . . the worst of all because in the ancient racism of the region, the refugees from Vietnam are hated wherever they go."[74] Indeed, maintaining poor conditions in the camps seems to have been a calculated move on the part of Thai authorities to discourage a further influx of Vietnamese refugees. Therefore, the refugee camps produced considerable public resentment, and the Vietnamese camps, to which the boat people were assigned, caused particular animosity.

Although anti-Chinese sentiment was not a major factor affecting refugees in Thailand in general, it was important in terms of the boat people who were predominantly Hoa. There has been evidence of tension between the Thais and the Chinese minority in Thailand over the years. Traditionally, "the Thais were accustomed to look upon the two or three million Chinese in their country as the major cause of their economic ills."[75] As well, following the communist revolution in China, Thailand took a number of precautions ". . . to prevent the Chinese in Thailand from becoming a built-in fifth column."[76] This may explain some of the Thai fear of added communist infiltration along with the refugees. Certainly anti-Chinese sentiment in Thailand was directed particularly against the boat people who tried to land there.

The massive refugee influx into Thailand produced a great deal of resentment. One reporter in 1979 remarked that:

> Officials see no end to the massive refugee bombardment from all sides - across the Kampuchean border, landing in boats on Thai shores, and floating across the Mekong River from Laos - with no real concerted effort by the international community to relieve Thailand of its suffocating burden.[77]

This resentment caused a number of refugee "incidents". One of the most infamous was the massacre of ninety-three refugees by Thai soldiers at Doun Nek. As well, in the late 1970's it was noted that "in the provinces of Trat, Chanthaburi, and Prachin Buri on the Kampuchean border, there has been a series of demonstrations . . . and some officials fear riots if the situation worsens."[78] The boat people began to leave Vietnam in large numbers at this time, and received the impact of Thai anti-refugee sentiment.

For the boat people sailing to or near Thailand, the most noticeable effect of Thai animosity was the lack of naval protection against pirates. As frustration mounted in Thailand against its refugee burden and the boat people increased in number, the Thai government began to support measures which would discourage further refugees. Bamrung Khaorat, a high-ranking naval officer in the coastal provinces, declared, "why should we protect refugees? We don't want them to come here."[79] Indeed, at the time there was ". . . a growing suspicion that the fishermen [pirates] have the authorities' tacit approval to operate as a kind of savage free-lance coast guard."[80] This cruel policy was certainly effective in reducing the flow of boat people to Thailand. Of all the refugees over this period of time that went near Thai waters, "only one refugee boat in five was said to escape attack."[81] When word of these attacks filtered back to Vietnam many boat people altered their destination to Malaysia or Hong Kong. This relieved the pressure on Thailand but passed the problem to these other countries.

By 1981 the Thai government had implemented a more formal policy against the boat people. It was announced that any refugee landing in Thailand after August 15, 1981, would not be resettled in a third country until all boat people already in the country were found placements. This was an attempt by Thailand to force Western countries to absorb the less capable from among the boat people as well as the highly qualified ones they had been taking. Unfortunately it meant that more of this latter group languished in refugee camps waiting their turn to emigrate. Another policy implemented by Thailand was to tow refugee boats back out to sea when they tried to land.[82] The results of these policies as well as the work of pirates was to drastically reduce the number of boat people searching for refuge in Thailand.

The boat people were therefore victims primarily of the political and military situation in Indochina in the late 1970's, and to a lesser extent the social situation. The enormous refugee burden produced by communist activity in Laos and Kampuchea determined that Thailand adopt a relatively harsh policy, more unofficial than official, towards the boat people when they began to leave Vietnam in large numbers. In general, the Thai tactics were successful in keeping the boat people from their shores. Unfortunately, more refugees then thought of Malaysia as their destination. Malaysia, more than any other country, was to receive the full force of the exodus.

1.4.4 Malaysia

Malaysia became a key destination for the boat people in 1978 when 64,000 arrivals were recorded. By September 1979, 110,744 Vietnamese refugees had landed in Malaysia.[83] These large numbers caused a crisis in Malaysia, and the government was forced to respond with stern measures.

There are a number of reasons as to why more boat people attempted to make West Malaysia their destination rather than attempt the hazardous crossing of the South China Sea to the comparatively unpopulated areas of East Malaysia, namely Sarawak and Sabah. West Malaysia is closer to South Vietnam than any other country except Thailand, and that nation was discouraging the landing of the boat people. A fast crossing could be made to West Malaysia in less than two days. As well, since many of the boat people were not experienced sailors they used the string of offshore oil drilling rigs in the Gulf of Thailand as beacons which would lead them to Malaysia. The personnel on these rigs, which were operated by European and North American companies, often provided assistance, too, in the form of food, water and fuel.[84]

West Malaysia perhaps was looked upon as a more attractive country from a political viewpoint by the better informed among the boat people before anti-refugee sentiment spread there. The former British colony was relatively stable compared to Thailand, Indonesia, or the Philippines, thereby presenting promising conditions for commercial activities for the many business-conscious Hoa refugees. As well, Malaysia was a democracy, and this could be deemed an attractive proposition to people escaping from a communist regime.

Initially Malaysia provided a welcome which was reasonably tolerant.[85] However, when Malaysian authorities realized that the country was the primary destination of the boat people, the softer opinions changed dramatically.

Much has been written about the harsh response of Malaysia to the boat people, partly because inflamatory remarks by government officials and acts of inhumanity by persons make good press copy. To some extent this is what the authorities envisaged. Faced with an enormous influx of unwanted ethnic-Chinese refugees, the Malaysian government was determined to shock the rest of the world into taking remedial action. The government's position began as one of reluctant sympathy for a cause, but soon deteriorated to the point that they charged Hanoi with ". . . dumping rubbish over the fence."[86] To illustrate Malaysia's position, a newspaper at the time reported an incident where two hundred people drowned after their boat was refused permission to land by local Malays. "The accident, which occurred about 150 yards offshore, was witnessed by a large crowd of villagers, many of whom were said to have expressed their hostility toward the Vietnamese by throwing stones at their ship."[87] Similarly, in January 1979 eyewitnesses claimed that Malay soldiers fired machine guns over the heads of boat people attempting to land.

When Malaysia instituted the policy of towing refugee boats back to sea, Hong Kong Governor Sir Murray MacLehose stated that this action should not even be considered as a solution to the refugee problem. Malaysia described ". . . his reasoning as pure sentimentality which fed the cynicism of Hanoi."[88] By mid-1979 Malaysia had expelled or refused landing to 55,000 boat people.[89] At the same time Deputy Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed threatened that the refugees would be kept out of Malaysia by all means short of shooting them if Western nations did not speed up their resettlement process. "We will have no choice but to send them out, which is the only alternative to their being left to rot in the camps."[90] Indeed, shortly thereafter even this rhetoric was expanded upon by Mahathir. "Not only would Malaysia shoot on sight at any more . . . boat people who tried to land on its shores . . . but it would push back to sea the 76,000 who have already landed there."[91] Although this position was softened somewhat almost immediately, the rhetoric was effective. "Mahathir's ugly words may actually have done the refugees a service since the threat shocked the Western world into belated recognition of a human tragedy that is almost beyond solution."[92] Certainly the government's increasingly harsh position vis-a-vis the boat people was in part an attempt to create international pressure to help solve the refugee situation. However, there were also intense domestic reasons why Malaysia did not want to provide a homeland for the boat people.

The most important concern leading to Malaysia's stand against the boat people is associated with the ethnic structure of that country. Factors which should be considered in this context include the history of ethnic relations in Malaysia, the intricate political balances in terms of internal affairs and the religious

cleavages. All three issues had combined to produce strong anti-Chinese sentiment from time to time within the country and, in the late 1970's, was directed by way of extension against the boat people.

Though the Chinese and Malays have lived together on a reasonably amicable, symbiotic basis, there has been some resentment against the ethnic-Chinese because of their strong position in commerce, trade, and finance. Friction between the two groups intensified during the world economic depresson in the 1930's. During the Japanese occupation of Malaysia during World War II Malays were pitted against Chinese, producing further divisions. Following the war the Malaysian "Emergency" saw the country combating the revolutionary activities of the Communist Party, whose members were mainly ethnic Chinese. The atrocities committed by these insurgents produced more animosity between the two groups. More recently, the race riots following the election in May 1969 were a reflection of racial tension. ". . . For all Malaysians the experience was both traumatic and salutary. Certainly a widespread consensus . . . developed within the country that repetition of the May 1969 incidents should be avoided at all costs."[93] Therefore, there were historical reasons for the Malay population to be suspicious and fearful of a large influx of Hoa boat people. The government too was predisposed to attempt to head off another possible racial confrontation.

With respect to the internal political situation, the United Malay National Organization (U.M.N.O.), which continues to be the dominant party since independence, was concerned about maintaining their power in a country where the suffrage more often than not follows ethnic lines. As well, there had been a tendency for both the Malays and Chinese to challenge each other's traditional areas of

influence. "Both groups have sought to diversify their base of power - the Malays in the economic sphere, the Chinese in the political realm."[94] Therefore, the boat people were viewed by both U.M.N.O. and the Malays in general as a factor which would disrupt the existing balance of power in Malaysia, and further frustrate their plans to gain more economic control in the country.

The aforementioned issues are further complicated by developments in the religious field from the late 1970's with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. The east coast of Malaysia, particularly the provinces of Trengganu and Kelantan, served as a landfall for most of the boat people. This sector is peopled in main by Malays and is recognized as the seat of the new "fundamentalism". Consequently, ". . . Moslem conservatives keep up their pressure on the government to keep out the Chinese at whatever cost, since there is no doubt that the dominant Malay population wants to stay dominant."[95] Indeed, when Mahathir made his remark about shooting refugees on sight, the only serious supporter of his rhetoric was the east coast based Party Islam.[96] Therefore, the non-Moslem, non-Malay boat people could not have picked more sensitive locales in Malaysia as landfalls. These circumstances accounted in large part for the government's reaction to them; it was an attempt to placate the politico-religious forces in the region, and to prevent the Party Islam from using the refugees as a cause celebre over U.M.N.O. in its efforts to make political headway in Malaysia.

A number of comments were made by the government describing the distressful situation that the boat people were causing in Malaysia. The presence of the Hoa would heighten the racial problem, ". . . acutely so in Malaysia with its delicate racial balance (47 percent Malay, 34 percent Chinese), and with a long-term

program to advance the Malay role in the mainstream of economic activity."[97] The widespread fear was that the Vietnamese would ". . . remain permanently, thereby upsetting a delicate balance between the predominantly Malay community, and the Chinese and Indians who make up nearly half the population."[98] Indeed, the general feeling of the government could be summed up in the statement that ". . . the situation is precarious and there is a continuing preoccupation with 'racial arithmetic' and the need to promote national unity and avoid racial conflict."[99]

The Malaysian government set out a number of other reasons why the boat people were unacceptable in the country. The refugees no doubt put an added strain on the budget, particularly as the east coast of Malaysia is one of the poorest regions in the country. However, this was not a really cogent reason for not accepting the boat people. "The measures to prevent the influx, according to the Home Minister, cost Malaysia . . . U.S. $11.3 million in the first five months of 1979."[100] The government could well have spent this money on aiding the refugees. The fact is, the issues of costs of maintaining the boat people was not a significant consideration. Consider, for example, that there was little public reaction from the Malay community when Malaysia had earlier accepted refugees. "The government has so far taken in for permanent settlement large numbers of Cham Moslems, and another 120,000 Fino Moslem refugees from the civil war in the Southern Philippines."[101] As well, there was an active search for other Moslems needy of refuge. ". . . It is interesting to note that the Malaysian government is reported to have scoured refugee camps [in Thailand] looking for Khmer Muslims that could be brought to Malaysia."[102] The reasons, then, that Malaysia

turned away the boat people appear to have been socio-political rather than economic.

The Malaysian government also used the issue of internal security as a reason for not welcoming the boat people. Though the Malayan "Emergency" was officially at an end in 1959, insurgents associated with the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) continue to be active in the northern part of the country. Although the MCP is backed by Peking rather than Hanoi, "Hanoi's actions in throwing its unwanted citizens into the South China Sea can only help the MCP."[103] In a military sense, it meant there was less surveillance of the northern area where the MCP was active because the armed forces had to be used to patrol the east coast and man the hundred coastal watching posts, waiting for boat people. "Maintaining the posts is not only expensive but a drain on manpower in the army, which is facing a new spate of activity by the Malayan Communist Party."[104]

Furthermore, like Thailand, Malaysia was concerned about communist cadres infiltrating the country by posing as boat people. "Among the 40,000 inhabitants of Palau Bidong [an island refugee camp off Kelantan] are at least 60 communist cadres and an estimated 1,000 pro-communist sympathizers."[105] The concern was not primarily short-term disturbances in the camps caused by these people but rather a long-term undermining of the political system. Malaysian Home Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie stated that:

> Such measures as to plant their workers and agents among these so-called refugees, with the purpose of slipping away into thin air on arrival at Malaysian shores, will be consistent with . . . the possibility of Vietnam now planning for immediate contingencies or a long-term objective.[106]

Therefore, on security grounds Malaysia may have had justifiable reasons for being suspicious of the boat people, although to what extent the government may have been trying to arouse public resentment against them on this premise is not clear. The harsh measures used against the refugees seemed to stem mainly from ethnic considerations than from any other reason.

Finally, the Malaysian government indicated its inability to deal logistically with the boat people. Authorities argued that camp conditions were so poor that new refugees could not be accommodated. Certainly some of the camps were in a bad state. On the island of Palau Bidong it was reported in 1978 that 20,000 people were ". . . jammed into a hillside jumble of makeshift tents intended for a tenth that number."[107] This island of less than one square kilometer later held 42,000 boat people. In other camps, however, conditions were worse.

> Afflicted with malaria, dysentery, dehydration, malnutrition, tapeworm, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and exposed to a multitude of other diseases, many of them lost their will to live in such fetid, squalid surroundings.[108]

However, the Malaysian authorities could have cleaned up the camps using the money being spent on blockading the boat people. But, this would have reduced the suffering of the refugees, and the attendant world publicity through such good deeds would have in turn reduced the number of resettlement placements offered by other countries. Malaysia would then have been left with a continuing refugee problem. Keeping camp conditions poor provided an excuse for turning away further refugees, and hastened the end of the problems posed by their presence in the country.

Malaysia found itself in a very uncomfortable position when it became the main destination for the boat people. Primarily to maintain its internal political

stability it reacted in a harsh manner. From a humanitarian point of view their actions were deplorable. However, the shock they produced galvanized Western countries into action, and led to a more rapid and complete resettlement of boat people elsewhere than otherwise might have occurred.

The remaining countries of Southeast Asia were much less affected by the exodus of boat people as they were not primary destinations. However, to varying degrees and for various reasons, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan were all opposed to the influx of these refugees.

1.4.5 Singapore

Singapore received 23,951 refugees between 1975 and the end of January 1982. The number remaining in that country by the latter date was 1,390.[109] These relatively small numbers reflect the firm stand which Singapore assumed toward the boat people when they first began to arrive in that country.

In May 1975, the initial wave of boat people that landed in Singapore following the American withdrawal from Vietnam numbered approximately 1000. These refugees were admitted, processed, and quickly resettled in third countries. However, in June the government of Singapore adopted a stringent policy on refugees ". . . on the grounds that it had no room to accommodate more refugees, that other governments were taking advantage of its compassion, and that it had no choice but to refuse permission for any more ships carrying Vietnamese to enter its waters."[110] The government tightened its regulations still further as the boat people exodus increased. No refugee boats were allowed to land in Singapore except in emergencies, in which case repairs would be made and the boat would have to leave immediately. This meant that ". . . getting into Singapore on any-

thing but a foreign flag vessel became virtually impossible for the refugees."[111] In addition, guarantees of resettlement were required from the government of the state of the rescuing ship, the government of a third country offering resettlement, and also the UNHCR with respect to funds for the care and maintenance of the refugees, before any refugee would be allowed to leave a foreign vessel.[112] The effect of these regulations (as intended by Singapore) was to discourage shipowners from picking up refugees in the South China Sea with the intention of bringing them to Singapore.

Regulations concerning refugees were tightened still further in October 1978. After that date a "ceiling" of 1000 refugees that could be in Singapore at any time was set, and no refugee was allowed to remain in the country more than ninety days. As well, Singapore decided to ". . . not accept UNHCR's general guarantees of care, maintenance and best efforts to find resettlement openings."[113] This meant that the country was not legally bound to observe international policy on refugees and could tighten its regulations still further at any time. This was reflected in the decision of the Singapore government to tow out to sea any refugee boat approaching its coast. Indeed, the Australian High Commissioner to Singapore, Geoffrey Price, stated that "it has been widely suspected with good reason that Singapore naval patrol boats have forced many refugee boats out to sea with directions to Australia."[114]

Singapore had little concern as to the ultimate fate of the refugees; the sole objective was to get them out of the country. There were a number of reasons underlying this hard-hearted policy. The maintenance of racial harmony was the reason most consistently given by the government of Singapore, as was the case in Malaysia, for its actions concerning the boat people.

> Singapore tries to minimize the differences between the ethnic groups without destroying each group's heritage - a fine line even in an uncrowded atmosphere, but the island has one of the highest population densities in Asia and probably could not handle a large influx from anywhere. Its capacity to absorb refugees is extremely limited.[115]

Considering the fact that Hong Kong has a higher population density, one could question Singapore's stand with regard to the refugees on this score. Population pressure would seem to be a poor reason, although perhaps Singapore feared the consequences of an "open-door" policy. The issue of racial integration was neither as valid a point as in the case of Malaysia, as 76 percent of Singapore's population is Chinese.

Another reason for Singapore's negative response was political. Hanoi was viewed as deliberately upsetting Southeast Asian countries by using the Hoa as a weapon. The Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, stated in June 1979 that ". . . pitiless, cruel, barbaric methods of political blackmail were being used by Hanoi as a political weapon to put pressure on its Southeast Asian neighbors, most of which already had minority problems."[116] This view was reflected by Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia, Chak Mun See, who likened the boat people to ". . . waves of bombers [meant to] destablize, disrupt and cause dissension and turmoil."[117] As well, Foreign Minister S. Rajaratnam ". . . implied that countries should refuse to take the refugees and let Vietnam resolve its internal problems."[118] This hard line was directed especially against the "mercy ships" which picked up refugees under the auspices of a nation already guaranteeing their resettlement. Singaporean policy was even harsher toward these ships which it viewed as acting as a "pull" factor for boat people, thereby aiding Hanoi's plans. Therefore, Singapore's response to what it viewed as an overt attack on its inter-

nal stability was to put up effective barriers against the boat people, perhaps in the hope that the resulting fate of the refugees would turn world opinion firmly against Hanoi.

A final reason given by Singapore for its treatment of the boat people was economic. It was repeatedly pointed out that Singapore was a small country with few resources and pressing problems in maintaining full employment. Certainly the country had real difficulties in supporting all sectors of its population at a reasonable standard of living, particularly with respect to housing and employment. It is interesting to note, however, that Singapore's GNP in the late 1970's was approximately $3,200 per capita, and is therefore the most affluent of the Southeast Asian countries. Indeed ". . . some economists believe that Singapore, on account of its wealth, . . . should no longer be classified as a developing country along with its Southeast Asian neighbors."[119] It would seem that economically, Singapore was in a better position to cope with the refugees than it indicated.

The few refugees that Singapore did harbor were treated relatively well. The camps were relatively poor, but ". . . efficient and happy, a model for first-asylum countries accepting the flood of refugees."[120] The boat people were also treated well by the residents of Singapore. "As they wandered about the island, the refugees blend in nicely, and there have been no major incidents between them and the island's residents."[121] On the other hand, these circumstances could be associated with the limited presence of the boat people in Singapore.

Singapore took a hard line in terms of the boat people because it could see the array of problems posed just to the north, in Malaysia. Perhaps the magnitude of

the problem prompted the isolationist response. Geo-political considerations, too, dictated that it would be unwise to give in to Hanoi's aggressiveness. Singapore's position may be best summed up by Lee Kuan Yew when he said, "you've got to grow callouses on your heart or you just bleed to death."[122]

1.4.6 Indonesia

Indonesia became involved in the exodus of the boat people, for, ". . . like Simon of Cyrene: there was no way to refuse to carry the cross."[123] By 1979, at the height of the refugee flow, Indonesia had approximately 50,000 refugees in holding camps. Initially, the influx was relatively light as Thailand and Malaysia were primary destinations. ". . . Indonesia has been able to be a little more hospitable than some of its Asian neighbors towards refugees from Indochina, though it has never exactly put out the welcome mat."[124] But, as other countries began to hinder the entry of refugees, more of them made their way to Indonesia. In July 1979, it was reported that "Malaysia's policy of shooing away Vietnamese refugees from its shores has increased Indonesia's burden more than tenfold in the past six months."[125]

In June 1979, Indonesia's response to this influx was to threaten to institute a naval blockade against the boat people. Defence Minister Mohammed Jusuf stated, "we are not going to allow any more refugees to land in our country."[126] At the same time, negotiations were continuing with Malaysia on a joint blockade plan. The result was a joint plan to tow future refugee boats out to sea. This ". . . reflects the ascendancy of those [authorities] involved in security matters over those concerned only with diplomatic and humanitarian aspects of the problem."[127]

As the above quote indicates, Indonesia's initial response was to be compassionate towards the refugees. This may have been because of basic humanitarian considerations or perhaps because authorities were concerned about publicity, and the maintenance of the country's international trade which was dependent upon world opinion. It also may well be that the authorities thought that the key to stopping the exodus was to maintain diplomatic relations with Hanoi, with a view to persuading them to halt the refugee flow. Condemnation of Vietnam was a last resort. The Indonesian reaction may have been harsher, earlier, if not for these considerations.

The influx of boat people rose dramatically in mid-1979. In June, for example, 22,743 refugees arrived, and this re-kindled latent public resentment against the Hoa. During the colonial period, the Chinese, who were already in the area as entrepreneurs, were used by the Dutch as middlemen in their production-oriented Culture System. The exploitation of native Indonesians under this system produced a fundamental anti-Chinese sentiment, particularly in the commercial centers of Java. Later, during the protracted and bitter struggle for independence, many Chinese backed the Dutch. "The indictment of the Chinese as servants of colonialism is not baseless. As a relatively prosperous people with major investments, the Chinese tended to fear destruction of the status quo."[128] The Chinese supported the losing side, and suffered for it afterwards.

> The prejudice and bitter resentment which is so often revealed in the formulation and execution of much of the government's Chinese policy flows partly from an Indonesian inferiority complex developed during centuries of underprivilege in their native land.[129]

This policy included, for example, the forced repatriation of more than 100,000 Chinese and the displacement of 400,000 Chinese after 75,000 businesses operated

by them were closed in the early 1960's. Furthermore, Chinese schools and communal organizations were proscribed, and laws enacted to limit ownership of land, participation in business activities and employment in the state sector by the Chinese.

The anti-Chinese feelings were compounded with the growth of the communist movement and this was thought of as an extension of events in China. In 1965 an abortive communist coup occurred in Indonesia, and in the aftermath it is reported that 300,000 ethnic Chinese were killed.

The historical distrust and resentment of ethnic Chinese has further manifested itself in a number of recent confrontations. In April 1980 an anti-Chinese rampage in Ujang Pandong resulted in 800 Chinese shops and houses being damaged, and there were riots against the Chinese in central Java in November of that year. These are events that can be construed as indicative of the general mood of Indonesians towards the boat people who were landing in increasing numbers at that time. In addition, the growth in the past several decades of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia has tended to make matters worse. "Internally, Muslim and nationalist elements were raising their voices against the Vietnamese, largely because most refugees are ethnic Chinese."[130] Therefore, the issue of religion intensified the adverse reaction in Indonesia to the boat people.

As was the case with other Southeast Asian nations, issues pertaining to the maintenance of internal security were also trotted out. On July 31, 1979, General Amin Idris stated that "mainland Chinese were masquerading as Vietnamese boat people and sneaking into Indonesia as illegal immigrants."[131] Given the history of Chinese involvement with communist activities in Indonesia, the fears may well

have been justified. However, one writer argued that ". . . it is ludicrous that the predominantly Chinese boat people should be denied sanctuary and turned away from Indonesia or elsewhere . . . on the grounds that they are Communist agents or saboteurs."[132]

Finally, Indonesia argued that the refugees posed a significant financial burden on the country. Officials claimed that in a country of 140 million people comprised of many landless and poor, they did not want anymore destitute immigrants. Furthermore, most of the boat people were former town dwellers, and if they had been accepted as immigrants they would likely have wanted to crowd into the already congested urban centers in Java, at a time when Indonesia's transmigration policy was trying to relieve existing population pressure. In terms even of short-term care, ". . . Indonesia made it clear that it could not bear the cost of developing, maintaining, administering, or supplying the [refugee-inhabited] islands or of transporting the refugees."[133] There may have been some validity to these statements, but it is hard to understand why Indonesia adopted the policy that no private relief groups be allowed to aid the refugees. Indonesia undoubtedly felt, like Malaysia, that providing aid to the boat people would blind world opinion to the need for speedy resettlement of the refugees elsewere.

Therefore, Indonesia's hardening position, like that of Malaysia and Singapore, was a reaction to the overwhelming numbers of boat people, or potentially so, that had to be dealt with. However, the base reasons for denying sanctuary to the refugees could be associated more with long-standing internal socio-political considerations.

1.4.7 Philippines

The Philippine reaction to the boat people will be dealt with in brief, as it was not a significant refugee destination. The Philippines was thought of as a refuge only after the harsh methods adopted by Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore became common knowledge, and besides, the flow of refugees had slowed considerably by that time. Furthermore, the dangers attendant on a crossing of the open South China Sea were well known. Tricky currents, sudden and violent storms, numerous in-shore reefs and pirates have tested even experienced sailors. Moreover, the required easterly course from Vietnam to the Philippines took refugee boats across international shipping lanes rather than along them, and nagivation in open waters was also a problem. Consequently, their chances of being rescued would have been minimal. Between 1975 and 1979 fewer than 10,000 boat people arrived in the Philippines.[134] By June, 1982, only 14,545 refugees were awaiting resettlement.[135]

Initially, the Philippine reaction to the refugees was somewhat hostile, perhaps because of the media coverage of the problems neighboring countries were experiencing. This attitude was demonstrated with the arrival of the ship 'Tung An' in Manila harbor in December 1978. Philippine authorities would not allow the 2318 refugees off the ship until August 1979. As well, the President of World Vision, W. Stanley Mooneyham, reported that "the conditions [on board] were some of the most deplorable I have ever seen."[136] Eventually the refugees were moved to isolated Tara island for processing. Also, the Philippine government filed criminal charges against the captain and crew of the ship for trafficking in refugees.[137] These were moves designed to discourage other boat people from making their way to the Philippines.

By July 1979, the Philippines began to modify their earlier stand. Carlos P. Romulo, a spokesman for the Philippine government, suggested ". . . an increase in the capacity of a processing center already offered and facilities for a further center for 50,000 subject to U.N. funding and the principal of 'no residuals'."[138] The "no residuals" point was specifically stressed as one of the guarantees demanded of third countries if they wished Philippine participation. "Countries accepting the refugees must agree to take all who landed, leaving none in . . . the Philippines."[139]

The accommodating Philippine response would seem to be conditioned by the desperate state of the economy in that country. A significant majority of Filipinos are poor. The upper 20 percent of Filipinos consume nearly 60 percent of the nation's resources while the lower 40 percent of the people's share is a mere 15 percent of resources. A World Bank survey in 1975 found 45 percent of all households in the country to be below the U.N. poverty line.[140] Consequently, funds made available by the UNHCR for refugee support were regarded as a stimulant to the internal economy. The government employed local people to build the camps, local agriculturists and manufacturers benefited through the purchases of food and clothing by the refugees, and on resettlement of the boat people, the camps could provide additional low cost housing for needy Filipinos. As long as the program continued to be funded by the UNHCR and the refugees were moved out as planned, their temporary presence was an advantage rather than a burden to the Philippines.

Furthermore, the level of compassion shown by the authorities in the Philippines was perhaps designed to put a better light on the country's sorry image in

many parts of the world. President Marcos had been under attack in many quarters for his heavy-handed internal government policies and human rights violations. His regime was in need of some publicity of a different nature. Issues with respect to internal security and a possible resurgence of anti-Chinese sentiment among sectors of the public were met by isolating the refugees in controlled camps and ensuring their speedy resettlement in third countries. Incidently, it was felt that the government's comparatively sympathetic treatment of the Hoa would assuage the Chinese power block that had helped to keep Marcos in power. Diplomatic pressure by the United States also contributed to a more humane attitude towards the refugees. In summary then, the Philippines assumed a posture of guarded benevolence towards the refugees. Whether this response was cynical or sincere is open to conjecture. The general consensus, though, was that the Philippines ". . . demonstrated an adherence to the basic principles of asylum and assistance of refugees."[141]

1.4.8 Japan

Japan, despite being among the wealthiest countries in Asia, attempted to turn a blind eye to the plight of the boat people. By July 1979, when Western countries had resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees, Japan had admitted exactly three Vietnamese as permanent residents. This number was later raised to 500 after pressure was applied by the West, and by June 30, 1982, 1360 boat people had been resettled in Japan.

The Japanese government did its best at the onset to avoid the issue. In 1977 when an Israeli ship picked up 66 refugees, the Israeli government ". . . sought without success to have the Vietnamese accepted in the ship's ports of call at

Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan."[142] The refugees were eventually resettled in Israel. Furthermore, Japanese ships ". . . were going out of their way to avoid waters known to be used by refugee boats so that the ships would not have to pick up the refugees."[143]

When some boat people did manage to get to Japan, they were given a cold reception. The refugees were labelled "illegal aliens" or simply "illegals".[144] As well, they were misled into believing that they could become permanent residents with an opportunity to take out Japanese citizenship. In fact, the refugees were ". . . given nothing more than the privilege to stay for one year".[145] Indeed, to gain officially-recognized status in Japan, a refugee needed ". . . proof of a well-to-do sponsor, a guaranteed job or a close relative in Japan, fluency in Japanese and a year residence in Japan or employment abroad with a Japanese firm".[146] The boat people were effectively kept out of the country by these stipulations.

The foregoing reflects the level of enthnocentricity that is pervasive in Japanese society. "The Japanese regard refugees of almost any kind as gaijin - outsiders. This is especially true of Asia's 'boat people' . . . Tokyo's reluctance to resettle the refugees shows Japan at its xenophobic worst."[147] The following quotation illustrates this further. "In [Japan] where skin color is considered an 'impurity', ethnic difference is an even greater alienation."[148] As one Japanese student remarked, "we tend to despise other Asians, especially Koreans and Indochinese. And we mask this over with legalism and pretexts."[149] Japan even refuses citizenship to Koreans and Chinese who have resided in Japan for generations, and the few boat people who were accepted by Japan will undoubtedly face many difficulties in achieving fuller integration.

Pressure exerted by Western countries made Tokyo acquiescent to some extent. The government perhaps feared that unfavorable international opinion would hurt the country's all-important export trade. However, instead of offering to take in a substantial quota of refugees, Tokyo raised its financial support in 1979 to 50% of the budget of the UNHCR, that is, approximately $50 million per annum. This was seen by some as ". . . a bribe to keep other countries from pressuring Japan into accepting additional refugees."[150] By others it was considered ". . . an immense contribution that [would be] welcomed anywhere".[151] In any case, it is obvious that Japan did not want to accept the boat people, an attitude it shared with its Southeast Asian neighbors. In spite of the financial support that the country extended, it has been stated that "Japanese reluctance to resettle the Indochinese refugees is a disgrace - when one considers that Japan is one of the wealthiest countries in the world - and close to Indochina at that."[152]

1.4.9 South Korea and Taiwan

In the literature concerning the boat people, South Korea is scarcely mentioned and Taiwan is dealt with in passing.

In mid-1979 South Korea was host to a mere forty-two Vietnamese refugees, according to U.N. sources.[153] As of February 1985, no boat people had been accepted for permanent settlement and only fifty-five remained in that country awaiting relocation.[154] Compared to a total of 555,073 Vietnamese who landed on the shores of Southeast Asian countries since 1975, this number is of little consequence. The small numbers of refugees in South Korea is primarily due to the fact that it is located much further north than any country in the region except Japan. As well, since the boat people would have to pass Hong Kong enroute to

Korea, it is understandable that they would drop anchor at the first opportunity. Furthermore, the Koreans are not engaged in international shipping to the extent of the Japanese, and therefore would have fewer encounters with refugee boats in the sea-lanes closer to Vietnam. In terms of national wealth, South Korea is not in the same category as Japan and did not receive the same level of international pressure as that country to provide a homeland for the boat people. Finally, one can speculate that the South Koreans would not be receptive to Vietnamese of Chinese lineage given the war they had fought against China in the early 1950's. All these factors may account for the small number of boat people to be found in South Korea.

The U.N.H.C.R. report in 1985 did not list any refugees seeking permanent residence in Taiwan or awaiting resettlement in a third country.[155] This reflects the determination of the Taiwanese not to become involved with a problem they regarded as being the concern of other Southeast Asian countries.

One of the earliest encounters Taiwan had with the boat people was in 1977 when the Israeli ship *Yuvali* picked up sixty-six refugees in the South China Sea and attempted to offload them in Taipei. Taiwan refused the *Yuvali* permission to do this. Indeed, authorities in Taipei ". . . put a police cordon around the ship to prevent anyone from getting off."[156] Eventually the refugees were flown directly to Israel where they were accepted for permanent resettlement.

Over the next few years Taiwan's position softened somewhat. By June 1979, authorities there claimed to have given asylum to 11,000 boat people since 1975.[157] However, at that time the country adopted a harder line. On June 21 Taiwan declared that ". . . it would accept no more refugees but would donate

$300,000 and 10,000 tons of rice to care for those in Malaysia, Thailand, and Hong Kong."[158] As well, authorities insisted that the 700 refugees still in Taiwan be expediently relocated to third countries.

Taiwan presented several reasons why it could not accept more refugees. First, authorities argued that the population density was already too high in the country - more than 467 people/km^2 overall, and over 1000 people/km^2 along the western coastal plain. Also, they stated that Taiwan was a developing country "unable to accept the huge financial burden of resettling large numbers of refugees."[159]

There are other factors that would account in part for Taiwan's cool response to the boat people. On January 1 1979, the U.S. had transferred diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China after having supported Taiwan's stand as the "true" China since 1949. This may have caused Taiwan to feel betrayed by the Americans. As the refugee problem was largely a result of U.S. intervention in Vietnam, Taiwan could view the plight of the boat people as an American responsibility. Furthermore, "even if Taiwan agreed to accommodate refugees temporarily, resettlement in third countries would be hampered by the lack of diplomatic relations with all the countries now accepting boat people."[160]

Taiwan may also have shared the fears of other Southeast Asian nations with respect to the possible presence of communist infiltrators among the boat people. Given the history of anti-communism in Taiwan and the proximity of the country to the People's Republic of China, this may have been a significant factor in their rejection of the refugees. Finally, Taiwan lies well to the north of Hong Kong and off the Chinese mainland and as such would have been an unlikely landfall for the boat people.

1.5 Resume

Refugees are not a new phenomenon in the world. However, the influx of boat people who were predominantly ethnic-Chinese exposed the unstable socio-political situations in most of the countries bordering the Asian Pacific Rim. The reactions exhibited by these countries, and particularly the fears expressed that the arrival of ethnic-Chinese in such large numbers would jeopardise future internal stability, reached near hysterical proportions in certain cases. The repeated references by these countries to issues pertaining to ensuring economic survival, and the maintenance of internal security as well as ethno-racial harmony, are all pervasive in the continuing negative responses of most of the countries of the Asian Pacific Margin to the plight of the boat people. The sole exception could be China, and even this opinion may perhaps be due to the lack of clear and valid data on this subject.

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Chapter II

RESETTLEMENT OF BOAT PEOPLE AND THE EXPERIENCES OF A REFUGEE FAMILY

The first part of this chapter will outline the acceptance and permanent resettlement of boat people in "third" countries, and in doing so will deal at some length with the program in the United States and Canada. The second part of the chapter will attempt to trace the social, economic, and overall family background of a refugee family of five, and to recount their experiences in making their way to sanctuary in Canada.

2.1 Resettlement of the Boat People

2.1.1 World Response

By February 1985 the total number of boat people who had found first asylum in Southeast Asian countries was as follows:

Malaysia	201,067	Thailand	78,411
Hong Kong	105,662	Philippines	32,487
Indonesia	90,468	Singapore	27,640[1]

As indicated in Chapter I, these countries were unwilling to permanently resettle the refugees. "First asylum countries offered safe sanctuary for a brief time before primitive passions gained the ascendancy, patience and charity gave out, and persecution . . . followed."[2] Through the efforts of the U.N.H.C.R. and the

media, which inspired a compassionate response towards the boat people, most of these people were accepted for permanent resettlement in third countries. Nations receiving the largest numbers of Indochinese refugees were:

U.S.A.	578,349	Germany (Fed. Rep.)	22,520
China	272,100	United Kingdom	16,572
France	97,395	Switzerland	7,835
Canada	96,315	New Zealand	5,990[3]
Australia	93,711		

In addition to the above, those countries that accepted more than one thousand Indochinese refugees for permanent resettlement were:

Netherlands	5,633	Itlay	3,016
Norway	4,774	Sweden	2,862
Belgium	4,255	Austria	1,675
Japan	4,106	Argentina	1,282[4]
Denmark	3,275		

The foregoing figures indicate considerable variations among countries in their receptiveness of the Indochinese refugees. Canada, for example, had a ratio of refugees to total population of 1:324, ranking slightly ahead of Australia with 1:332 and the U.S. at 1:374 for the period 1975-80.[5] Perhaps the other extreme was exemplified by the Soviet Union which in 1977 issued a statement denying refugee status to the boat people, describing them as "subversive degenerates and criminals".[6] The U.S.S.R. has not accepted any Indochinese refugees. Such a reaction would seem to be expected given present-day political alliances.

In order to further understand the movement and resettlement of the refugees, the response of the United States and Canada will be examined in turn.

2.1.2 The American Response

The U.S. had experience with the resettlement of Vietnamese prior to te influx of the boat people. With the collapse of the South Vietnamese government in 1975, approximately 135,000 Vietnamese emigrated to the U.S. Generally these people had had close association with the Americans due to their presence in Vietnam between 1954 and 1975, and as such they would have faced retribution in a communist-controlled state.

These earlier groups of refugees differed significantly from the boat people. A high proportion of them were affluent ethnic-Vietnamese. As well, many were Catholic rather than Buddhist. In addition, most left the country as family units or even family groups; only 16,819 of this group arrived in the U.S. as lone individuals.[7] However, one of the characteristics this earlier group shared with the boat people was that the majority were younger people; 36 percent were between the ages of 18 and 34, and 45.7 percent were under 18 years of age.[8] All these factors meant that integration into American society of the earliest group of refugees was relatively rapid.

Despite the foregoing observations, these earlier groups had difficulties in settling in, for though the multi-ethnic American society was largely founded by immigrants and refugees, the sudden influx of the Vietnamese led to resentment.

> When the first mass exodus of Vietnamese occurred, the perceptions and attitudes of the American people toward them did not augur well for a warm welcome. America's long and frustrating military involvement in Vietnam was undoubtedly largely responsible for an initial feeling of indifference - even hostility in some quarters - towards the refugees.[9]

In spite of these difficulties, the Vietnamese adapted reasonably well to their new homeland. In some respects their presence also made the integration of the boat people easier when they began to arrive a few years later.

The first contingent of 107 Vietnamese boat people arrived in San Francisco in September 1977.[10] By the beginning of 1985, 578,349 Indochinese refugees had been accepted for permanent resettlement in the U.S.[11] The following paragraphs describe this massive program.

The International Rescue Committee was a humanitarian group formed at the beginning of World War II to aid refugees. In December 1977 they organized the Citizens Committee on Indochinese Refugees (C.C.I.R.) with the expressed purpose ". . . to awaken American public opinion to the urgency of immediate assistance and prompt liberalization of the country's immigration policy."[12] Before 1979, for example, U.S. policy towards rescuing boat people was that the navy would give aid to those people they encountered on "normal deployments in the area" around Vietnam.[13] However, through the efforts of groups such as the C.C.I.R., the policy was altered. After the Geneva Conference on Refugees in July 1979, President Carter ordered the 50 ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet to actively search out the refugee boats and render "all possible assistance" to them.[14]

Growing public awareness of the plight of the boat people produced further changes. One of the most significant of these was the 1980 Refugee Act, in which the United States adopted the U.N. definition of a refugee, and made federal funds available for refugee resettlement. It also "authorized the routine admission of 50,000 refugees a year - a sizeable increase from the previous figure of 17,000."[15] This move also allowed the U.S. to assume a leadership role in prompting other countries to resettle greater numbers of boat people.

The United States interviewed and screened refugees in U.N. centers in various parts of Southeast Asia. On being accepted, and the U.S. did indeed take many of the less desirable cases, the refugees were moved to a large U.N. refugee center at Bataan in the Philippines. Refugees stayed there "until they could be moved directly to their new homes."[16] By June 1982, when the boat people exodus had diminished considerably, 459,275 Indochinese refugees had been accepted into the U.S.A.[17]

Church groups, civic organizations, as well as individuals sponsored the refugees. Sponsors "were obligated to help the refugees find jobs and housing and settle into a new community."[18] The government helped finance this procedure. Before 1979 the sponsor was given a $250 resettlement allowance for each refugee, and in 1979 this was raised to $450. The actual cost of resettlement, however, ranged from $1000 to $3000; the difference had to be borne by the sponsor.[19] The government also provided additional services such as language and employment training programs for the refugees.

A number of problems arose as the refugees made their way in the U.S. One of these was with respect to subsequent regional deployment. "California, Texas, and Louisiana are the country's three leading settlement areas because their climate is more congenial to Asians."[20] Hawaii, although its climate was more suitable to the refugees, was not a popular destination.[21] This meant that the refugees were more of a "visible minority" in these areas, and this led to racial conflicts. As well, large urban centers were more attractive to the Indochinese than rural areas or small cities, at least in part because many of the refugees came from Saigon. "Large numbers settled in the Los Angeles area, in San Diego,

in Houston, and in the suburbs of Washington, D.C."[22] This agglomeration of refugees may have made adjustment easier for them because of group support, but the racial tensions aroused through their banding together did hinder smooth integration.

There were added difficulties due to lack of foresight on the part of U.S. immigrant authorities. For example, refugees resettled in the same neighborhood in certain cases came from both North and South Vietnam, and this often led to renewed conflicts. Friction also developed between former urban and rural dwellers, between those speaking different languages, and also between Vietnamese, Laotians or Kampucheans who were resettled in the same neighborhood.

Other problems arose because the "newer arrivals were poorer, less skilled, less educated, and less literate than the 1975 group,"[23] and consequently they experienced greater difficulties in finding employment. In January 1979 "only 28% of the adult refugees who came in 1978 were employed,"[24] and even the jobs they found tended to be menial. For example, 45.5% of them found blue-collar jobs and only 32% were white-collar workers.

Finally, there was resentment on the part of some Americans who felt that the refugees were taking jobs away from them, even though the new immigrants more often than not undertook the kinds of work disdained by Americans. The resentment was particularly noticeable in regions with milder climates which were preferred by the Indochinese, because the competition for jobs between the Americans and the newcomers became more intense in such areas.

Despite the difficulties outlined in the previous paragraphs, the fact that about half a million refugees were accepted by the U.S. between 1976 and 1985 is in itself an indication of the lead role played by the United States.

2.1.3 The Canadian Response

Canada was tardy in formally recognizing the status of refugees. Many nations signed the United Nations Refugee Convention upon its formulation in 1951, but Canada waited until 1969 before adding its name to the list.

In 1975, 9,000 Vietnamese emigrated to Canada following the collapse of the South Vietnamese government. At that time there were no specific provisions in the Immigration Act concerning refugees. "Each refugee movement was treated as an ad hoc problem, with the financial resources available and the population needs of Canada the primary formal considerations in making refugee policy."[25] The arrival of the 1975 group of Vietnamese refugees was one factor in prompting the Canadian government to introduce specific legislation concerning refugees.

The 1976 Immigration Act, proclaimed in April 1978, brought about significant changes regarding the manner in which Canada dealt with refugees. Under the new act:

> . . . decisions on refugee policy were no longer made by simple orders-in-council but required the plans of the government to be tabled in Parliament following consultation with the provinces. In this way, the decision on the Indochinese refugees was far more open to Parliamentary involvement and public debate than had hitherto been the case.[26]

The new act also eliminated the need for Indochinese refugees to convince the authorities that punitive action would be taken against them upon return to their homelands.[27]

Immigration policy at this time was formulated by the federal government through formal consultations with the provinces. In 1976 the Parti Quebecois came to power in Quebec, and pressured the federal government for more autonomy vis-a-vis formulating policies with respect to refugees. The result was the

Couture-Cullen agreement, signed in February 1978. This outlined "forms of collaboration strategy for immigration and . . . the selection process of individuals waiting to resettle in Quebec."[28] Quebec was allowed to form its own Ministry of Immigration which could determine policy and quotas in terms of immigration. This was to have an important bearing on the response by Quebec to the boat people when they began to arrive in Canada in 1978.

The point system which was a part of Canadian immigration policy was applied to the Indochinese refugees in a less rigorous manner than to other immigrants. The government announced in 1978 that "the basic considerations are whether an individual is a true refugee under the Geneva Convention . . . and whether the person has the potential to settle successfully in Canada."[29] In practice, the concept of "motive" was important in determining if a refugee could "settle successfully" in this country. The immigration officer involved in dealing with a refugee would assess the skill level and socio-economic status of a refugee. A well-qualified refugee of relatively high socio-economic status would be accepted, as these qualities indicated a "strong motive for upward mobility that might determine greater 'success' in Canadian terms."[30] This led to a criticism made later by other countries that Canada was taking only the "best" refugees, leaving the less desirable ones for other nations.[31]

Canada's first experience with the boat people occurred in 1978. The decrepit 1600-ton freighter *Hai Hong*, carrying 2,500 refugees, sailed to Malaysia that year, but the authorities refused the ship permission to dock, and threatened to tow it back out to sea. The news of this event spread rapidly across Canada. In November Bud Cullen, the Minister of Immigration in the Liberal government,

announced that Canada would accept 600 of those aboard the *Hai Hong*. Immigration officers were to be sent out to interview the refugees and determine those "best able to benefit from settlement in Canada."[32]

In December 1978, the federal government announced that it would accept 5,000 refugees from Southeast Asia during 1979. "This number was increased to 8,000 in June 1979 at which time the federal government stated that it expected another 4,000 would be admitted under private sponsorship."[33] By July, however, 290,000 boat people had left Vietnam and the fate of the refugees reached critical proportions, for it was during that month, for example, that the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister made his astonishing statement about "shooting [boat people] on sight". This remark in a sense reflected the growing resentment towards the boat people by Southeast Asian governments. Because of these circumstances, a conference on Indochinese refugees was convened by U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in July 1979. Forty-nine countries participated in the Geneva conference, including Canada.

In order to deal effectively with the dramatic increase in refugee immigration in 1979 and 1980, a Refugee Task Force was established in the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (C.E.I.C.) in July 1979. "It coordinated the overseas and domestic refugee activities of the C.E.I.C., and worked with federal departments, provincial governments, and with voluntary agencies, and other private groups."[34] The Task Force was also charged with the coordination of all aspects of the refugee program "from selection abroad to resettlement and integration in the new community."[35]

Just prior to the U.N. conference, Flora MacDonald, External Affairs Minister in the Conservative government, and Immigration Minister Ron Atkey announced that Canada would accept up to 50,000 additional refugees for resettlement by the end of 1980. "Canada's decision . . . was a result of the highly visible plight of the boat people."[36] The government also reserved 16,000 aircraft seats to the end of 1980, made some Canadian forces airplanes available for transportation, and pledged $500,000 to the U.N.H.C.R. for the operating costs of refugee camps in Southeast Asia.[37] As well, when the Liberal government returned to power in February 1980 it promised to sponsor and resettle an additional 10,000 refugees.

The exodus of the boat people slowed considerably after 1979. In 1981, Canada accepted only 8,873 refugees for resettlement. The figures for 1982 and 1983 were 5,293 and 4,650 respectively.[38] These numbers reflect the decreasing number of boat people leaving Vietnam as well as reduced immigration quotas in Canada after 1980.

In order to further reduce the costs to the government and to promote increased public awareness and involvement, the government encouraged private groups to sponsor refugees. The 1976 Immigration Act had allowed that "any church, corporation, or group of five or more adult Canadian citizens or permanent residents could sponsor a refugee."[39] But, when the federal government increased Canada's refugee quota in July 1979, it outlined a scheme whereby the government would match private sponsorship to an overall total of 50,000 immigrants. This proposal, along with a general reduction in sponsorship formalities, encouraged direct public involvement with the refugees. "The program met with overwhelming success and by the end of 1980, 7,688 sponsor groups had been formed across Canada to privately sponsor some 32,281 Indochinese refugees."[40]

Church groups played a major role in the sponsorship of refugees. As well as providing a focal point for public involvement, they provided financial assistance to sponsoring groups. For example, in July 1979 the United Church formulated a joint-sponsor agreement with the Canadian government. This accord enabled the United Church's national organization to provide a fund whereby individual congregations could proceed with sponsorship without financial risk. Any shortcomings at the local level would be compensated for by the national organization. Under this program, 650 churches sponsored refugees in 1979.[41]

It is interesting to note that the cost of resettling a government-sponsored refugee in 1979 was $3,416. The cost incurred by a private sponsor averaged $2,663. By encouraging the private sector to sponsor refugees the government not only involved more citizens directly but also saved itself approximately $74 million during fiscal 1979-80.[42]

Refugees were resettled in all the provinces and territories of Canada. The 1979 figures show that Ontario had accepted 10,741 refugees while the figures for Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia were 6,033, 3673, and 2,843 respectively, and the combined figure for the Yukon and Northwest Territories totalled 75.[43]

The deployment of the refugees was "partly the result of agreements struck between the various provinces and the federal government and partly a matter of the wishes of the immigrant."[44] By early 1980 Quebec and Ontario had the largest numbers of refugees at 16,000 and 15,042 respectively. In terms of government versus privately-sponsored refugees the ratio was nearly the same for all the provinces except Ontario, B.C., and Manitoba; in the latter there was a higher number of private sponsorships.[45]

A fair number of refugees moved to other localities after their initial deployment. Approximately 50% of them moved at least once.[46] Most of the movement was intra-provincial, primarily out of smaller centers (i.e. less than 50,000 people) to the larger cities. The most popular destination was Toronto, followed by Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal, and Winnipeg, in order of preference.

> There were almost no instances mentioned of refugees who had initially located in any of the six larger cities moving to another center. However, groups of refugees in some of the smaller centers were also seen by sponsors to be firmly settled and unlikely to move. These centers included Kelowna, Kamloops, St. Johns . . . and Red Deer.[47]

When the refugees did move, the reasons given were most often related to the quest for better forms of employment, and improved civic services, as well as the search for a compatriot ethnic support group.[48] There was inter-provincial movement as well. The general trend was towards Alberta and Ontario, and away from the Atlantic Provinces. In this case the reason most often given for doing so related to the search for employment.

Of the refugees who arrived in 1979, 15% were under primary school age, 25% were between the ages of 6 and 17 inclusive, while a mere 2% were over 60 years of age. Half of the males and three-fifths of the females were married at the time. In terms of education, 74% of this group had at least a secondary school education, 12% were university trained, 11% had technical training, and 3% had no education. Regarding language ability, 12% of the arrivals spoke English, 6% spoke French, 4% spoke both of these languages, leaving 78% who spoke neither of Canada's official languages.[49] The latter consideration in particular had a significant bearing on the adjustment problems of the group to life in Canada.

The refugees fared well in terms of finding employment. "After 18 months in Canada, 89.4% of the working-age population of Indochinese were participating in the Canadian labor market: their overall unemployment rate was . . . 10.4%."[50] This was remarkable given that the overall rate of unemployment in Canada was 8.5% in March 1981.

The Indochinese refugees did, however, experience problems in adjusting to life in Canada.

> . . . There is a growing "high-risk" group that suffers from severe depression, anxiety and psychosis because of the traumas of war, their perilous escape, having to seek shelter in overcrowded refugee camps and being transplanted to an alien culture . . . .[51]

Kwok B. Chan and Lawrence Lam, in a study of Vietnamese-Chinese refugees in Montreal, identified further problems experienced by this group. These included feelings of anxiety brought about by not knowing the whereabouts of family members, the loss of a business or property in Vietnam, and the lack of prior knowledge as to conditions in Canada.

There were additional stresses produced by the misunderstandings between the refugees and their sponsors.

> Both sponsors and refugees enter into the relationship as total strangers, with whatever normally expected existing personality and temperament differences between them accentuated and, sometimes, dramatized by a virtual lack of understanding of the other's ethnic and cultural background.[52]

There were problems as well between the Indochinese in general and Canadians. For example, in 1983, 25% of the Vietnamese refugees were single, government sponsored men between the ages of 20 and 40. With the lack of a family support group some of these people tended to misuse their freedom. The result was the formation of gangs of young refugees. Gang warfare and the intimidation of other

refugees has been an increasing problem, particularly in Toronto and Vancouver.[53]

Integration of the refugees has been hampered by those Canadians who are opposed to the immigration of the Indochinese. In 1979, when the refugee quota was 50,000, a poll showed that 37% of the population felt that this number was too high.[54] Another poll taken in June 1979 showed that opposition to the refugees was strongest in rural areas and among those who had a "low income, low education, and little experience with visible minorities."[55]

Opposition to the presence of refugees was dependent on a number of factors. One charge was that because some of the boat people had been able to pay as much as $3000 each to leave Vietnam, they should be regarded as wealthy Chinese Vietnamese who were able to bribe their way out of Vietnam and not as destitute refugees. Furthermore, many claimed that the economy could not absorb so many refugees, that they were taking jobs away from Canadians, and that the social services funds expended on refugees could be better used for helping Canadians. "The hungry hoards of Asia are pictured as crowded rats banging down the doors of Canada to overwhelm this country, bringing with them their poverty and their needs."[56] The foregoing quote also reveals a latent racist component which has tended to compound the issue of integration; it reflected, as Harold Troper of Toronto's Institute for Studies in Education stated, "a long-standing tradition of racism and xenophobia."[57] Alan Borovoy of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association added, "the more heterogeneity you introduce the more you increase the risks of conflict."[58]

The arguments used by the group opposed to the refugees are not substantive from an economic point of view. Of the Indochinese refugees who arrived between 1975 and 1980, 93% had found employment, and as to the issue of taking away jobs from Canadians, it must be stressed that the refugees in many cases created their own fields of employment, or took menial jobs rejected by others. The refugees also stimulated local businesses through purchases of the material necessities required for life in Canada, and their earnings no doubt contributed to Canada's Gross National Product. Furthermore, the taxes paid provided the government with further funds. Still, jealousy based on ethnocentricity on the part of some Canadians was heightened; they envied the support which the refugees received and the economic success of the Indochinese.

Canada played a significant role in the resettlement of the Indochinese refugees in the period from 1979 to 1981 when the greatest exodus of these people occurred. Public attention regarding the plight of the boat people which was generated by the media led to private as well as government involvement in their relocation. In 1985 a government report stated that "when the size of our population and G.N.P. are taken into account, Canada's record of aid to refugees in recent years has been second to none."[59]

2.2 An Empirical Study of a Vietnamese Refugee Family

General surveys and aggregrate data are no doubt useful in understanding large scale refugee movements. However, in the interests of gaining a fuller understanding of the problem, a case can be made for the need for micro-studies on an empirical basis of the refugees themselves.

The selection of such an approach is further governed by the following considerations. First, there is the question as to the number of case investigations - be they five, twenty-five, or fifty, based perhaps on rigid pre-conceived questionnaires, that would be required to allow for a tabulation of responses leading to an attempt at ultimate quantitative assessments. Second, it may be argued that the widest range of samples is more likely to provide more conclusive results from a statistically measurable point of view. But, one is then confronted with difficulties of an immediate kind. Simple logistics posed by contraints of time, travel distances and funds would certainly have restricted the range of case samples in view of the level at and the circumstances in which an investigation of the topic under study was made. Third, bearing the aforementioned in mind, would five case studies of lesser depth have provided more assured information than the one which was undertaken? The undertaking of more than one case study would have posed added uncertainties, because one would have had to deal with strangers rather than with the members of a single family whose confidence had already been gained. Fourth, even if broader assessments leading to wide-ranging generalizations were indeed possible, it has to be borne in mind that exceptions are always to be had and that the reasons for such exceptions are seldom constant. For example, it could perhaps be stated that northern and central Europeans have proved to be more resilient and in turn the more prosperous of the refugees who have settled Anglo-America through the decades. But, are there not individuals and families from East Asia or even South Asia who have done as well if not better? Pursuing this line of thought a little further, it is important to note that many people from the British Isles who have made good in Anglo-America through

their working lives prefer to return to their native land on reaching retirement age despite the changed socio-economic fabric back home. Does this mean that Canadian residents of say Polish or Hungarian origins who are in similar circumstances have no such thoughts? There may indeed be many who do, but what keeps them on this continent is not that they no longer think of home, but because the changed socio-political framework is abhorent to them. These same considerations also surely apply to many an overseas Chinese, be they residents of Southeast Asia or Anglo-America, who find themselves in a similar predicament. Finally, it has to be borne in mind that no arbitrary limit can be imposed on the variables which come into play when attempting to assess human behavioral patterns in the context of a study on social integration, be it with regard to individuals, families, long term residents or recent immigrants. One thing is clear: the level of integration does vary between persons, families, and group affiliations, and much also depends on time, place, and associated circumstances.

The following case study of the Tran family was therefore undertaken in the hope that it will make a contribution to the sum total of literature on the subject. And, after presenting the findings, a more detailed submission weighing the adoption of an empirical method of investigation will be made in the concluding chapter of this work.

2.2.1 Family Background and Life in Vietnam

The family in question comprise the father Tran Canh Van, his wife Tho Minh Quy, their daughter Ai-Lan and sons Tran Quoc Phong and Tran Quoc Sy. The names used in this study are fictitious in order to protect the identity of the human subjects whose background and experiences are set out in the following sub-section of this chapter and in the chapter to follow.

Tran Canh Van was born in Saigon in 1937. His parents were ethnic Chinese. His father had come from Guangchou and his mother from Hainan Island, and Van was the eldest of eight children: six boys and two girls. At the time of Van's birth his father operated a small business, making and selling incense. Van's father, who could also speak French, had business connections with the French colonial administration. Because the Trans were ethnic-Chinese they were treated well by the French administrators and soldiers. Van remembers the French soldiers particularly because they taught him how to swim, and also because by associating with them he was able to learn some French.

Van was only a few years old when his family fled Saigon because of Japanese air raids in late 1941. They settled temporarily in a village approximately twenty kilometers from the city. Van remembers a few scenes from this time. For example, he recalls that he and his friends used to play games with the bodies of the dead soldiers, such as putting cigarettes in their mouths or moving the ones dangling from the trees in order to startle people as they walked by. The war was upsetting to Van's parents, but Van perceived it simply to be a game, and fortunately escaped any real trauma.

The Trans moved to the city of My Tho in 1948. This city is located approximately 86 kilometers southwest of Saigon in the province of Dinh Twong. Van, now eleven years old, began school in My Tho and continued his schooling uninterrupted through high school. It was here that he met his future wife.

The Tran family was not impoverished, but certainly lived in a humble style. They owned no land except that upon which their house was built. The house itself was approximately 140 m^2 in size, and was home to eleven people. It was divided

into three sections. The front part served as a store where Van's father sold incense and other commodities. The middle section served as the sleeping area while the rear part of the house was used as a kitchen. Cooking was done on a three-burner stove fueled by varsol which was pressurized by a hand pump. Water for domestic use was carried from a nearby well by members of the family, and stored in a *Lu*, a large, ceramic, Klong-type water jar found in many parts of mainland Southeast Asia. There were no washrooms in the house so the Trans used the nearby outdoor public toilets.

Van remembers little of the political developments in Vietnam prior to the inauguration of Ngo Dinh Diem as President in 1955. This is understandable given that Van was only eighteen years old when Diem came to power. However, he does recall that prior to 1954 Bao Dai was the "King" of Vietnam and that Diem served as his Prime Minister for a year before being elected President. Van also recalls that there was much internal turmoil in the south at this time. There were numerous strikes, and Diem's regime was also engaged in combating the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen rebel groups as well as numerous other factions.

Van feels that Diem was a "good leader who didn't like the communists," and that people supported him for the latter reason. He believes that other members of Diem's family, particularly his brother Nhu and Madame Nhu, and his brother Cardinal Thuc, attempted to increase their power at Diem's expense. Still, Van is uncertain as to the specific reasons why Diem was overthrown, and is of the opinion that the political situation in South Vietnam began to deteriorate after Diem's demise in 1963.

Van also recalls the massive refugee influx from the north in 1954 following the Geneva conference which led to the partitioning of Vietnam and the establishment of the seventeenth parallel as the boundary. He says that many people did not like the newcomers, particularly because they spoke with a different accent. However, the local government in My Tho gave the refugees food and billeted many with local families. The Trans housed several of the refugees. Van recalls that they were good workers and that they talked a lot about their hatred of the communists, but Van was too young at the time to understand exactly what they were talking about.

Van wanted to attend the University of Saigon after he finished high school but decided that this was beyond his financial means. He was drafted in 1962 by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) while he was living in My Tho. The initial period of mandatory service was eighteen months, but Van volunteered to serve until 1967. After going through basic training he was assigned the post of dispatcher at a motor vehicle pool in Saigon. Van enjoyed this position as it carried authority and prestige. As well, he was given the rank of "Super" as he had graduated from high school, and after two years of service was made a lieutenant. His life at this time centered on the army. He was required to sleep in the army barracks and he spent much of his free time gambling and drinking with fellow officers. Van did take some formal training in mechanics after being posted to Saigon, and received a license to this effect. He admits, however, that he learned very little from the course.

Van began dating his wife to be during this time. Tho Minh Quy was born in 1954 in the city of Ben Tre (Truc Giang), a center of approximately 400,000 people

located 100 kilometers southwest of Saigon. Her father was a Chinese pharmacist who had fled China when the communists took control there in the late 1940's. Her mother was of mixed Chinese and Vietnamese descent. In Ben Tre, Quy's father managed a large variety store, something akin to a Woolworth's in Canada. Quy admits that her family was wealthy and that her life was very comfortable.

The nine members of the Tho family lived in a house in Ben Tre of approximately 90 m^2. It was divided into three sections. The front section was used for the family business of packaging and selling Chinese medicines. The middle part served as the sleeping area while the rear section was used as a kitchen. The house had running water although only for a few hours each day, but it did have a large cement water storage container. As well, there was an indoor toilet in the building that was flushed with water from an overhead holding tank.

In 1950 Quy began school. The institution was operated by the French government and was open to the public. The medium of instruction was Vietnamese though French language instruction was available as one of the subjects. Quy was aware of the conflicts in Vietnam while she was growing up but felt they were "out in the country" and not of personal importance. In 1963 Quy graduated from high school and went to work for her father. The Tho family moved to Saigon that year where Quy's father started a pharmacy which principally packaged and sold Chinese medicines. Quy worked as a staff supervisor and bookkeeper of the business. She lived with her parents up to and after her marriage to Van in 1966.

Van and Quy were married on August 25, 1966 at ages 26 and 22 respectively. Traditionally, marriages were arranged in Vietnam, sometimes even before the participants had been born. But in Van and Quy's case matters were somewhat

different. After they met in high school their respective families had a chance to become acquainted. When the couple expressed their wish to be married, Van's father spoke to Quy's father about the union. Because the match was mutually acceptable the couple was allowed to proceed with their plans. Van states that if their fathers had not agreed to the marriage, he and Quy would have cancelled their plans. Even so, he claims that the marriage was a love match. Van adds that Quy's family agreed to the marriage although there was a difference between the two families with respect to wealth. He states that this was not an important consideration.

The wedding ceremony was conducted according to Buddhist rites. It was held before a table laden with fruit and liquor, and upon which were cards with the names of their respective families. The proceedings included a series of bows supervised by a priest, and an exchange of wedding rings. Van wore a western-style suit while Quy was attired in a white dress which was similar in style to what brides wear today in Canada. For the reception she changed into another less formal but elegant white dress.

The wedding was an elaborate affair, financed by Quy's parents. More than 300 guests were invited to a banquet in a Cholon restaurant. Van invited many of his friends from the army. He offered to share the cost of the wedding with Quy's parents because of this but they refused. Later, a second reception was hosted by Van's parents in My Tho, to which approximately 100 guests were invited. Guests at both receptions gave the couple significant sums of money as gifts, a practise which Van states is a custom at Chinese weddings.

Van and Quy went on a week-long honeymoon to Vung Tau, a city approximately 80 kilometers southeast of Saigon. This too was paid for by Quy's parents. Van says that a honeymoon trip was the customary practise at the time among wealthy people in Vietnam.

Following the honeymoon Van moved in with Quy's extended family in Saigon. This was not in keeping with Vietnamese custom, for normally a woman leaves her family and makes her home with her husband and his family. But, as Quy's father operated a large pharmacy, additional labor for the family business was welcome. As well, there were no other adult males living in their Saigon house and Quy's father was happy to have his son-in-law provide added protection for his family. Furthermore, Van continued to work on an army base in Saigon, so this arrangement was convenient for all concerned.

Quy's father owned the four-storey home in Cholon, and the family members living there included Quy's sister and niece and their immediate families, her mother, as well as Van and herself. By 1973, when Van and Quy had three children, there were fifteen people living in the house. Van did not mind this arrangement as each of the nuclear families had their own private section of the building. He would have preferred a house of his own but could not afford one. As well, his father-in-law allowed Quy and him to live there free of charge. The arrangement was very acceptable and the couple and their three children continued to live in this house until 1975. Van's parents did not object to the breach in custom as they were relatively poor and could appreciate the economic advantages of the arrangement.

Van found the house in Saigon very comfortable. It was large compared to others in the area. The house was sturdily built out of reinforced concrete. Each floor was divided into two sections, entered via a central stairway. Each of its four floors had an area of approximately 225 m^2. The upper three floors each had balconies. The second-floor balcony was particularly wide and was often used for parties where people could eat and dance outdoors. When it was very hot some of the family members would sleep there. The flat roof of the building was also a popular place for relaxing and enjoying some fresh air.

The front section of the ground floor housed the pharmacy. Large metal overhead doors were opened during business hours. Halfway into this room was a counter where customers made their purchases. Behind the counter were rows of benches where employees of the pharmacy packaged medicines, and washed and refilled small medicine bottles. In one corner was a washroom for the use of the workers. This facility had running water, as did the toilet on the third floor of the building. Along the wall opposite the washroom was a kitchen, containing three stoves and a refrigerator. One of the stoves was of Japanese manufacture and powered by varsol. The other two stoves were manufactured in Vietnam and used charcoal. Quy's father employed two cooks full-time to prepare food for his employees and extended family. The work benches were used as tables during meal times.

The section of the ground floor in the back of the building served as the Trans apartment. The front section of the second floor was used as living quarters by Quy's sister and her family while the section in the rear served as a workshop for the pharmacy. The front section of the third floor of the building was Quy's

mother's apartment which contained a second washroom. The apartment in the back of the house on this floor served as the living quarters of Quy's niece and her family. The fourth floor was given over entirely to storage although the front section held two stoves and a water tank and was sometimes used for cooking.

The rooms of the building were high-ceilinged but windows were small by Canadian standards and had curtains covering them. In order to increase air circulation, ceiling fans as well as numerous table fans were located in each room. Vietnamese-style pictures hung on the walls and Van states that their furniture was similar to that found in Canada, except for its somewhat heavier construction. Each family also had various household appliances which they received from Quy's father as gifts. These included a black and white Sanyo television, a Japanese-manufactured refrigerator and washing machine, and an Akai stereo. The family members obviously enjoyed the material benefits derived from a thriving business.

Quy's father lived in this house part of his time but usually inhabited a second house which had been his first dwelling upon returning to Saigon from Ben Tre, and where he had established his thriving pharmaceutical business. This house was a three storey structure of approximately 90 m^2, located three blocks from his second building. The first floor housed the pharmacy which was used primarily for the distribution of medicines rather than their manufacture. It also served as the main bookkeeping office for the business. The second floor served as living quarters for Quy's father while the third was given over to storage. He resided in this house because of a sentimental attachment to the place where he had started his business. As well, Quy's father believed that his business could use two points of

distribution, and each part of his business needed a supervisor. His wife could oversee his second building. In spite of this arrangement he and his wife would often spend time together at one residence or the other.

The wealth of Quy's family was derived from a thriving pharmaceutical business. There were approximately fifty workers employed in this enterprise. They ranged in age from ten to about forty-five with twenty of them over eighteen years of age. For the most part these workers were recruited from the cities of Ben Tre and My Tho where Quy's father had business contacts and could be assured of hardworking and loyal hands. They worked five days a week, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour's break for lunch. The total cost to Quy's father in wages was between 8,000 and 10,000 dong per week (U.S. $64 to $80). This expenditure is not significant when compared to labor costs in North America in 1970. However, the cost of living in Saigon in 1970 was also relatively low, therefore the wages paid were a reflection of the economic circumstances in Vietnam at this time. In 1965, one U.S. dollar had a value of 90 dong. By 1970, inflation had pushed this figure up to 125 dong. Continued inflation led to a dollar in 1974 being valued at 170 dong. The profits from the pharmacy were between four and five million dong per annum (U.S. $32,000 and $40,000). Given the low labor costs, it would seem that Quy's family had a very high income and indeed enjoyed a high standard of living.

The standard of living must also take into account the costs of various basic necessities. In 1970, prices for such commodities were very low. For example, a kilogram of sugar cost 35 dong (U.S. 28 cents) and the price for the same amount of rice ranged from 15 to 20 dong (12 to 16 cents). A two kilogram fish cost a mere 10 dong (8 cents) and a chicken of similar weight cost 90 dong (72 cents).

Overall domestic expenditures on foodstuffs, then, as well as a mere 100 dong (80 cents) per month for utilities, was relatively low and the Tho family must surely have had more than enough to spare for other expenditures and must have been able to effect considerable savings. For example, a shirt cost between 100 and 150 dong ($.80 to $1.20) and a pair of pants was only slightly more expensive, with prices ranging from 150 to 200 dong ($1.20 to $1.60). A pair of shoes cost 100 dong (80 cents), and a haircut was a mere 10 to 15 dong (8 to 12 cents). And, should they have thought of purchasing a third home, the cost of a 90 m^2 house, though relatively high at approximately 500,000 dong (U.S. $4,000), would be only a fraction of the annual profit from the pharmacy. Therefore, given the profit derived from the business, it would indicate that the Tho pharmacy was a thriving concern.

Van and Quy had nearly all their basic necessities as well as a few luxuries provided for them without charge. They spent their own money primarily on additional luxuries, and the costs of these items are worth mentioning. In Saigon in 1970 a complete meal in a modest restaurant cost 15 dong (12 cents), and a bottle of beer a mere 12 dong (1 cent). A package of Vietnamese cigarettes cost between 4 and 6 dong (3 to 5 cents) while American brands sold for 15 dong (12 cents) per package. A bicycle carried a price tag of between 2,000 and 3,000 dong ($16 to $24), while a small imported car was priced at about 100,000 dong ($800). A liter of gas was 30 dong (24 cents). A medium size black and white television set cost 10,000 dong ($80), while a Japanese-made wristwatch commanded the same price. Many luxuries were significantly more expensive than basic commodities, as can be seen by these price indices. However, given the income of the Tho

family even such luxuries were very affordable. For example, the Trans themselves owned a new Vauxhall automobile as well as a Honda motorcycle. These items cost 100,000 and 50,000 dong ($800 and $400) respectively. Quy's father had a new Toyota station wagon and various other members of the Tho family owned a total of four additional small motorcyles. Each of the Tran children also had new bicycles.

It is difficult to determine the exact income of the Tran family because of the complex monetary flow within the Tho family. Quy herself earned only 4000 dong ($32) each month, but this figure lacks real meaning because her father provided her with a floating expense account of between 500,000 and one million dong ($4,000 to $8,000). With this money Quy would pay the operating costs of the building, as well as the pharmacy business. In addition, it could be used to cover personal expenditures. Van's wages from the military amounted to approximately 20,000 dong ($160) per month. In addition, he was paid a wage when he worked in the pharmacy. Furthermore, Van supplemented his income by selling jeeps, spare parts, and gasoline on the black market. From these activities he derived an additional 50,000 dong ($400) per year.

The determining of exact incomes is further complicated because of other black market activities prevalent in the ARVN during this time. Although soldiers were provided with all the basic necessities of life, many made additional income through accepting bribes and selling army equipment, gasoline, and American PX goods. Van indicated that a common type of corruption was to list the names of more than the actual number of personnel on the army payroll and then collect the wages of these fictitious soldiers. Also, senior officers often required their sub-

ordinates to sign their paychecks and surrender the money to them. Most obliged because failure to do so might result in reassignment to an unpleasant job or perhaps placement on combat status. During various times in his career Van was forced to give up his paychecks under these threats.

The Trans had few concerns or worries with regard to finances during their life in Saigon. Indeed, this is indicated by the fact that Van and Quy had difficulty in recalling the costs of various items because they seldom had to purchase basic commodities; the purchasing of basic commodities and cooking was done for them. The Trans spent most of their personal income on luxuries, including dining out in restaurants, and going to the theater and cinema. Van's greatest expenditure was on gambling, an activity in which he was heavily involved at this time. Quy, however, still managed to save money and stated that their savings in the early 1970's amounted to approximately 100,000 dong ($800). This indicates that the Trans were quite a wealthy family, and that they enjoyed a high standard of living in comparison to the majority of the populace.

In a "typical" day in 1970, Van would sleep in the army barracks, get up at eight or nine A.M., and have breakfast at a local shop with a friend. He would then drive his motorcycle to the Tho residence and visit Quy and the children for a few hours. Afterward he would return to the barracks and begin gambling. In the evening he would often go out to drink and dance in various nightclubs, accompanied by his army friends.

Gambling deserves a special mention as it occupied so much of Van's time during this period of his life. It was an activity in which he was engaged most days of the week for at least several hours. Van was very adept at table tennis

and was a divisional champion for several years. He would often go to a table tennis club and play for a few hours with his army friends, and then gamble with them afterward. The games were predominantly Chinese or Vietnamese. The former included Ma Chuoi, Tu Sac, and Co Tuong. These games were played with plaques or a type of domino. Vietnamese games included 13 La, Caster, and Bai Cao, all of which used the standard 52 card deck. The European game "21" was played, as well as dominos. After playing these games for a few hours the winner would buy dinner for the rest of the players at a nearby restaurant. Van, of course, has many stories to relate in this connection. He often lost his entire paycheck, and on one occasion he lost all of his money, his wristwatch, and his motorcycle. The military police once arrested him for gambling on an ARVN base and he spent twelve days in jail. This arrest also cost him his promotion to the rank of Captain. Van's gambling group also functioned as a *Hui*, or Vietnamese mutual aid organization. Members of the *Hui* provided each other with material and non-material support, and Van spent much of his time with these people.

The Trans' first child, their daughter Ai-Lan, was born on November 1, 1968 in a Saigon clinic. Quy was not worried about the birth of her first child as she went to a doctor every Monday for a check-up during the latter months of her pregnancy. After recovering from childbirth Quy returned to work while other family members looked after her daughter. The arrival of a child did not have a significant effect on Van's carefree lifestyle.

In 1969 Van, a lieutenant, was placed on combat status. He went on missions until 1970 when he was badly wounded after the vehicle in which he was riding struck a landmine. He spent six months recovering in hospital before returning to

the motorpool. Ordinarily Van would have returned to combat, but Quy's father bribed a Vietnamese colonel to keep him out of combat. The bribe was 25,000 dong (U.S. $200) initially, and each month thereafter, Van was required to give his monthly paychecks directly to the Colonel.

In the motorpool Van found increasing pressure also applied to him by his immediate superior, a Vietnamese major. Van feels this officer was envious of his wealth and critical of his hedonistic behavior. He thinks the man did not dislike him because he was ethnic-Chinese. The major strictly controlled Van's behavior at the office, requiring him, for example, to obtain permission before leaving the base or signing out vehicles. Eventually Van bribed the major to stop his harassment. Soon after, Van was reassigned to a small department in the motorpool where he supervised a dozen people. This was a significant drop in prestige for him.

Van recalls the upheavals in the South Vietnamese government from the 1963 assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem to the fall of Saigon in 1975. He was particularly upset after Diem was overthrown, believing that he had been a bastion against the spread of communism in the south. He feels the U.S. government had wanted too much from Diem and had manipulated him. The Americans had eventually withdrawn their support when he had been recalcitrant about following orders. Van remembers that many people celebrated in the streets when they heard of the coup against Diem, but he feels these were generally uneducated people. Intelligent citizens were unhappy and concerned about Diem's downfall. Van recalls that General Duong Minh succeeded Diem followed by a series of leaders, including General Nguyen Khanh, Air Vice Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky, General Nguyen Van

Thieu, and back to General Minh. The successive governments and internal political strife that was the result made it even more difficult for the military to make headway against the communist forces. It also encouraged corruption and personal greed among the Vietnamese themselves. Van now strongly regrets his behavior at this time because he feels it added to the weakness of the Republic, which ultimately led to its downfall.

In 1970 Van spent three months at a base camp in the region of Pautieng, approximately 50 kilometers west of Saigon. Each day he was flown to Binh Luong, approximately 130 kilometers north-west of Saigon, near the border of Cambodia. There he was responsible for examining damaged army vehicles to judge whether they were repairable. If so, they were loaded on board a C-47 transport plane and taken back to Binh Luong. If beyond repair, Van supervised their destruction using plastic explosives. After his three-month term was completed he returned to his job at the motorpool in Saigon.

The Trans' two sons, Tran Quoc Phong and Tran Quoc Sy, were born on August 14, 1970, and November 12, 1973, respectively. Quy was happy because she had wanted sons. Financially, the family was secure and the pharmacy was thriving. Quy had been worried about Van when he had been in the combat zones and was relieved when he was posted back to Saigon. She recalls the increasingly unsettled conditions in Saigon in the early 1970's. The fighting was moving closer and there were occasional attacks upon the city. Added to this was the presence of American troops who, Quy recalls, roared about the city in their vehicles. They often became inebriated and drove recklessly, occasionally running over someone. She did not like this aspect of the American presence, but tolerated it because they were fighting the communists.

Van worked with many Americans in the army and an American colonel headed the motorpool where he worked. Initially Van did not like the American presence. Moreover, the influx of American soldiers increased after Diem was overthrown in 1963. He felt there were already too many competing factions in Vietnam and that the Americans would just complicate the situation. However, as time passed Van came to admire the Americans because of their efforts in fighting the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops. He states that while many people in Saigon did not like the Americans, the Vietnamese troops had great respect and affection for them. Van feels that all these soldiers should be treated as heros because of the sacrifices they made attempting to defend his country.

Ai-Lan, six years old at that time, remembers some features and events in Saigon. She liked their big house and her many cousins who lived there and who were her playmates. She had lots of rice to eat and was happy. Ai-Lan was unaware of the war until her father was wounded. She recalls seeing him in the hospital covered with many bandages, and was frightened. Van was short-tempered when she came to visit because he felt much pain, and some of his wounds itched abominably. He was also impatient at being treated as an invalid and would sometimes speak harshly to Ai-Lan. She remembers being very distressed when this happened.

Ai-Lan learned Vietnamese as her first language. She attended a tax-funded Vietnamese public school for four hours each day. Because there was a shortage of schools in Saigon she attended the morning "shift" while another group came in to study in the afternoon. The school had 16 or 18 classrooms with approximately 45 students in each room. Subjects taught were similar to those found in elemen-

tary schools in Canada, with the addition of classes in Vietnamese and French language instruction. Ai-Lan also attended a Chinese school in the afternoon for a few months, but quit because she did not like it. She had been enrolled because Van felt that the children should learn Chinese as they lived in a Chinese part of Saigon. During her regular school hours Ai-Lan found the teachers to be strict, and she had to be very obedient. At the same time she feels she had a normal life at school, learning, playing, and getting into mischief.

Phong began his schooling in 1976, which was after the communist takeover. He attended a French school named L'Ecole Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Admission to the institution was on a lottery basis where 200 students were randomly selected from approximately 2000 applications. Phong was fortunate to be accepted. The teachers were of higher quality in this school than the public schools, and standards were also higher. The school was also well-equiped compared to the public institutions. The cost of attendance was 2000 dong ($12) for a ten-month term.

When the American troop withdrawal began in the early 1970's, there was much confusion in the ARVN. Van, a Captain after 1973, remembers feeling surprised at the American departure and worried because of Vietnam's heavy dependency on the U.S. troops. He and his colleagues also felt angry and betrayed. Many Vietnamese soldiers refused to obey orders after this time. Van was upset but felt powerless in the face of a deteriorating military situation.

Van wanted to fight the communists in the final days before the fall of Saigon, but the gates at the military base had been locked to keep everyone inside. As well, General Minh, the new President, had ordered them over the radio to remain where they were. This order made Van very angry. Eventually he slipped out of

the base and made his way home. He changed into civilian clothes and stayed indoors for three days while the North Vietnamese took control of the city. Other people reacted differently. Many were happy about the political change and celebrated the arrival of the communist troops. Quy admits she felt very relieved that the fighting was finally over. Van recalls that many of his neighbors became "April 30th" communists. He remembers that when the first North Vietnamese soldiers appeared his initial impression was that they were extremely young and that their rifles seemed to be too large for their bodies. He did not know what they were going to do and was concerned because he had learned "many bad things about communism" while he was in the army. Still, Van felt that because the invading force was Vietnamese they would treat their own people reasonably well.

Ai-Lan had learned more about the war in school when the teachers explained the presence of the soldiers and the bombing. She recalls that her family was very frightened and that they stored food, water, and clothing. The adults discussed the possibility of fleeing Saigon but eventually decided it was better to await the takeover of the city at home. Ai-Lan remembers that the communist troops entered their area of the city quietly; there was no gun fire. She recalls that many people were happy that the war was over and there was a parade in the street with many people shouting and singing.

When the communist forces arrived they were very friendly toward the ethnic-Chinese community because of the military ties between North Vietnam and China. Nevertheless, Quy's uncle, a Colonel in the ARVN, advised Van to leave Saigon while the new regime consolidated its power. Consequently Van travelled to the village of Suoi Nghe, located approximately 100 kilometers east of

Saigon in the province of Baria. He stayed with some relatives on a farm there for about two and a half months. At this time the government began calling in all South Vietnamese males between 18 and 40 years, that is, those of military age, for "discussions". Van submitted his documents to the authorities. They were retained and he was instructed not to move from the village of Suoi Nghe.

Van was soon sent to a "re-education center", as were all Vietnamese citizens whom the new regime felt had had close ties to the former government. The authorities told him it was to be for ten days, but it was more than two years before Van managed to leave. Van recalls that the three camps in which he was incarcerated were very similar. The first was near the city of Bien Hoa, approximately 30 kilometers northeast of Saigon. Here the inmates had to write out repeatedly their family history dating back three generations. Interrogators compared the stories and questioned them on any inconsistencies they found. After a few months Van was moved to a second camp near Long Giao and finally to a camp at May Tau, located approximately 110 kilometers east of Saigon in the county of Xuyen Moc. Van spent most of his two years imprisonment in this latter camp.

May Tau was similar in physical layout to the other re-education centers. The camp was carved out of the jungle by the individuals who were later to be its occupants. Six bunkhouses were constructed, separated from each other by approximately 100 meters of jungle and connected by wooden walkways. Each bunkhouse held between forty and fifty people. There was a guard tower as well, but no perimeter fence. Attempts were made by officials to reduce movement within the camp and thereby prevent escape attempts. For example, the occu-

pants of one bunkhouse were not allowed to communicate with individuals in any other bunkhouse. As well, the latrines were built very close to the bunkhouses, and Van remembers the smell as being nearly intolerable. The inmates were locked into their bunkhouses at night and did not have access to the latrines. This was a major source of discomfort, particularly when individuals defecated in the bunkhouse itself. These conditions prompted some inmates to escape into the jungle, however, most of those who attempted to do so were killed or recaptured. Van recalls that most people in the camp were terrified of the jungle; they feared the tigers, bears, snakes, and insects as much as the communist patrols.

The work done by the camp inmates was very arduous. They made tools out of broken vehicle and aircraft parts and were taken out to the jungle to chop down trees. They also crushed rocks with hammers and helped construct roads. They were sent out to work each day at five in the morning, for approximately ten hours. In the evenings there was a half-hour break after dinner followed by communist indoctrination meetings which lasted until ten at night.

Food in the camp was scarce and of poor quality. Meat was served only rarely and the two meals per day usually consisted of a crude type of bread accompanied by a piece of salt. Water came from nearby creeks and was of poor quality. Nevertheless, it was rationed and there was never enough for a proper wash. Van often washed and fished in a nearby stream, the fish helping to supplement his diet. Food was important as the work was physically demanding and the nights were often cold in the jungle, particularly because the inmates were given only poor-quality clothing and a few thin blankets. These conditions coupled with a general lack of medicine caused numerous camp inmates to become weak and sick, and many died.

It was difficult for Van to gain release from the re-education center because he had been promoted to the rank of major in the ARVN a few months before the fall of Saigon. After trying for two years, Quy finally managed to bribe a communist official, using twelve ounces of gold, to release her husband. Van feels fortunate compared to other camp inmates. One of his brothers was a major in the ARVN and was in a camp for ten years. A brother of Quy, a lieutenant, was incarcerated for eight years. Some of Van's friends are still in "re-education centers" today.

While Van was in the May Tau camp, Quy's parents purchased a farm near the village of Suoi Nghe, where Van had stayed temporarily after leaving Saigon in May 1975. After his release from May Tau he lived on this farm for a year and a half. The farm was 4.5 acres in size, and was quite large compared to others in the area which generally averaged only half an acre. The cost of the farm was three million dong (approximately U.S. $18,000). There were two houses on the land, the older of the two of cement construction with a corrugated metal roof, and the newer one of brick. There was no running water, but there was an indoor latrine as well as an outhouse. Cooking was done on a wood and coal-fueled stove. There was no electricity, and light was provided by portable gas lanterns.

The land was of poor quality, with infertile soil and many rocks. Van knew little about farming so Quy's father hired local farmers to plant and harvest crops on the land. Rice was grown along a creek which crossed the property. Peanuts, green beans, soya beans, sesame, and corn were also planted. There were banana and papaya trees on the land and Quy's father also purchased pigs, chickens, ducks, and three cows. Moreover, Van caught fish in the three ponds on the property.

At first Van was the only occupant of the farm, and he was sick and weak because of the harsh conditions he had experienced in the re-education centers. Quy continued to live with her family in Saigon although she visited Van occasionally. The operations of the pharmacy had been scaled down by the communists at this time and moreover only family members could be employed there, because Quy's father did not have the cash flow necessary to pay outside workers. This was because a new currency had been issued by the communist regime in July 1975. The new notes were still named "dong" although they were of a different color from the old. As well, the new issue bore a picture of Ho Chi Minh, and the name of the country had been changed. When the new currency came out, the banks froze people's accounts as well, leaving many individuals nearly penniless. However, Quy's father had anticipated these events and had had his money converted to gold before the new notes were issued.

2.2.2 Travails as Refugees Enroute to Canada

Eventually Saigon became too dangerous for the Tho family, primarily because of the repressive policies carried out against the ethnic-Chinese after the deterioration of relations between Hanoi and Peking. Quy now moved out to the farm at Suoi Nghe, along with her children and her sister, brother, and their families.

During this time Van was planning his family's escape from Vietnam. His fears were shared by thousands of other Sino-Vietnamese in the country, which led to their mass-exodus in 1978-79. He was concerned about the measures being initiated against the ethnic-Chinese, and did not know if he would be returned to a re-education center or perhaps to one of the feared New Economic Zones. He was determined to leave the country. He would often travel to nearby villages on the

pretext of selling fish he had caught, and talk to people about the possibility of finding passage on a ship leaving Vietnam.

Ai-Lan remembers attending school in the village. She was in the fifth grade and not happy with her education. She charges that the teachers attempted to brainwash her. They would say "many bad things" about her father, and she in turn "really hated them". She would often avoid going to classes and would be punished by receiving a strapping, or having to do extra duties such as cleaning the school. The only subject she felt she learned at this time was mathematics. Usually the teachers talked about communist theory, and Ai-Lan refused to listen. After having completed the sixth grade she stayed home and helped her parents on the farm. She also worked in a small pharmacy that Quy had started operating in the village.

While living in Suoi Nghe, Van and Quy decided that they had no future in Vietnam. They felt that their movements and actions were constantly monitored by the communists, and they had to watch what they said and to whom. Both were increasingly concerned that they might be forced at any time to relocate in a New Economic Zone. Furthermore, they did not want to raise their children in a country where the schools provided poor quality education and indoctrinated the students in communist beliefs. Moreover, Van and Quy were concerned that Phong and Sy would eventually be drafted into the army when they reached fifteen years of age. Van clearly states that they fled Vietnam for these reasons, and not because they were simply hungry.

The Tran family tried to escape Vietnam three times in 1978 and once in 1979. They were successful on the final attempt. In all cases but the last Van claims not

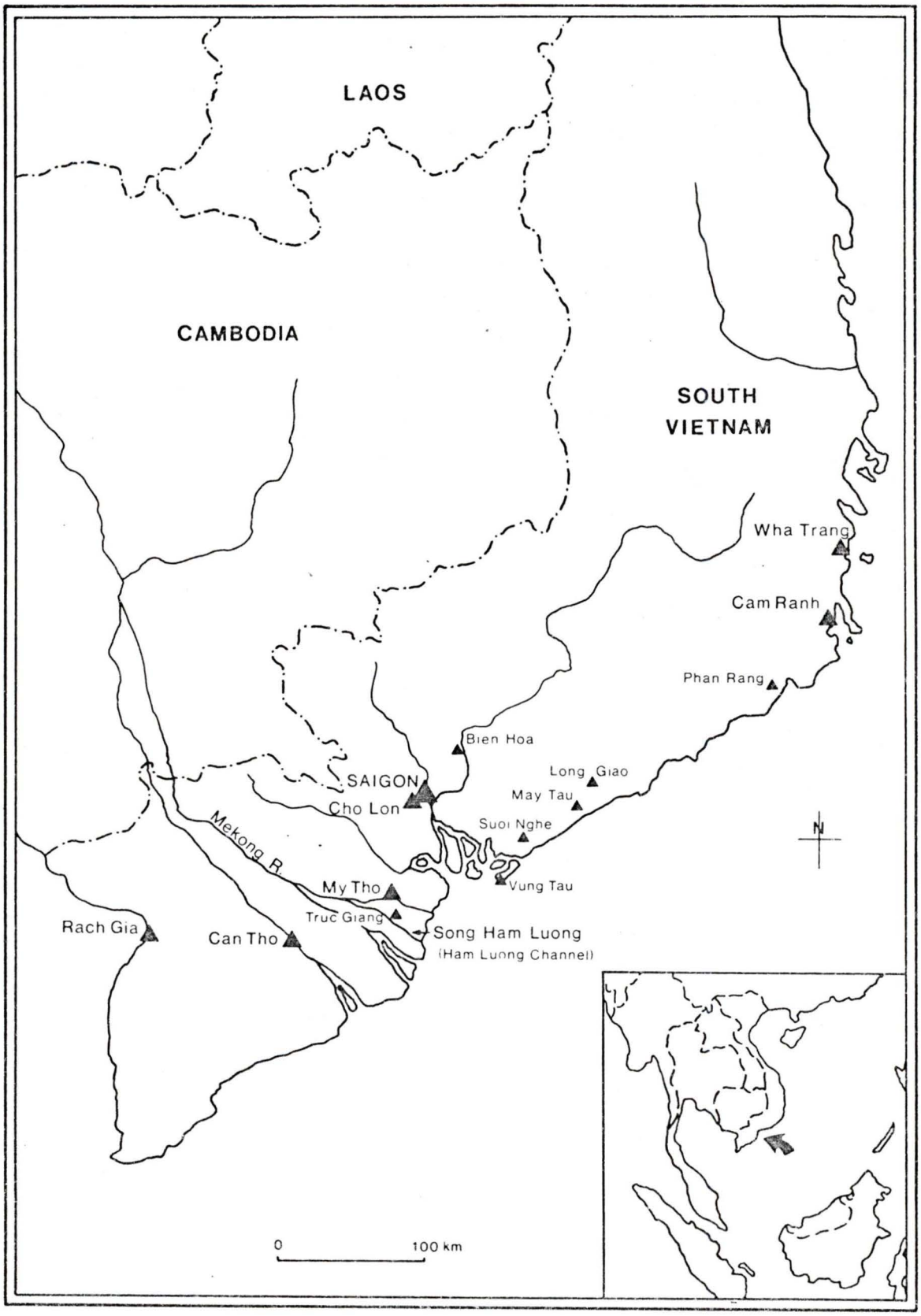
to have known the destination of the ship they proposed to take. The first time the family planned to leave from the town of Rach Gia, but the authorities found out about the escape and stopped it. Van lost two ounces of gold he had put forward as a deposit. The second attempt was to be made at Can Tho, but the plan had been concocted by swindlers and Van again lost a deposit of two ounces of gold. On the third attempt the Trans were prepared to leave from My Tho, but were again stopped by authorities. However, this time Van did not lose any money.

By this time, the authorities in Vietnam began to change their attitude toward the ethnic-Chinese. The government was concerned that the Hoa could become a fifth column in Vietnam, and it also hoped to prop up the declining economy by confiscating the Hoa's money and possessions. Therefore, the authorities began to sanction the exodus of their ethnic-Chinese citizens. When passage was booked on a ship, government officials appropriated twenty percent of the cost while the ship's owners collected the remainder.

As part of a government-approved departure scheme, the Tran family gathered at the city of Ben Tre on January 1 1979. The cost of the voyage was ten ounces of gold for those over fifteen years of age, and seven ounces for children fifteen and under. Ai-Lan remembers the initial part of the voyage as being very exciting. There were several thousand people waiting at the docks near Ben Tre, and the Tran family joined about 120 others on a small boat which took them out to sea. The boat was approximately twenty-five meters in length and powered by an in-board motor. Ai-Lan recalls that it was much like the fishing boats on the west coast of Canada, which she would later see in pictures. The boat was not

overcrowded although Van remembers that some of the others had as many as three hundred people on board and seemed in danger of capsizing. On the voyage out to sea, along the Ham Luong Channel, Van and Sy were very seasick while the other family members were not. They continued out to sea overnight and rendezvoused in the morning with a large cargo ship. This turned out to be a 3600 tonne freighter named *Skyluck*. The Tran family had brought their own food and water because they were unsure of the duration of the voyage, and they made a place for themselves and their possessions on one of the three levels of lower decks. Conditions were very cramped, but Ai-Lan says they were "thinking of the future". She was both frightened and excited about being on a ship for the first time, and leaving Vietnam. Van recalls being physically ill from worry. Newspaper reports from the time indicate that the *Skyluck* left its anchorage off the port city of Vung Tao on January 24, 1979, with 2630 people on board. See the map on the following page for the locations mentioned in these paragraphs.

The voyage was somewhat confusing for the Tran family, perhaps because they were not in a position to obtain information about the movements of the ship. Van remembers that one night the Captain of the ship came down to their section of the hold and told the people there to leave the ship. After some discussion they decided to stay on board, but they had to give up half of their possessions as a bribe. According to Van, about seven hundred people disembarked including one of Quy's cousins who eventually settled in France. Most of those who left the ship were young men because the refugees were afraid that women and children might be attacked. It took most of the night for the seven hundred people to be offloaded. Newspaper accounts indicate that the *Skyluck* was intercepted by a


LAOS
CAMBODIA
SOUTH VIETNAM
Wha Trang
Cam Ranh
Phan Rang
Bien Hoa
Long Giao
May Tau
Suoi Nghe
SAIGON
Cho Lon
Mekong R.
My Tho
Truc Giang
Vung Tau
Rach Gia
Can Tho
Song Ham Luong
(Ham Luong Channel)
N
0
100 km

Philippines coastguard cutter near Palawan island on January 31st, and ordered to leave the area. The ship's crew headed the *Skyluck* out to sea but turned around after dark and returned to Palawan island with the intention of leaving all the passengers there. However, at daybreak two vessels appeared and the Captain of the *Skyluck*, believing they were coastguard boats, took his ship quickly back to international waters and sailed for Hong Kong.[60]

Van states that the voyage from Vietnam to Hong Kong took eighteen days while the references cited indicated that it took twenty-seven.[61] They arrived in the British colony at night and anchored near the Star Ferry. Ai-Lan remembers that all the lights made the city look beautiful. The Trans celebrated their arrival by eating all of their remaining supply of food. Their relief was somewhat premature, however. The authorities in Hong Kong denied the refugees permission to land, and towed the ship to a new anchorage off the west coast of Lamma Island. The refugees stayed on the ship until June 24th. Van states that the officials in Hong Kong lied to them, telling the refugees they would only be on board for a few weeks before being processed for resettlement.

Van remembers living on the *Skyluck* for about six months although in fact it was slightly less than five.[62] He says living conditions were very poor, with so many people crammed together in close quarters. Food was brought to the ship every second day, along with fresh water. Even so, there never seemed to be enough of either necessity. Each person was allowed a meagre portion of rice and hot water as well as one sandwich and biscuit per day. The cooking was done in forty-five gallon drums, and Van claims that he will always remember the taste and smell of diesel fuel in the food. To keep clean, everyone had to bathe in the

ocean which was another awkward aspect of their life on the ship. There was also boredom, with which the Trans had to cope. It was very hot in the spring and early summer and the ship was too crowded to allow for easy movement. Van spent many hours simply watching the ocean and contemplating the future. He also remembers the constant hubbub aboard ship which was heightened when groups of refugees sang and danced to relieve the boredom and perhaps their anxieties.

For the children the experience of living on the *Skyluck* was better. Sy, who was six at the time, only vaguely remembers the ship. Phong was nine and says he "didn't mind" the experience because he could play with the numerous other children on board. Ai-Lan was eleven and recalls the experience as beneficial. She learned to endure hardships, which helped her to mature emotionally. These hardships also made her appreciate the quality of her life in Canada when she was later relocated there.

Eventually the refugees on board the *Skyluck* decided to force the authorities to act. On June 29, 1979, they cut the ship's anchor and the vessel drifted with the tide, onto the rocks of Lamma Island.

The Tran family was taken, along with the other *Skyluck* refugees, to a detention center on Chi Ma Wan island. Van and his sons were relegated to one section of the camp and Quy and Ai-Lan to another. They were told that the center had formerly been used to hold Japanese soldiers after their surrender in 1945, but they were not sure if this was true. Ai-Lan remembers the camp as being "beautiful". Although there was a fence around the compound, the camp was clean and the surrounds contained many trees. Conditions were still rather crowded and primitive, but it was vastly better than life on the ship. The Trans slept on three-

tiered bunks in rooms that held about 120 people. Also, the water was turned on for only two or three hours a day and the toilet facilities were not adequate for so many people. Consequently it was difficult to keep clean and unpleasant odors permeated the rooms. Food was plentiful, however; Chinese-style soup, rice, and chicken dishes as well as bread were served in ample quantities. The occupants of each room lined up in turn with their bowls and were served from a central kitchen. They ate their meals in their rooms or in the compound. The refugees had to eat their fill of the food served in the camp as there were no opportunities to purchase other provisions. Quy states that the guards, who were from the regular Hong Kong police force, were initially strict but that they later turned friendly as everyone followed the rules. For the first three or four days the refugees were not allowed to leave the grounds of the camp, and they spent the time settling in and keeping their rooms as clean as possible. Phong remembers that the camp was "like a jail". However, he was not afraid because his father was with him. Van adds that he did not like the guards because they ordered the refugees about unnecessarily.

The Tran family stayed in this camp for three months. They were told while there to choose three countries in order of priority from a list of five offering resettlement placements. At this time Van received a reply to a letter he had written from camp to a friend in Canada. His friend recommended Canada, stating that employment opportunities seemed promising, that the country had a mixture of ethnic groups, and that there was a relatively low level of prejudice. In view of this Van listed Canada, Australia, and England in order of preference on his form, and left out the U.S. and France.

Van was very concerned at this time about communist infiltrators in the Chi Ma Wan camp. He claims that several ex-ARVN officers were killed by them during this period. Van responded to this threat by keeping very quiet about himself, saying that he had been "just a soldier". Even when he went for his first personal interview at the Canadian Embassy in Hong Kong, he was suspicious of the Chinese people working there. Initially he did not want to talk to the female Chinese officer dealing with his application until she had established her identity as a legitimate member of the embassy staff.

After being accepted for placement in Canada, the Tran family was moved to a second camp located in Kowloon. This one was leased by the Canadian government and was a former medium-security prison for Hong Kong's criminals. There were approximately 700 refugees in this center, all destined for Canada. Although the family had been reunited, they did not find this camp attractive. It was set in a rather bleak, treeless urban setting near the Kai Tak airport. There were insects in the camp dormitories, and many flies in the hot, damp, crowded rooms. As well, there were only two toilets in their section of the camp and one had to line up in order to use them. Because they were overused, there were fetid odors throughout the building. Furthermore, the water was only turned on for a few hours each day so the refugees were unable to wash thoroughly. There were bars over the windows, too. As well, the family had to use identification cards for entry and exit through the main gate. Moreover, they were restricted as to when they were allowed to leave, and those under eighteen years of age could not go out unescorted on weekends.

All these factors made the Tran family feel as though they were in a prison. The food was of poor quality as well. The vegetables used were often old and sometimes spoiled, and the Trans would often find flies in the food. Eventually Van decided to go out and buy food, and combined this with the rice they were given at the camp.

Van states that the authorities in Hong Kong refused to allow all of the family members to leave the camp at one time, as they were afraid that because the family was ethnic-Chinese they would try to stay in Hong Kong rather than go on to Canada. Van claims that many ethnic-Chinese Vietnamese have relations in Hong Kong who could help them settle there. Indeed, Quy had distant relatives there. However, Van was not interested in staying in the colony because of the disadvantages of life there, and he had learned that the lease from the People's Republic of China would expire in 1997 and that the future would be insecure. Also, there were many communists there and Van was vehemently opposed to living amongst them. Moreover, Canada seemed to offer much more in the way of support services for refugees and the prospect of a good life. Therefore, Van was determined to go on to settle in Canada.

Their departure, though, was delayed because Van fell sick, and the Canadian authorities would not allow him to leave in such a condition. The Trans therefore spent a total of three months in this second camp. In the meantime they learned something about Canada. Ai-Lan states that she thought Canada was an ancient and impoverished country when she lived in Vietnam, because during her schooling there little mention was made of western countries. In the camp they were shown films about Canada to help prepare them for life there. Ai-Lan says these films

often portrayed Canada in the winter when the country looked bleak and unpopulated. The Trans were dismayed by these images and many of their friends bemoaned their choice of Canada as a resettlement destination.

In November 1979, the Tran family left Hong Kong for Canada. Ai-Lan was happy to leave because many of her friends had already departed. Even so, she and her brothers liked Hong Kong, though not the second refugee camp. Van and Quy were relieved to be leaving at last, but were worried about their future. They did not know what to expect in Canada. They bought some preserved black mushrooms and sunflower seeds for consumption on the flight, as well as a large supply of ginseng and Chinese vitamins for future use. However, the airport authorities in Hong Kong confiscated these goods. Van laments this as some of the items he had to surrender were very expensive. The chartered airliner which carried them made a refueling stop in Japan, and finally put down at the international airport of a major city in western Canada after an eighteen hour flight.

[1] *Refugees*, "How Many And Where," May 1985, p. 24.

[2] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 261.

[3] *Refugees*, "How Many," p. 25.

[4] Ibid.

[5] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 269.

[6] Ibid., p. 267..

[7] Gail Paradise Kelly, *From Vietnam to America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), p. 42.

[8] Ibid., p. 41..

[9] Stone and McGowan, *Wrapped*, p. 113.

[10] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 254.

[11] *Refugees*, "How Many," p. 25.

[12] Aaron Levenstein, *Escape to Freedom* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 263.

[13] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 254.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Levenstein, *Escape to Freedom*, p. 269.

[16] Judith Bentley, *American Immigration Today* (New York: Julian Messner, 1981), p. 85.

[17] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 252.

[18] Bentley, *American Immigration Today*, p. 85.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Levenstein, *Escape to Freedom*, p. 288.

[21] Department of Planning and Economic Development, *The State of Hawaii Data Book, 1982* (Honolulu: Government Printing Office, 1982), p. 511.

[22] Bentley, *American Immigration Today*, p. 90.

[23] Ibid., p. 85.

[24] Ibid., p. 88.

[25] Howard Adelman et. al., "Canadian Policy on Indochinese Refugees," in *Southeast Asian Exodus: From Tradition to Resettlement*, p. 138.

[26] Ibid., pp. 140-41.

[27] C. Michael Lanphier, "Canada's Response to Refugees," *International Migration Review* 15 (Spring-Summer 1981): 117.

[28] Adelman et. al., "Canadian Policy," p. 147.

[29] Ibid., p. 145.

[30] Ibid., p. 146.

[31] Ibid.

[32] *Canadian News Facts*, November 18 1978, p. 2048.

[33] Immigration Program Division, Program Evaluation Branch, Strategic Policy and Planning, *Evaluation of the 1979-80 Indochinese Refugee Program* (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, April 1982), p.ii.

[34] Ibid., p. iii.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 1.

[37] *Canadian News Facts*, July 16 1979, p. 2171.

[38] Policy and Program Development Branch, Immigration, *Refugee Perspectives 1984-1985* (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, May 1984), p. 38.

[39] Adelman et. al., "Canadian Policy," p. 141.

[40] Immigration Program Division, *Evaluation*, p. 1.

[41] Hugh McCullum, *The Least of These* (Toronto: The United Church Observer, 1982), p. 20.

[42] Immigration Program Division, *Evaluation*, p. 33.

[43] Policy and Program Development Branch, *Refugee Perspectives 1984-1985*, p. 42.

[44] Lanphier, "Canada's Response," p. 121.

[45] Ibid., p. 128.

[46] Immigration Program Division, *Evaluation*, p. 31.

[47] D.P.A. Consulting Ltd., *Evaluation of the Indochinese Refugee Group Sponsorship Program* (Ottawa, prepared for Employment and Immigration Canada, February 1982), p. 23.

[48] Ibid., p. 25.

[49] Lanphier, "Canada's Response," p. 121.

[50] Immigration Program Division, *Evaluation*, p. 15.

[51] Carol Bruman, "Boat People in a new land," *MacLean's*, October 3 1983, p. 19.

[52] Kwok B. Chan and Lawrence Lam, "Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese Refugees in Montreal, Canada: Some Socio-psychological Problems and Dilemmas," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (V. 15 no. 1, 1983): 5.

[53] Bruman, "Boat People in a new land," p. 19.

[54] Howard Adelman, "Refugee Sponsorship and Backlash," in *The Indochinese Refugee Movement*, ed. Howard Adelman (Toronto: Operation Lifeline, 1979), p. 88.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., p. 96.

[57] Ken Becker, "The people who need people," *MacLean's*, August 20 1979, p. 13.

[58] Ibid., p. 16.

[59] Policy and Program Development Branch, *Refugee Perspectives 1984-1985*, p. 3.

[60] Grant, *The Boat People*, pp. 127-28.

[61] St. Cartmail, *Exodus Indochina*, p. 102.

[62] Ibid., p. 103.

Chapter III

A NEW LIFE IN CANADA: REACTIONS AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

3.1 Initial Reactions to the Canadian Scene

3.1.1 Reception and Settlement in Brownvale

The Tran family was filled with anticipation as they arrived in Canada on a cold November day. When the doors of the airplane were opened on landing at the airport, Van could clearly see that it was snowing outside. The passengers nearest the exits did not want to leave the aircraft because of the snow and the other passengers did not understand the delay. A good deal of confusion ensued. When the Tran family eventually left the airplane, Van was fascinated by the snow, which he had never seen before. He also recalls how surprised he was by the cold.

The refugees boarded a bus directly from the aircraft and were taken to a processing center on the outskirts of the city. Van believes it was formerly a part of an army base, and found it clean and comfortable. The Trans stayed in this camp for four days awaiting clearance by the immigration authorities. The family members were impressed at how friendly people were to them. Ai-Lan remembers that an initial problem for her was coping with jet-lag. She found herself waking up hungry in the middle of the night but could not find any food. During the day everyone was fed in a cafeteria. Ai-Lan was also thrilled about using a washing

machine. The Trans had had one in Vietnam, but the communist agents had confiscated it before she was old enough to use the machine. Also at this time the family was issued with new winter clothing, because they, like most of the refugees, were unprepared for the cold weather.

The Trans found the language barrier to be a significant problem at this time. There were only a few translators in the camp and they were overworked, so communication was difficult. For example, immigration authorities asked Van to sign many different forms. Van complied although he had no idea what he was signing and did not really care. Partially because of their very poor command of the English language the Trans had a feeling they would be resettled in Vancouver. They were happy at the prospect because they had heard there were many ethnic-Chinese living there, and that the climate was relatively mild. Moreover, the family wanted to live in a large urban center. However, this was not to be.

On the fourth day after their arrival, the Trans met two members of their sponsoring group who had driven to the transit camp in their stationwagon from "Brownvale", a town located approximately 100 kilometers from the city. The name Brownvale has been adopted in order to conceal the whereabouts of the refugee family in question. The Trans were piled into the stationwagon and, with their luggage secured on the roofrack, the group left the camp. The Trans thought they were going to be driven to their new home in the city. They were reasonably happy about this prospect because the city was indeed a large one. But, as they left the city behind them, Van and Quy began to worry. They could not communicate with their hosts and had no idea of their destination. At one point during the trip the stationwagon turned into a farmyard because the luggage on the roofrack

needed adjusting. The Trans jumped to the conclusion that the farm was to be their home and were dismayed, for they had been city folk all along and did not relish the countryside.

Eventually the Trans arrived in Brownvale, a town of approximately 10,000 people. They were taken directly to a cafe run by a local Chinese for dinner. Van was very relieved when he found he could speak with the proprietor of the restaurant. He felt that if one ethnic-Chinese family could live in the town then he and his family could as well. While the Trans were eating dinner reporters from the local newspapers arrived to take pictures of the family. Ai-Lan found this embarrassing as it caused everyone in the restaurant to stare at them. After dinner the family was taken to a duplex that their sponsors had secured for them. It was a humble abode but clean and the Trans were immensely relieved to have finally found a home. The date was November 9th, 1979.

3.1.2 The Details of Sponsorship

The Trans were the first refugee family to be sponsored by the United Church in Brownvale, and a committee had been formed several months before their arrival. The committee was responsible for a fund-raising drive to help the newcomers. The United Church, as mentioned in Chapter II, had a special arrangement with the Federal government whereby the national church organization would cover debts incurred by local churches. This gave the church in Brownvale the confidence to go ahead with their sponsorship plans.

The committee was composed of thirty-five people from the congregation. A chairman and co-chairman were elected, and the remaining people were divided into four groups. The first group was responsible for raising sufficient funds. The

second group organized housing, furniture, and clothing. The third was assigned the task of arranging classes in basic English and providing assistance in general orientation while the fourth group was responsible for the placement of the Tran children in schools and for finding employment for the adults. When the Trans arrived, therefore, most arrangements were well in hand. The house was well-stocked with foodstuffs, kitchen utensils, and furniture. A job had been arranged for Van, English lessons were scheduled, and a local school was expecting the children. Much of the later success of the Tran family with respect to integration can be attributed to the efforts of the well-organized and supportive sponsoring group.

The initial stages of settlement were challenging for both the Trans and their sponsor. There were numerous tasks to be carried out in order to bring the family into the mainstream of life in Canada. Following government regulations, the Trans had to undergo physical examinations and be given the necessary vaccinations by the local health unit. Optometrists tested each member of the family, and dentists had much work to do on badly-neglected teeth. Van and Quy were assigned social insurance numbers so that they could legally seek work. Quy had to fill out forms to receive a family allowance, and Van was instructed to take out insurance policies providing coverage on his life and household possessions. All of the foregoing was rather bewildering to the Trans, but their sponsors helped make a difficult task somewhat easier.

The Trans also had to learn new domestic skills. Their sponsor had to show them how to operate household appliances, and even simple things often taken as commonplace by most Canadians such as individual room thermostats or a flush toilet had to be explained. The Trans had to learn how, where, and when to pay

their bills, shop for groceries, and dispose of their garbage. Sorting out their mail was particularly confusing as they had difficulty distinguishing between personal letters and official mail on the one hand and official-looking "junk" mail on the other. Government forms which arrived were perplexing and the sponsors had to explain their significance. Overall there was a myriad of details to be learned. It may be that because the Trans are intelligent, industrious, and ambitious, as reflected in their economic success in Vietnam, that they were able to learn these skills quickly and with little difficulty.

Financially, the Trans became independent of their sponsor after only three months, but psychological dependence continued. Even after they received their citizenship in 1983 the family felt dependent on the church group. Even today, they continue to maintain a close relationship with certain members of their sponsoring committee. For example, the Trans spend every Christmas with one family who will be referred to as the "Johnsons". They obviously feel a tremendous sense of gratitude and personal debt to them. This is reflected in a number of extravagant presents they have given the Johnsons from time to time, these including a stereo and an expensive jade bracelet. Moreover, despite repeated queries by the writer, none of the Trans would make any adverse comments with respect to their sponsors.

3.1.3 Schooling of the Children

The Tran children began school within a few days of arriving in Brownvale. Ai-Lan and Phong were admitted to grades four and three respectively while Sy entered kindergarten. All three children were older than their classmates but their sponsors felt that this would make their adaptation to the school system in

Canada easier. Ai-Lan remembers being frightened on her first day of school. She and Phong felt out of place because they were the only orientals in their classes. Moreover, they could not converse with their classmates nor with their teachers. However, they felt that everyone treated them well; they said that no one laughed at them or called them names. The other children showed them around the school and communicated with them using a simple form of sign language. In Ai-Lan's class her teacher started her off on a first-grade level English text and then took her through the lessons at a leisurely pace. Ai-Lan also learned English using materials from a correspondence course. Soon after the Trans arrived in Brownvale a "Teacher of English as a Second Language" was hired to give lessons to the increasing number of refugee children in the school system, and this program was of real benefit to Ai-Lan and Phong. Moreover, they learned English fairly quickly because of their close contact with their classmates and the need to use this language in the community. Indeed, one of the comments on an early report card for Ai-Lan was that she talked too much. This would seem to indicate that she had learned English quickly. Moreover, it suggests that Ai-Lan had begun to adopt some of the practises of Canadian children of her age. Phong was an excellent student who quickly surpassed his sister in achievement and became one of the best students in his class. He stated that achieving high grades in his classes was relatively easy as compared to Saigon. He was also of the opinion that because he earned good grades his teachers expected more of him, and this has in turn encouraged him to strive even harder.

There is much support for education within the Tran family. Van considers the educational system to be of high quality, and respects the teachers. This is

perhaps a reflection of the traditional Vietnamese attitude wherein educators are held in high esteem; they are often ranked ahead of parents in this context. Van would like his three children to attend university eventually. Phong is now the best student in his class. Ai-Lan maintains a B average, and Sy about the same. In Sy's case, these grades are a result of being tutored several times a week by a retired school teacher. He spends perhaps fifteen hours per week doing additional assignments, and his parents do not allow him to stop until his tutor has stated that he has mastered his lessons. This heavy workload is a further reflection of the importance which Van places on education.

3.1.4 Adapting to a New Physical Environment

The Trans had experienced neither extreme cold nor snow before coming to Canada although they had heard rumours about the harsh climate while in Hong Kong. Van detested the cold weather in Brownvale when he first arrived. Saigon has an annual mean temperature of 27.5^0 C.[1] while the figure for Brownvale is 3.5^0 C.[2] Moreover, the range in temperature varies between the two countries. In Saigon, the lowest seasonal temperature, based on the mean of the average daily minimum and maximum temperatures, is approximately 26^0 C. while the highest is 30^0 C.[3] In Brownvale, the figures are -21.9^0 C. and 22.8^0 C. respectively.[4] It is not surprising therefore that the Trans were shocked by the relatively low temperatures. Over the past six years Van has come to like the snow but he still does not relish the long, cold winters in western Canada. Quy and Ai-Lan share this attitude although the two boys claim that they do not find the winters particularly arduous. It is interesting to note that after a trip to Dallas in July of 1985 Van and Quy found the weather there unbearably hot, even though the mean

temperature in Saigon is the same in that month.[5] The Trans seem to have adapted somewhat to the climate in western Canada over the last six years.

Van has noticed a number of contrasts in landscape between the Mekong delta region and the area around Brownvale. He recalls that the area within a one hundred kilometer radius of Saigon was quite flat whereas the Brownvale area has gently undulating terrain. The natural vegetation found in the Saigon region is predominantly of the dipterocarp type. Large trees form a canopy, under which are found various species of vines and creepers. Bamboo thickets are commonplace. Cultivated tree crops in this region consist of planted or self-propagated perennials, including *cay dua* (coconut), *chuoi* (banana), *du du* (papaya), *xoai* (mango), and *wan* (plum). In the Brownvale region the vegetation is much different. Natural vegetation includes short grass, and bushes such as wild rose, saskatoon, chokecherry, pincherry, and raspberry. These are interspersed with stands of birch and aspen poplar. Spruce trees are commonly found on north-facing valley slopes, and willows grow along stream banks. There are a few varieties of cultivated fruit trees, including apple, crabapple, plum, and Nanking cherry. Moreover, vegetation introduced to the area for decorative purposes includes caragana, mountain ash, cedar, pine, and cotoneaster. Field crops, which dominate the rural landscape, most commonly are wheat, canola, barley, oats, rye, alfalfa, and flax.

Van describes the soils in the lowland area around Saigon as being black or grey. He is in this case obviously referring to the alluvial or humic soils in the deltaic region. He describes the soils in the higher interfluve areas as being red and white, and this is no doubt a reference to the lateritic soils found in such areas. On the other hand, when he states that the soils of the Brownvale region are

uniformly black, he is recognizing the pedocalic, i.e. chernozem soils of the region.

There are few wild animals in either the region of Saigon or Brownvale. However, in the jungles in South Vietnam there are elephants, black bears, and panthers. Van often saw these animals while he was flying close to the ground in helicopters. None of these animals nor the ubiquitous snakes of Vietnam are found in the Brownvale area.

Van had an opportunity to see relatively unsettled areas of Vietnam while flying over them in helicopters. He observed the land as being fairly untouched. However, in retrospect he believes that most of these regions were relatively settled as compared to the vast uninhabitated regions of Canada. He notes the land immediately surrounding Brownvale is not as intensely cultivated as was the land near Saigon, and that the field patterns are also different in this country; he is amazed at the large size of the fields and the extensive cultivation of wheat. On the other hand, in South Vietnam the fields were much smaller and often consisted of flooded rice paddies, and in this context he misses the numerous water buffalos on the land. He also recalls that there were many more roads, canals, small bridges, and telephone poles in the area around Saigon, whereas in the region around his new home in Brownvale there are more fences, railway tracks, and powerlines.

The seasonal changes in the color of the landscape around Brownvale is a novelty too, for the green of spring and early summer turns to the yellows and browns of late summer and autumn, and then to the white of winter. It was initially a source of both amazement and confusion to Van to observe the seasonal changes in

the color of the landscape around Brownvale. In South Vietnam the changes were hardly of much concern: a monotonous green over much of the year, with perhaps a scattering of shades of yellow during the drier months.

Some fruits and vegetables are common to both regions. These include pumpkins, onions, tomatoes, peas, cucumbers, corn, carrots, cauliflower, and cabbage. However, turnips and asparagus are not grown in South Vietnam. Garlic and green peppers are grown in South Vietnam whereas in Canada these are generally imported or grown in hothouses.

To sum up, the Trans found the landscape generally to be much different in their new homeland, and the family had difficulty in adapting to it, particularly because the "urban" landscape of a small town such as Brownvale gives way quickly to the vast "countryside".

3.2 Considerations Pertaining to Material Well-Being

3.2.1 Employment and Finances

Van began work after only five days in Brownvale. His first job as a gas station attendant paid $3.50 per hour. The service station was owned and operated by a Korean family who had immigrated to Canada in 1973, and the Trans' sponsors may have thought that the arrangements made were suitable because as orientals both parties would perhaps have much in common, and that this factor would make Van's integration into the workforce easier. The sponsors were also aware that Van had worked in a motorpool back in Vietnam and may perhaps have felt that work in a service station would be to his liking. It seems, however, that Van was not happy with the situation. He disliked working outside in the cold

weather; his eyes turned red and his hands froze from the wind and low temperatures. Then, after two weeks a relative of the Korean family appeared, and he was given Van's position. Van was not disappointed at this turn of events.

Van immediately began a new job, washing dishes in a local hotel. He preferred this work because it was indoors. Initially he earned $3.50 per hour and when he left after two and a half years his hourly wage had increased to $3.75. At the same time as Van started washing dishes he took on a second job in the hotel as a janitor, and this provided him with an additional four to five hours of work each day at the same rate of pay.

Two months after his arrival, the Trans' sponsors found Van a job as a janitor in the local high school, where he worked an eight hour shift at an initial wage of $6.00 per hour. This meant that Van worked at three jobs at the same time, and he did so for a year and a half. His schedule was hectic. He worked at his dishwashing job from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., then went to the school, located only a few blocks from the hotel, and worked there until midnight. And, he then returned to the hotel to clean the building until 4 or 5 a.m. He would then return home for a few hours of rest before beginning his 18 hour work day again. Van says he worked so hard when he first came to Brownvale because he had trouble adjusting to living in Canada, and had difficulties in sleeping well. Since he was so restless, and wanted to become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible, he worked as much as he could. Indeed, his income at this time was approximately $20,000 per year. After a year and a half he quit his work as a hotel janitor, and a year later gave up his dishwashing job. He now relies on his job as janitor at the high school, where after nearly six years service he now earns $10.16 an hour over an

eight hour work day. His record of hard work and attendant success has indeed been remarkable.

Quy remained at home for the first year; she claims that she could not find employment. This is questionable because there were numerous low-paying jobs available in the community at that time. A more likely explanation might be that she felt nervous about going out to work alone in Brownvale, and that it took her awhile to learn enough English to enable her to associate more freely with people and feel more at ease when she needed to look for work in town. Moreover, with Van working so many hours, she needed to remain home some of the time to care for the children. Eventually Quy took a job as a kitchen helper in a local hotel, although not the one in which her husband worked. She stayed at this job for four and a half years, working between five and seven hours per day. Initially she earned $3.50 per hour and, after four years, $4.50 per hour.

At the present time all of the family members are employed in one job or another, and they tend to help each other at their respective jobs. Van continues as a janitor in the high school. Quy is employed as a caretaker in the United Church where she works five hours a day at $7.00 per hour. Van, however, does this job for her over most of the year. During the school vacation periods Van works at the school during the day, while Quy does the daytime chores at the church. This exchange of jobs perhaps reduces the total income tax they must pay. Moreover, Van still prefers to work many hours each day because it keeps him from thinking too much about Vietnam, which he misses intensely. He says he has no trouble finding employment because he is willing to work for wages which other Canadians consider too low. Quy, meanwhile, has a second job as a janitor

at the local theater, for which she is paid $4.00 per hour and works five hours every day of the week, at various times of the day. Phong and Sy help her with this but they receive no wages. Ai-Lan works at the theater as well, selling candy and popcorn. She earns $4.00 per hour and works approximately twenty hours each week. Finally, Phong and Sy both deliver newspapers.

The total family income is substantial. Van earns $1637 per month for his work at the school and $700 per month as church janitor, while Quy earns $560 per month for her work at the theater. Their combined gross income is then about $3000 per month. In addition, Ai-Lan makes about $300 per month at her job while Phong and Sy each earn approximately $100 per month. The children receive no allowance from the parents, but retain their earnings to buy clothes and purchase various luxuries. The Tran family undoubtedly have the financial resources to obtain all the required material comforts. They have attained a comparatively high standard of living in just seven years, and these circumstances have enabled them to make many social contacts and establish themselves speedily in Brownvale.

Van and Quy spend most of the money they earn. Car and house payments, and outlays on utilities, gasoline, food and clothing account for the bulk of their expenditures. Van says that emphasis on saving money is a Chinese trait because the history of hardship in that country compelled people to do so. He claims that he is not overly concerned with saving money, because people in South Vietnam had a relatively easy life in the past and did not have to worry about an uncertain economic future. In this respect he is no doubt thinking of the status of his own family and not in general terms, for there were undoubtedly numerous poor people

in that country. Nevertheless, Van and Quy have been saving some money to ensure that Ai-Lan will have a dowry and that all their children will be able to attend university. For the last four years they have been paying $150 a month into an insurance company savings plan. Van puts in $50, Quy adds $40, and the children contribute $20 each. Van does not mind making due provision for his children's education, but expects his children to look after him and Quy when they are old. In this respect, the traditional expectations that the children will look after their parents in old age have enabled Van and Quy to concentrate on furthering their interests as middle if not upper-middle class citizens without worrying unduly about saving large sums of money for their later years.

Quy continues to make the financial decisions of the family, as she did in Vietnam. However, the entire family meets to discuss major purchases such as an automobile, so that everyone has some input. Van feels this is necessary because the decisions directly affect all members of the family. This joint approach to domestic issues is different from traditional Vietnamese practises and the new values may be consequent on the close bonds which developed between the parents and the children during those trying days as refugees. The changed value system could perhaps also be attributed to the fact that Quy came from a more sophisticated social background, and that she was used to making decisions. Indeed, Van and Quy's marriage seemed to follow a matrilocal pattern, an unusual arrangement in Vietnam. For example, though most financial decisions were made by men in traditional Vietnamese society, Quy had been in charge of the family's money since her marriage to Van.

Van feels that it was much easier to make money on the side in Vietnam than in Canada. The acceptance of bribes and the illicit selling of army equipment were both lucrative activities, and besides, the pharmacy operated by his wife's family, the Tho's, was very profitable. Van claims that he would now rather work for his money. Van made less money in absolute terms in Vietnam than he does now in Canada. But, because of the low cost of living in Vietnam, he claims he was financially more successful there. On the other hand, he recognizes that Canada is politically stable and that the economy is healthier, and as such that there is much opportunity here. Therefore, Van feels that life is better in Canada than it was in Vietnam despite his lower financial and social standing in this country. Indeed, he is content with his present work and has no desire to change jobs. Rather, he wants to maintain a steady income such that all of his children may eventually attend university. The appreciation of the opportunity for an improved life here is perhaps one of the significant factors which has led to the comparatively smooth integration of the Trans into Canadian society.

The Trans maintain accounts in a local bank. Van was conversant with the chequing and credit systems when he arrived. In Vietnam the Tho family had used banking facilities in their pharmacy business, as Vietnamese of means, and they were familiar with the practises of the foreign banks established by the French and Americans. However, Van has some Vietnamese friends in Canada who were not familiar with banks when they arrived here, and this caused them numerous problems. These difficulties were especially acute with respect to the use of credit cards.

Van does not like borrowing from banking institutions, however. Once he wrote a cheque without having secured a loan to cover it. This caused him much embarrassment, even though the bank manager later apologized and admitted that the error had been made by the bank. Recently, when the Trans bought a new car, Van took out a loan directly from the manufacturer, even though their interest rates were somewhat higher than those offered by the bank. He adds that an additional reason for doing so was that banks pry into one's personal affairs too much when lending money.

To sum up, there are some differences among the members of the Tran family regarding their spending patterns. Van is occasionally upset at his children's insistence on buying extremely expensive high-quality goods when less expensive choices are available. Although he regards their use of money rather frivolous at times, he refrains from interfering too much with the manner in which they spend personal earnings. Van also feels that his children put too much emphasis on the importance of money. This may be a result of having experienced deprivation as refugees, or perhaps is a reflection of an age difference or an indication that the Tran children are more acculturated to Canadian values than their parents.

3.2.2 The Search for Acceptable Housing

As previously mentioned, the Trans were initially settled in a duplex by their sponsor. The other half of the building was occupied by another Sino-Vietnamese refugee family, and conflicts between them prompted the Trans to leave this domicile in 1981 and move into a townhouse-style apartment on the northern edge of Brownvale. This apartment had been constructed in the early 1960's and was poorly insulated. In the winter the upper bedrooms were very cold and the family

had to sleep together in the living room to keep warm. Their new neighborhood was working-class, as had been their previous one. Their neighbors included an employee of an electrical-supply store, and a salesman for a car dealership. Both were of Caucasian descent. Van found these people to be friendly and helpful, and he developed friendships with them.

Following the winter of 1981-82, the Trans decided to secure new accommodation. Van discussed his circumstances with an English-Canadian acquaintance who was a teacher and part-time realtor. He trusted him as his church had sponsored and successfully resettled an Indochinese refugee family. Consequently, following the advice of this man, Van purchased a lot on the northern edge of Brownvale. It was in a working class area of town and cost $17,000. Van also hired a general contractor to build a three bedroom bungalow of approximately 140 m^2.

The Trans decided to purchase a new house rather than an old one for several reasons. First, Van did not feel he knew enough about house construction to ensure that he would find a well-insulated building that was in a good state of repair. Second, he could obtain a subsidy from the provincial government by purchasing a new dwelling. In total, the land and house cost $63,000. The initial mortgage of approximately $57,000 was at seventeen percent. The payments were $450 per month, relatively low because of the monthly government subsidy of $383. Later, when Quy began working this subsidy was reduced, and the payments rose to $700 a month. Presently, the Trans pay $640 per month on a mortgage of approximately $53,000 at an interest rate of twelve percent.

The decision to have a new house built and the trust they put in the teacher as well as the contractor who helped them is perhaps indicative of the increasing level of integration of the Tran family. They identified themselves with the Canadian ideal of owning a home, and were willing to put their trust in Canadians in this important matter.

The Trans now have many of the common labor-saving devices found in numerous Canadian homes, including a new fridge and stove and a microwave oven. They also own a stereo, a video tape recorder, and an elaborate color television; the latter item, though, was a gift from Quy's brother who lives in San Francisco. The pictures on the walls are either Chinese or Vietnamese in style. Furniture in the house is western-style and is Canadian-made. The house has a full basement which is partially furnished. Phong has his bedroom here, and there is also a laundry room containing an automatic washer and dryer. Generally, Van and Quy feel that their home is not much different from those of their neighbors.

Van and Quy claim that they do not aspire to own a larger residence. Van in particular feels they have ample living space, and he enjoys having separate rooms for the kitchen, living room, and dining room. Van had developed a sentimental attachment to his house already, and looks upon it as a symbol of the good luck he has had in Canada. He is proud to own such a residence, moreso because when he and his family arrived in 1979 they owned practically nothing. If he were to have sufficient money, Van claims that he would move to the countryside. This is a significant change from his earlier fear of being isolated on a farm. He reasons that this would be quieter than living in town and that the well-water in the country would be superior to the piped water in Brownvale. Van feels that water qual-

ity is very important for one's health. The children do not share this desire to move to the countryside. Ai-Lan would like to live in the city where there is a greater variety of attractions if not distractions, and the boys are content in Brownvale.

With respect to the obligations between members of a family, Van believes that a person must adapt to the customs of the country in which he lives. He reasons that the practise of living together as an extended family as in Vietnam is a good idea. It reduces living costs, provides a social support group, and gives each family member the physical protection of a larger group organization. However, to live in such a manner in Canada would not be considered typical. He feels his family should learn to live as a single family unit, as do most Canadians.

3.2.3 Adaptation to Modes and Patterns of Transportation

The change in the mode and type of transport used by the Trans reflects their increasingly secure financial situation as well as their adaptation to life in western Canada. Van did not have to walk much in Vietnam as he always had some type of vehicle to drive. When he first arrived in Brownvale, which is too small to support a bus service, he had to walk or ride a bicycle. When he needed to go to the nearby city he used the Greyhound bus service to get there, and then the transit city buses. Quy also had to walk when she first came to Brownvale and still prefers to do so. However, she has recently had some medical problems which affected one of her legs and so she usually drives now.

The Trans purchased a 1973 Ford Torino in the spring of 1980, for $1700 cash down. After two years they traded this automobile in for a 1978 Ford half-ton truck, and paid an additional $2200 for it. The truck, however, used too much gas

and was too small for the entire family to ride in at one time. They therefore traded the truck after one month on a 1977 Buick Le Sabre, and paid an additional $3400. Van took a loan from the car dealership for this amount. The Trans still own this automobile. In 1984 they bought a second car, a new Pontiac Phoenix at a cost of $12,000. They paid $3000 as a downpayment and took a four-year loan from the car dealership for the remaining $9000. Interestingly, all these vehicles are North American products. Van believes that they are more suitable to Canada with respect to durability and ease of repair than imported vehicles.

All the family members own bicycles. Van uses his only once a month and Quy has never ridden hers, claiming it is too big. Ai-Lan rides hers occasionally, but uses the school bus to get to the high school which is located several kilometers away. The two boys, however, use their bicycles as their primary means of transport.

Ai-Lan and Phong have "learner's permits" for automobiles; they passed the written test for these when they were fourteen years old. Van has promised to teach them how to drive, and says that he will allow Ai-Lan to drive one of their cars when she passes her road test. He wants the children to proceed in stages with their driving lessons and be competent because he does not want them hurt in traffic accidents. Van also claims that if Ai-Lan can save enough money to buy her own car he would allow her to do so. Ai-Lan favors this idea as it would make her feel more independent.

The Tran family seems to have adapted quickly to the dependence on the automobile in Canada. Certainly the great distances between places and the limited public transportation system almost makes this an imperative. No doubt hav-

ing been familiar with vehicles in Vietnam facilitated this adaptation. Still, the dependency on the automobile which they have developed, indicated by their ownership of two cars as well as the extent to which they use them illustrates a rapid and thorough adaptation to this aspect of the western Canadian lifestyle.

With respect to material well-being, the Trans have been very successful in Canada. Van feels this success is due to his ability to hold a steady job at the high school and several other jobs at one time, and also because the other members of the family work. He also believes that their ability to make friends and their willingness to take the advice of these people has been an important factor in their success. Van is proud of his family's achievements to date, and more so because they arrived here in 1979 with very little else, but their determination to make good.

3.3 Domestic Concerns

3.3.1 Foods and Food Habits

When the Trans first arrived in Brownvale, members of their sponsoring group took Quy out to do her grocery shopping. They bought her ingredients for common Canadian dishes and helped Quy prepare these meals. For the first month she dutifully followed these guidelines. However, the Trans made trips to the nearby city and bought ingredients for Vietnamese and Chinese dishes. They were not prepared to confine themselves to western cuisine.

Initially Quy bought groceries at Chinese stories in the city, because no Vietnamese shops were there at that time. She felt awkward in these establishments, however, as she could neither speak Chinese or English, and the proprietors could

not speak Vietnamese. It was therefore difficult for her to find particular items and she began to patronize stores opened by her compatriots as time went on. She no longer shops at Chinese stores.

The Trans undertake an outing to the nearby city approximately twice a month with the primary intent of buying familiar groceries. There are now five Vietnamese stores in the city and Quy is happy to be able to communicate freely with the proprietors. She is able to find all the commodities that were available in Saigon. However, most are often canned or frozen, and the Vietnamese dishes she turns out are somewhat different in taste to the dishes she used to make back home.

Quy invariably cooks most of the meals, although Ai-Lan often helps her to prepare food. Quy learned how to cook only after coming to Canada. As mentioned in Chapter II, her family employed two cooks fulltime in Saigon, and Quy never had reason to learn how to prepare dishes. However, she worked diligently at this task and is now capable of turning out some delectable meals. Several times each year the Trans host a banquet for fifteen or twenty people and Quy produces a veritable feast. For these events Quy prepares Chinese-style dishes as she feels they are more acceptable to her guests than traditional Vietnamese food.

Although some people in Vietnam ate such unusual foods as dog meat, Van and Quy's families did not. They looked upon dogs as pets rather than as a source of food. People often ate rats in Vietnam as well, and Van admits that he often consumed them while he was in the ARVN. He states that the rats which lived in the paddies and fed on rice grew to be large in size and were quite good to eat. Quy did not share her husband's experiences or appreciate his tastes in this respect.

She has eaten snake meat, though, and Van also savours it. Van believes that many Canadians would eat such foods and like them if they were not briefed beforehand. Now the Trans have no need, nor do they have the opportunity, to enjoy these dishes.

While living in Vietnam the Trans ate both Chinese and Vietnamese dishes. Van says that Chinese dishes use such ingredients as green peppers, garlic, onions, oyster sauce, sesame oil, rice, fish, and meats such as pork, beef, and chicken. Though Vietnamese dishes contain onions, garlic, rice, green peppers, and fish as well, copious amounts of hot red pepper and ginger, curry powder, and cinnamon are used. A major feature of Vietnamese dishes is that they often contain a potent fish sauce. Vietnamese food is generally much more spicy than Chinese dishes, and in the preparation of the former, peanut and coconut oils are more commonly used than sesame oil. Some common Vietnamese dishes which the Trans eat are *Canh chua* (sour soup), *Ca kho* (fish and pineapple), and *Thit kho tau* (meat and pineapple). Chinese dishes include *Com rang* (fried chicken and rice in tomato sauce), *Bao ngu xao thit ga* (abalone with chicken), and *Vi ca* (fish fin soup).

The Trans also eat both Vietnamese and Chinese-style snacks. One Vietnamese snack which seems to have French origins is called *Pate Chaud*, a small pie filled with a spiced pork mixture. Another Vietnamese snack is *Trai Cay* which is a mixture of stewed fruits. *Che* is a type of pudding and *Banh ngot* is a sort of sweet biscuit. Deep-fried banana, or *Chuoi chieu* is also a popular Vietnamese snack. Chinese-style snacks eaten by the Trans include *Baur ngot*, a type of biscuit, and *Ha cau*, a flour and meat mixture. *Mi* is a type of egg spaghetti and *Hu*

tiru is a rice and meat mixture. Quy invariably prepares many of these snacks for both her family and their guests.

Even though they have lived in Canada for six years, the Trans continue to eat mostly Vietnamese and Chinese-style meals. A few Canadian dishes, which Quy learned how to prepare while working as hotel kitchen-help, have been added to their diet. These dishes include hamburgers, hot dogs, and mashed potatoes. Quy prepares these only about once a month as she feels that although they are easy to make, one tires of them quickly. There is no fixed schedule for the preparation of different types of dishes. The family will eat one type until they grow tired of it, and then will switch to meals of another variety.

Quy downplays disagreements between family members about the type of food they eat. She claims that the children eat what she prepares. Occasionally, however, the children do not like what is put before them. This makes Van angry and his response is that they can purchase and prepare their own food if they dislike what is prepared at home, but that they must not insult their mother. Certainly there are variations in food preferences among the family members. Van says that rice is his favorite food and that he prefers this to potatoes. He likes Vietnamese dishes above all others. Ai-Lan claims not to have a favorite food, but prefers a variety of dishes. However, she likes to eat rice at least once a day. She tends to prefer Vietnamese dishes because there is such a variety of them. Ai-Lan dislikes potatoes and fruit pies, but finds hamburgers and hot dogs delicious. Apparently, Ai-Lan enjoys eating, as she recently joined a weight-loss organization to shed excess pounds. It is unlikely she would have had a weight problem in Vietnam, and this seems to be indicative of some dietary change on her

part. Phong, like Ai-Lan, prefers eating a variety of dishes. He dislikes potatoes except in the form of french fries. Sy bluntly claims that he has no real preferences and will eat anything.

The family members also prefer different breakfast foods. Quy and the boys eat instant noodles while Van prefers bread. Ai-Lan does not eat breakfast. For lunch, Van takes sandwiches and an apple in his lunchbox, claiming that Canadian lunches are easier to prepare and to carry than those in Vietnam. In Vietnam he usually carried an insulated aluminum box containing dishes identical to those he would eat for dinner.

Members of the Tran family show different preferences as far as beverages are concerned. Van's favorite alcoholic drink is beer although he likes cognac as well. He has the interesting habit of putting ice cubes in his glass of beer or wine. Van believes this habit was initiated by the French in Vietnam. Ice was generally not available in individual homes at this time because of the lack of refrigerators. Therefore, the ice available was in the form of blocks which were distributed from regionally located ice-making plants. Today, Van often takes imported Chinese guava juice, or American-made carbonated coconut milk in his lunchbox. He drinks cow's milk only when he is sick, but claims that most Vietnamese consume it. He also believes that a popular beverage in Vietnam is condensed milk mixed with hot water. Quy's favorite drink is Vietnamese green tea. She feels it has more flavor than the roasted tea commonly consumed in Canada. Occasionally she will drink a little milk, beer, or cognac. The children say that they dislike alcoholic beverages. Although they usually drank water in Vietnam to quench their thirst, they now prefer soda-pop. Ai-Lan does not like milk and the two boys are the only ones who drink it regularly.

The Trans usually use chopsticks to eat their meals. However, when they invite English-Canadian guests to dinner, they use western-style cutlery. Ai-Lan prefers using a spoon to any other utensil. Her parents often tease her about this habit, asking her if she is "old enough yet to use chopsticks". Quy in particular pressures her to drop this practice.

Van finds a number of table manners to be unacceptable. He believes a person should not talk with food in his mouth, slurp noodles, nor reach across others to pick up a dish on the table. To him, putting one's elbows or feet on the table is also bad form. He feels Canadians have two distasteful habits. The first is licking one's fingers while eating, and the second is overeating; he has often noted, for example, that many return repeatedly to a buffet counter. Quy adds that the Canadian practice of passing dishes around the table is rather unusual. Furthermore, Ai-Lan finds the practice of saying grace before a meal somewhat strange.

In Vietnam the Trans often ate out in restaurants, enjoying Vietnamese fare in Saigon and Chinese dishes in Cholon. In Brownvale, however, they never eat in local restaurants, claiming the meals are expensive. There are several Chinese, but no Vietnamese restaurants in town. However, the Trans do eat in Vietnamese restaurants in the city several times each month, more so for the social interaction than the food. The children go to restaurants more often than their parents. They frequently ride their bicycles to the McDonald's restaurant in Brownvale and eat meals there. Ai-Lan claims to eat there once a week. Van does not like the food at McDonald's, but expresses the pragmatic attitude that "when you are hungry, all food is okay."

Van is invited out annually to the caretaker's year-end dinner party. He has attended only twice in six years, however, and even on those occasions he had a meal at home beforehand. He claims that he does so not because he dislikes the food at the annual dinner but rather the claustrophobic atmosphere in the crowded Legion hall where the social event is held. Furthermore, he dislikes the high noise level and the cigarette smoke, and on the few occasions that he did attend he stayed only for an hour or so. To compensate for his reticence he invites all the janitors to his home each year for an elaborate Chinese meal which Quy prepares.

With regard to food habits, the Trans seem to have retained a preference for those dishes they ate in Vietnam, and expend a good deal of time, money, and energy buying the necessary ingredients. It is interesting to note that Quy decided to learn how to cook the more elaborate Vietnamese and Chinese dishes after arriving in Brownvale, rather than the more straight-forward Canadian-style dishes. There are noticeable differences though in the preferences exhibited by individual family members, and in this respect, and as expected, it is the children who have cultivated Canadian tastes, habits, and manners to a greater degree.

3.3.2 Types and Varieties of Clothing

When Van lived in Vietnam he dressed in trousers and shirt, as did most other men in that country, and consequently had few or no adjustments to make in Canada. In Vietnam Quy often wore a pant-suit to work, and dressed in an *Ao Dai* on occasion. An *Ao Dai* consists of pantaloons with a tight-fitting blouse cum attached skirt which extends to below the wearer's knees. The skirt is split on both sides up to the waist. Quy had one made for her in the city by a Vietnamese tailor. The pantaloons are of white material and the blouse-overskirt is of a dark

blue transparent material imprinted with a design of large red and white flowers. She wears this only on special occasions, and everyday wear is is the commonplace ensemble of slacks and sweater. Van notes that on a recent trip to Dallas he saw many American women wearing *Ao Dai's*. He thought they looked better wearing them than do Vietnamese women, as they are taller. Ai-Lan does not own an *Ao Dai*, and dresses in jeans and a shirt, as do most other Canadian girls of seventeen. Phong and Sy also dress in a fashion indistinguishable from that of their friends.

To sum up, the Trans have adopted the more popular Canadian and trendy styles of dress common to most Canadians. They have, however, had to purchase a greater variety of clothing because of the marked seasonality in climate in Canada.

3.3.3 Traditional versus Western Medicines

As Quy's father was a pharmacist, and because she worked in his pharmacy for many years in Saigon, Quy has retained a trust in Chinese medicines since coming to Canada. Medicines which she used in Vietnam and continues to use include *Dau thong tan*, a headache remedy, and *Ngoai cam tan*, a palliative for the flu. *Tieu ban lo* and *Thuoi dau bung* are medicines for stomach aches and *Dau nhi thieu* is a linament akin to Vick's medicated ointment. *Ninh than ban* and *Bo than hoan* are liquids which give a person energy and are perhaps similar to western products such as Geritol. Now that the Trans live in Brownvale they purchase these Chinese medicines in Vietnamese stores in the city.

A traditional Vietnamese remedy for colds that Van and Quy continue to use is the rubbing of an earthenware spoon and linament along one's limbs. They do not use acupuncture nor pressure-point massage, although Van learned the latter

technique while in the ARVN. Quy and Van both feel that Chinese medicines and medical techniques work slowly but are more effective in the long term than western medicines. They say that though western medicines work quickly the ailments seem to recur. Quy claims that most of her Vietnamese friends in North America still use Chinese medicines for this reason. The Tran children, however, state a preference for western medicines. Ai-Lan claims that even if the family had access to all the favored types of Chinese medicines she would still not use them.

There are varying attitudes among the Trans with respect to Canadian doctors. Van feels that most Vietnamese in this country would prefer going to a Vietnamese doctor practising western medicine. Because of their intensive practise in wartime, he believes that they are more experienced than their western counterparts, work faster, and provide better cures. There are a few Vietnamese doctors in the city and Van visits them when it is convenient. Conversely, although Quy believes in Chinese medicines, she has never visited a Vietnamese "doctor" practising traditional medicine in Canada and claims satisfaction with the local medical staff. Given the choice, however, between a Canadian or Vietnamese doctor practising western medicine, she would go to the latter because there is no language barrier. Furthermore, she feels that Canadian doctors are overly concerned with the side-effects of drugs, and so prescribe small doses. In Vietnam the dosages of western medicine that patients received were two or three times greater and therefore worked more quickly and effectively. Moreover, doctors in Vietnam who practised western medicine would give a patient an injection immediately to deal with a problem whereas in Canada they first test a patient's

blood, urine, or feces. These tests were conducted in Vietnamese hospitals. However, in clinics in Vietnam, where the problems encountered were not serious, these tests were not carried out. The practise in Canada is different, where most clinics perform these tests as a matter of routine. In Canada, Quy feels, a patient remains sick while these unnecessary tests are being carried out. Quy also dislikes the system of making an appointment to see a doctor. In Vietnam one simply visited a clinic and waited one's turn, a system which she feels is much faster than the making of appointments. Moreover, doctors in Vietnam worked more hours each day, so they could deal with more patients than do doctors in Canada. The Tran children, however, do not share their parents' concerns with respect to Canadian doctors. They claim to prefer local physicians and are comfortable with the system of making appointments.

To sum up, Van and Quy retain a preference for traditional Chinese medicine. Moreover, when using western medicine they prefer the direction of an ethnic Vietnamese doctor. However, when necessary they will go to a Canadian doctor. The children have adapted more completely, demonstrating a clear preference for western medicine and Canadian doctors.

Regarding domestic concerns in general, members of the Tran family have shown varying levels of adaptation and integration. The retention of Vietnamese customs is stronger in the parents while the children, although generally accepting both Canadian and Vietnamese practices, often demonstrate a marked preference for Canadian customs.

3.4 The Use of English and Associated Problems

3.4.1 Names and Forms of Address

Van has retained his complete Vietnamese name and states that he has no desire to have it anglicized. His co-workers mispronounce his name, but he does not attempt to correct them, as he feels that they would have difficulty with the correct pronunciation. In Chinese custom, a wife takes her husband's surname. However, Quy followed the Vietnamese custom of retaining her maiden name after marriage. This caused immigration officials some concern when the Trans entered Canada. To avoid confusion, Quy's name is set out in her passport as Quy (Tho) Tran. Vietnamese friends, however, continue to call her Quy Tho whereas she is known to her Chinese friends as Quy Tran. Both Van and Quy now use the western form of putting the family name last rather than the East Asian practice of putting the family name first, and they prefer to be addressed as Mr. and Mrs.; they show little concern that the traditional forms, namely *Ong* and *Ba* respectively, are no longer applied.

Ai-Lan has retained the Vietnamese spelling of her name although her English-Canadian friends pronounce it as Lynn. Her parents pronounce it in the Vietnamese fashion, however. Both Phong and Sy have adopted English names, Bob and Steve, and these names are used even at home. The change, initially suggested by the Trans' sponsor, made things easier for the boys in many ways. Classmates could associate with them without mispronouncing their names and, moreover, they did not run the risk of being made fun of if they continued to use their "native" names in full. Neither of the boys now use their middle names of "Quoc". The only people who use the boys' Vietnamese names are some of Van and Quy's Vietnamese friends and relatives.

3.4.2 Medium of Communication

All members of the Tran family speak Vietnamese as their first language. The children can speak Vietnamese fluently, and although Ai-Lan is more proficient in the language than her brothers, she has some problems in reading and writing Vietnamese. Phong has greater problems with regard to the latter, and Sy can neither read nor write the language.

Van is quite accomplished in Chinese languages. He can speak Cantonese, as could both of his parents. He is also fluent in *Hainanese*, his mother's first language, and *Tiechu*, the "native" language of his father. Other Chinese languages and dialects which he can speak include *Fukien*, *Quang Thoai*, and *Pho Tong* (Taiwanese). He also understands *Dai Son* and *He*, but speaks them poorly. However, he is unable to read or write any of the Chinese languages or dialects. Van says that he was able to learn so many Chinese languages because of the mixture of different groups of ethnic-Chinese in Saigon. Quy is less accomplished than her husband with respect to languages. She can understand Cantonese, but cannot speak, read, or write that language. Ai-Lan can understand some Cantonese, while her brothers have no ability in any Chinese language. Van has not pressed his children to learn Chinese as there are no teachers for these languages in Brownvale, and there is little opportunity to put them to use in town. He prefers that his children concentrate on learning to speak and write correct English.

Van feels that the greatest problem faced by his family upon arriving in Canada was their inability to speak English. He had initially thought of settling his family here and then returning to Vietnam to fight the communist forces. However, he felt that leaving his family in a place where there were few people with

whom they could communicate was not a responsible action for a husband and father. Initially the Trans found even simple tasks very difficult in Brownvale because of the language barrier. Moreover, they were only the second refugee family to arrive in town and they could not communicate with the Laotian family that had preceded them. A few local Chinese-Canadians helped the Trans to a limited extent when they first arrived. Usually, Van would invite them to his house for supper and ply them with questions regarding Canadian customs and way of life.

The Trans communicated with their sponsor primarily through written messages at this time. Quy could read some English and with the aid of a Vietnamese-English dictionary, the family could make their basic requests understood. Moreover, Quy began English lessons upon arrival in Brownvale and continued these for a full year. Van had problems at his job as caretaker at first because he could not understand the instructions given him. However, once he was shown what to do and was taught the basic vocabulary pertaining to his job, he had few problems.

Van's command of English has improved substantially since then, and he now has a reasonable level of ability in speaking and writing it. However, he speaks with a heavy Vietnamese accent. In Vietnam he had learned almost no English. He would say "good morning" to the American Colonel in charge of the ARVN motor pool, and would occasionally listen to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) programs. Though he has lived six years in Canada, Van still thinks in Vietnamese and jots down memos in that language. And, he is obviously most comfortable speaking in his mother tongue.

Although Quy studied English for a year she does not have the outgoing personality of her husband, consequently she still has difficulty in speaking English. When attempting anything more than rudimentary sentences she depends on Van or her children to translate her Vietnamese into English. Moreover, Quy does not understand English very well although she can read and perhaps write the language with reasonable facility. For example, when she took the written test for her driver's licence she easily passed the first time whereas her husband, to his chagrin, passed only on his third attempt. Quy is embarrassed that she is unable to speak better English, and consequently she is inclined to remain in the background when English-Canadian people visit them, and this in turn hinders her progress.

Phong has the most refined English of all, and speaks with only a slight Vietnamese accent. Ai-Lan has a poorer vocabulary than Phong and has a significantly heavier accent, and Sy uses the colloquial idiomatic English of his schoolmates and has scarcely a trace of a Vietnamese accent.

At home the Tran children speak English to each other, claiming that this is easier for them than speaking Vietnamese. Occasionally they will criticize their parents or swear, and when they do they speak rapidly in English using idiomatic expressions that their parents do not fully understand. Both Van and Quy indicated that they do not like their children using these slang expressions. Van states that he would like his children to speak to him in English because this would enable him to improve his command of the language, but through habit the children continue to speak to him in Vietnamese. On reflection, however, both Quy and Van admit that they are happy that their children continue to speak Vietnamese, and Quy in particular expresses a strong preference that they do so. Indeed,

this issue seems to be highly important to both Van and Quy. They regard language as being an important element in preserving their cultural heritage, and they continually try to maintain and improve their children's command of Vietnamese. For example, when they first came to Canada everyone had to speak Vietnamese at home, particularly so that Sy would be able to master that language. Van also takes time to tell his children stories and parables in Vietnamese, and reviews the history of Vietnam and reasons for their departure in their native tongue. Furthermore, Van and Quy insist that their children speak only in Vietnamese when they have Vietnamese friends visiting them. Van would like his children to take advanced lessons in that language, but this is impracticable because the nearest classes are held in the city. He wishes that radio or television programs in Vietnamese were available in Brownvale; they are unable to receive those broadcast from the United States. Van is keen that all members of the family maintain their proficiency in the "mother tongue", because he harbors the desire to return to Vietnam one day, and he wants his children to be accepted in that country as citizens rather than foreigners.

Outside their home the Trans are pragmatic as to which language they use. When speaking to people from the home country they use Vietnamese, and resort to using English when necessary.

Van spends a significant amount of his leisure time reading; most of the material he reads is written in Vietnamese. He claims he reads perhaps a half-dozen books of between four and five hundred pages each year. They deal primarily with international politics and the contemporary situation in Vietnam. An example is *Cai Tai Lieu Lun He Cong San Vietnam* (a document on communism in

Vietnam). Van also reads six Vietnamese magazines each month. *Khang Chien* (Return for Revolution), *Ngay Ve* (The Day of Our Return), *Van Nghe Tien Phong* (Front Line News and Information Magazine), *Tu Do Dan Ban* (Freedom for Citizens), and *Hon Viet* (Soul of Vietnam) are published in the U.S., and *Lua Viet* (Flame of Vietnam) is published in Toronto. Ai-Lan subscribes to *Maclean's* and *Sport*, and Van peruses these as well. Because his sons deliver local newspapers, Van also looks through the extra copies which they regularly bring home. When he has trouble understanding an article he has one of his children explain it to him. Van likes to keep abreast of world affairs, and feels that one of the greatest differences between living in Canada as opposed to Vietnam is the greater awareness in this country of global events.

Quy reads little material written in English, preferring to peruse cookbooks written in Vietnamese, for example *Nghe Thuat Nau An* (The Act of Cooking) and *Gia Chaur Quoc Viet* (Homemaking in Vietnam). These books are published in California and are available in the city. Occasionally Quy will read some of the Vietnamese magazines that her husband receives, or "romantic" novels written in Vietnamese. She will look through local newspapers occasionally and when she does so has some difficulty understanding the articles.

Apart from her school assignments, Ai-Lan rarely reads books written in English. She prefers reading Vietnamese stories written in Vietnamese, and she and Phong periodically read them together, but there is a problem as Ai-Lan reads much faster in Vietnamese than her brother. Ai-Lan sometimes reads Vietnamese newspapers but usually peruses instead the English magazines to which she subscribes. Phong prefers science fiction books, but does not spend much leisure time

reading. Sy rarely reads anything except that which is required for school. He is tutored in English, though his teacher's practice of having him read passages from the Bible is questionable.

Van dislikes television and movies and rarely watches either. Quy and Ai-Lan watch Chinese video movies on television although Ai-Lan has some difficulty in understanding them. The Trans also have a collection of Vietnamese video programs. They are produced in California and Quy buys them in the city. The programs include situation comedies, dramas, and puppet shows, and use actors and costumes from various regions of Vietnam. The Tran children all watch a considerable amount of television and often go to movies at the local cinema.

To sum up, the parents speak better Vietnamese and poorer English than the children. Moreover, since Quy now tends to remain in the background she has not matched the rate of progress that the other members of the family have made with the English language.

3.5 The Establishment of Social Contacts

3.5.1 Friends and Associates

When the Trans first arrived in Canada their friends included primarily those Vietnamese in the city as well as other refugees they had met on the *Skyluck* who had also come to this country. As well, the Trans formed a close friendship with one family in their sponsoring group who gave them a good deal of help when they first arrived. Moreover, Van has made good friends with some of his fellow janitors who made an effort to teach him English as well as Canadian customs.

Much of the Trans' success in establishing friendships in Brownvale seems to be related to Van's gregarious personality. He had previous contacts with foreigners in Vietnam and this may have made it easier for him to be outgoing when he arrived in Canada. While in the ARVN he took delivery of motor vehicles which were offloaded from ships docked near Saigon. This allowed him to meet people of various nationalities who worked in the ports. Van recalls coming into contact with Canadians, Americans, Japanese, Filipinos, Frenchmen, and Russians. Therefore, he learned how to cooperate with people having different cultural traits. He also learned that there are good and bad people to be found in every culture and that one must seek out the people in the former group. This experience undoubtedly helped Van adjust to Canadians and make friends with them.

A part of Van's motivation in making friends is that he feels he can learn much by doing so. For example, during his first winter in Brownvale Van gladly shovelled the snow from his neighbors' sidewalks. In exchange, his neighbors showed him ways of adapting to the severe winter cold. Van also feels a great debt of gratitude to Canadians because of the generosity he has been shown as a refugee. He feels ashamed that most people in South Vietnam seemed to be concerned only with themselves, and he believes this was one reason why the North Vietnamese were able to take over the southern half of the country. He is impressed with the humanitarianism that many people have shown him in Brownvale, and he would like to reciprocate.

Van seems to genuinely like people and wants to be accepted by them. He encourages his family to mix with other Canadians. For example, in the summer he will give the neighborhood children juice to drink, and has them teach him

Canadian songs. Moreover, when he has a barbecue, he will invite these children over for a meal, knowing that once the children come their parents will eventually follow. Furthermore, the Trans host numerous elaborate dinners throughout the year to which they invite their neighbors, friends, parents of their children's friends, and co-workers. This allows people to get to know them and this eventually can lead to fuller acceptance by the community. This approach is a reflection of genuine interest but it is also in part a calculated maneuver. Van likes people and knows that to be accepted he must give people the chance to meet him and his family. He understands that the natural inclination of newcomers is to stay in the background but that this must be avoided.

The Tran children seem to have integrated well. Ai-Lan claims to have many friends, both male and female. She attributes this to her ability to mix with people of varying socioeconomic backgrounds as well as of different ethnic groups. Now that she can speak English well she feels she can make friends much faster than when she first arrived in Brownvale. Most of her friends are English-Canadians and she wishes that there were a few Vietnamese girls of her age living in town. Her best friend is a Chinese-Vietnamese girl of her age whom she met on the *Skyluck* and who lives in a nearby town.

Ai-Lan is emotionally mature for her age. This may be a result of the difficulties she experienced as a refugee. She finds young Canadians of her own age rather frivolous. She claims to prefer working or spending time with her family to going to parties, though she is seventeen and at an age where she would like to date boys. Her parents, however, are concerned about the relaxed morals of Canadian youth. Ai-Lan wants to date for fun while she feels that her mother has the

attitude that dating is a serious step leading directly to marriage. Ai-Lan feels her parents are overly strict and old-fashioned in this respect. Apparently it is acceptable to invite boyfriends home where she can be chaperoned, but she is not allowed to go out on dates alone. Her parents do not want to discuss the issue, and a good deal of friction seems to be building between Ai-Lan and them. It is an interesting example of differences in values which have arisen at least in part because of the different levels of acculturation between family members.

Phong and Sy do not seem to have any shortage of friends. They have formed friendships with Canadian-born youths of various ethnic backgrounds as well as with other Vietnamese youngsters. Quy claims that she is happy that her children have friends from varied ethnic backgrounds and encourages them to bring their friends home to meet the family. The boys meet other children at school and through taking part in team sports such as basketball, volleyball, hockey, and soccer. Indeed, Phong was the captain of his school's basketball team in 1985; this was not only a reflection of his athletic ability but also of his popularity at school.

There are no strong affiliations between the Tran family and the local Chinese community. Van made numerous attempts to enlist their help before reaching the conclusion that they did not want to be overly involved with refugees. Van is obviously disappointed that they have not been more helpful. Today, the Trans meet with local Chinese families a few times each year, and they get together as a group only during the Chinese New Year. When Van first came to Brownvale he was suspicious of the local Chinese because he thought they were recent arrivals from communist China, a country which had backed the North Vietnamese against the South Vietnamese. However, when he learned that they had left China before

the communist takeover in 1949, he was more willing to accept them. Still, Van's initial reluctance may have been a contributing factor to his estrangement from the local Chinese community.

Quy wishes there were more Chinese-Vietnamese people in Brownvale with whom she could socialize. At present there are four such families in town; one from North Vietnam and three from the south. The Trans visit with them rarely, however. Van claims that they do not meet more frequently because of their busy work schedules. Interestingly three of the four heads of the families are also janitors, and they work at the same hectic pace as does Van. They have also been equally successful financially. Previously there were six other Chinese-Vietnamese families in Brownvale, but they have all moved to other locales in search of better employment. However, it is not surprising that Van was happy when they left town as some of the families had caused problems in the community; there was evidence of feuding and fighting between them, and even some cases of wife-beating had been reported. He felt this gave all Vietnamese a bad name, and he did not want to be associated with them. It may be that this is part of the reason the Trans do not associate more with the other Chinese-Vietnamese in Brownvale.

The Trans travel to the city at least twice a month to visit Vietnamese friends there, and the latter reciprocate at about the same frequency. Van's preferred associates are ethnic-Vietnamese, as he finds them more willing to discuss life in Vietnam than the Chinese-Vietnamese. He feels the latter are bent on forgetting Vietnam and are only interested in building a new life in Canada. Van is scornful of this attitude. However, Van states that their closest friends are those

Chinese-Vietnamese people who shared their trials on the *Skyluck*. Several of these families live in the region and the Trans visit them approximately once a month.

Van makes a real effort to play a visible role in the community. It is a reflection perhaps of his socioeconomic background that he understands the need to do so in order to be accepted fully by society. Quy has not integrated as well and this could be attributed to her retiring nature. In this case Vietnamese cultural attributes have perhaps interfered with her adaptation to Canadian life. The Tran children have adapted readily to the new social setting; youngsters are invariably more outgoing, and the wider range of options at school to form associations makes matters even easier. Their father has also encouraged them to follow his lead in mixing with others.

3.5.2 Affiliations with Vietnamese Social Organizations

Van belongs to a number of Vietnamese associations in Canada and the U.S. They include *Mat Tran Quoc Gia Thong Nhut Giai Phong Vietnam* (National Movement to Unify and Liberate Vietnam), *Lien Minh Dan Chu* (The Union of Democracy), *Tong Doan Thanh Nien Thien Chi Vietnam* (Troops Devoted to the Youth of Vietnam), *Luc Luong Nguoi Viet Quoc Gia* (Total Strength of the Vietnamese Nation), *Chi Nguyen Quan Vietnam* (The Devoted Army of Vietnam), and *Mat Tran Thong Nhut Cac Luc Luong Yeu Nuoc Vietnam* (The Movement of Unified and Strong Patriots of Vietnam). Some of these organizations have as their essential purpose the disseminating of information about Vietnamese refugees in Canada. They provide news of such things as sporting events, cultural exchanges, tours by Vietnamese musical groups, and the dates of fund-raising banquets. Other organi-

zations focus on keeping members informed of the political situation in Vietnam and related developments in international politics. Van supports all of the foregoing groups through subscribing to newsletters, paying membership dues, and making donations. The headquarters of the organization in which he is most involved is in the nearby urban center. It is a relatively small organization, and primarily serves the Vietnamese living in the province. The organization has only twenty-seven members out of a total Vietnamese population of 6000 in the city. The organization serves as a support group for its membership as well as a forum for discussions about the political situation in Vietnam, and the problems of settlement in Canada. As a support group the organization functions as a *Hui*, the same type of association to which Van belonged in Vietnam, although there is no gambling in this *Hui*. It provides psychological aid for its members, and functions as a financial agency for those individuals who cannot or prefer not to secure loans from Canadian financial institutions. In this respect it seems to function in a similar manner to the benevolent associations formed by Chinese in Canada in the 19th century. The *Hui* is an interesting example of a traditional Vietnamese organization playing a worthwhile role in furthering the interests of fellow countrymen in a new land.

3.5.3 Keeping in Touch with Relatives

Van has four brothers, two sisters, and more than thirty cousins still living in Vietnam. They do not have enough money to bribe their way out of the country and Van feels he does not have enough money to sponsor them.

One of Van's brothers was a policeman. One was a pig farmer, another a teacher, and yet another owned a small variety store in Ben Tre. When Van was

living in Saigon there was a great deal of rapport between them, and he would visit them at least once a month. As well, he would spend considerable time with his brother, the policeman, who lived in Saigon. Since 1975 the fortunes of Van's family have declined. Presently one brother makes incense for a living and another is a tailor. The brother who was a policeman emigrated to the U.S. and the whereabouts of the fourth is unknown. Van's father died several years ago and his mother continues to live in My Tho. He says his other siblings are reluctant to emigrate while their mother is still alive; they feel it is their duty to take care of her in her old age.

Van has arranged for Quy's family in Saigon to provide his siblings with funds, as the money which he has sent them by mail from Canada has never reached them. He intends on paying back this money when and as Quy's relatives emigrate. Contact between Van and his relatives at home has been limited. He telephoned his mother once, but the cost was $120 for ten minutes and he cannot afford to do this often. Van writes to his relatives in Vietnam but his letters take at least a month to get there, and letters to Canada take as long as three months. He receives only about three letters a year from members of his family. Van admits that he does not miss them as much as when he first arrived in Canada. He mourns his father's passing, though, and is sad that he is unable to visit his aged mother.

Van's brother who was a policeman escaped from Vietnam before Van, and presently lives in Texas. He now works for a firm in Dallas which makes computers and he supervises a number of other Vietnamese refugees at the company. Van says that his brother makes more money than he does, and is now very secure financially.

3.6 Elements of Tradition and Change

3.6.1 Questions Relating to Filial Proprieties

Van states that in Vietnam he wanted his children to be obedient. Since coming to Canada, he continues to believe that filial obedience is important. Van insists that his children maintain the traditional Vietnamese values of respect for those in authority. In this hierarchical order, the Monarch is the one with the greatest authority, second are teachers, and third, parents. Van perceives that Canadian children often do not show proper respect to these elders. His children, however, seem well-behaved by Canadian standards although Sy is noticeably less so. This could be attributed to the fact that Ai-Lan and Phong spent many of their formative years in the more strict Vietnamese social system whereas Sy is more of a product of Canadian society. However, all three are noticeably mature for their years.

Interestingly, Van does not exercise as much authority as his wife in dealing with the children. This is a reversal of the traditional Vietnamese pattern. The children tend to pay attention to their father only when he becomes angry with them. Van admits that he is not a strict disciplinarian. He feels he was a poor father to them when the family lived in Vietnam and he has tried to compensate for previous neglect by showing excessive kindness now. As well, Van may feel that his children need to be treated kindly because they had such a rough experience as refugees.

There are a number of character traits that Van feels a Vietnamese child should exhibit. A boy should be loyal to his country, in this case both Canada and the Republic of Vietnam. He should also be dedicated to his parents, honest, and

self-effacing. He should carry himself with dignity and pride. A boy should always try to set an example that others can follow. Phong and Sy agree with their father concerning these ascribed values.

Van believes that a Vietnamese girl should learn domestic duties, keep herself attractive, and speak to others quietly and in a humble manner. She should not shout or swear. She should obey her parents, practise good deeds, and not behave maliciously. After marriage a Vietnamese girl should obey her husband and especially her mother-in-law. If her husband dies she should not remarry but should concentrate on raising any children she might have. All of the aforementioned reflect traditional Vietnamese values, and Van seems to take them seriously, though Ai-Lan does not agree fully. She feels she should listen to her parents and husband but should not always be required to obey them. Moreover, she believes it is foolish not to remarry if one's husband dies. Furthermore, Ai-Lan resents the idea of losing contact with her family after marriage. In her view a woman "marries the man, not the man's family." In this context, Ai-Lan seems to have adopted some of the views commonly held by Canadians, particularly of her age-group.

Ai-Lan feels her parents are more attentive to her elder brother and that they regard his opinions more highly than hers because he is a male. Van responds by saying that Phong usually presents better arguments than does Ai-Lan. Still, he admits that he feels a male's opinions are more important than those of a female. Van defends this Chinese/Vietnamese attitude by arguing that when a girl marries she is lost to her family. Moreover, she does not carry on the family name. Van admits that he would like to change the custom of having a daughter lose contact with her family, now that he lives in Canada. In this respect he seems to be more amenable to Canadian values.

3.6.2 Issues Pertaining to Courtship and Marriage

Van and Quy state that they no longer want their children to follow the Vietnamese tradition of prearranged marriages. However, Van would like to have Ai-Lan's future husband come and receive Van's blessing prior to engagement. He claims that neither the ethnic origins or the religious affiliations of a potential spouse is of any consequence to him, and he says he has no firm convictions as to the nature of the wedding ceremony either. If Van disapproved of a potential spouse on other grounds he would try and dissuade his child from marrying that person. If his child was adamant, however, he would accept the situation. He believes that in Vietnam today most parents would respond in the same way, and he attributes this relaxation of traditional practises to the more lax attitudes that came into being during the second World War.

Van and Quy have several other concerns. For example, they would like their children to complete university training before contemplating marriage, and abhor the thought of any of their children cohabitating with a potential mate. Furthermore, Quy would like her children to have marriage ceremonies similar to the one she and Van had in Vietnam. They are already saving for Ai-Lan's wedding and will pay for it when the time comes. Van hopes that his children will not demand ostentatious wedding ceremonies; he would rather give the money he would save on elaborate functions to the newlyweds. The giving of money as wedding presents, he observes, is a pragmatic custom among both Chinese and Vietnamese.

Van feels that thirty is a good age for a man to marry, because this would give him time to complete his education and establish himself financially. Phong and Sy admit they have not given the matter much thought, but they tend to agree

with their father on this point. Quy feels Ai-Lan should not marry before reaching the age of twenty-five; Van, however, thinks that twenty-one is a better age. Ai-Lan diplomatically states a preference for marriage at age twenty-three or twenty-four.

Quy feels there are a number of qualities that Ai-Lan's future husband should possess. He should have at least a grade twelve education and be employed. He should not be slow-witted and should be prepared to conscientiously care for his family. Moreover, he should expect Ai-Lan to bear no more than three children. Quy is not conerned about the ethnic background or physical appearance of her future son-in-law. Ai-Lan's views are somewhat different. She too would like her husband to be a graduate of a high school or a technical institute. However, he should expect no more than two children and should possess a pleasant disposition. Ai-Lan adds that ethnic background and looks are of little consequence to her.

Van dislikes the practise of divorce. He believes that divorce is difficult for a husband and wife, and especially so for their children. The psychological trauma experienced by the children may lead them to become undesirable citizens in the future. He hopes that none of his children will ever undergo a divorce, but that if this should occur, he would accept it.

To sum up, the Trans still adhere to many Vietnamese customs, but show a degree of flexibility in that they are prepared to adopt some Canadian mores. Ai-Lan has some opinions which are clearly different from her parents' views, but this may be a function of age rather than a consequence of acculturation.

3.6.3 The Role of Religion

While in Vietnam, Van and Quy practised Theravayda Buddhism. Quy's parents also followed this type of Buddhism while Van's parents believed in the *Cao Dai* sect.

> Cao Daism worshipped god (represented by an eye), established a priestly hierarchy headed by a pope, borrowed religious figures from East and West alike, bestowed sainthood on such eminent secular figures as the French poet Victor Hugo, and was heavily infused with spiritualism.[6]

Van did not fully subscribe to the views of this esoteric group. He did not agree with their heavy involvement in Vietnamese politics, and had no further contacts with them after he returned to Saigon in the early 1960's.

The Trans continue to practise Buddhism, but Quy is far more devout than the other family members. They visit a Buddhist temple in the city half a dozen times per year, and donate $5 or $10 to the temple on each visit. While in Vietnam they followed the practise of ancestor worship and during such periods refrained from eating meat, but only Quy follows this practice now. Quy has constructed a Buddhist altar in their house; it occupies two upper shelves of the pantry. Van claims that the strange location is due to a lack of space, but since their house is approximately 140 m^2, the reason for the "hidden" location may be that the Trans do not want to appear unusual to their friends and visitors by having it in full view. This would be in keeping with Van's desire to blend into western Canadian society.

The altar occupies about two square meters of space, and the candles and incense sticks are electrical imitations. Even the flower arrangements are made of imitation roses. The centerpiece is a ceramic statue of a woman dressed in robes and holding a water jar. Her name is *Duc Ba* (Buddha Mrs.) *Quan The Am*,

and she is a Buddhist "saint" to whom people pray when they are in trouble. She was popular among the boat people during their perilous journeys. A bowl containing tea is also an integral part of the altar, and is refilled on the anniversaries of the deaths of Quy and Van's fathers, and their pictures as well as one of Quy's grandmother are displayed.

The most important routine Buddhist practice for Quy is her abstention from eating meat two days each month. Moreover, her most important belief is that when a person dies and is reborn, the form that the person takes is contingent upon his or her actions in previous lives.

Quy feels that religion plays an important role in her life. She believes that it teaches people to be kind and helpful to others. Van states that he does not believe in the tennets of any religion, but feels that rules governing one's conduct towards others is important. Religious institutions also help people in need, and Van feels this is a worthy function. However, he believes that religions tend to have too many rules which are unimportant. The Tran children tend to share their father's attitude towards religion. They feel that the tennets of Christianity and Buddhism were formulated by ancient peoples simply as standards of behavior. Quy says that she would be quite happy if Phong decided to become a Buddhist priest, but would have reservations about him becoming a minister in the United Church. Van hedged on commenting on such possibilities. He maintains that his children are free to choose any vocation they like, and that the thought of one of his sons becoming a minister had never entered his mind.

Van and Quy state that they have not been pressured to attend church services in Brownvale, even though the United Church was their sponsor. However, they

are fairly involved with that institution. On their first Sunday in Brownvale, the Trans were taken to a church service by members of the congregation. They were rather confused about what was happening, because they knew little or no English. The family was introduced to the congregation at this time and a luncheon was held in their honor. The church officials are aware that the refugees are Buddhists, but this has not adversely affected the good relations between the church, its members, and the Tran family.

The Trans attend United Church services of their own volition albeit somewhat sporadically. Van himself attends at least two or three times per month, due more to his being caretaker of the church than to personal choice. Each Sunday he ensures that the church doors are unlocked on schedule and he helps old people to their seats, and undertakes numerous other routine tasks. It is obvious that he feels a strong obligation to the church because of its sponsorship of his family, and much of his motivation to do well by the church seems to stem from this sense of indebtedness. Quy attends church services approximately once a month. She does not understand the English services, however, and finds them rather dull. Ai-Lan attends about once a month, but finds the services tedious because she must sit still for such long periods of time. Initially she attended services more regularly, but eventually persuaded her mother that occasional attendance was sufficient. Ai-Lan prefers the more relaxed Buddhist approach to worship, as she can move about and explore the temple rather than having to sit through a service at church. Phong and Sy attend church rarely, not because they dislike the services themselves, but because they shun the thought of having to attend Sunday school. None of the Trans understand the Bible readings nor the hymns and consequently they find church services uninteresting.

The Trans therefore attend the United Church for several reasons. Van regards the institution as a social welfare organization fulfilling many of the same functions as did the village councils in Vietnam. This is one reason why he donates ten percent of the salary he makes as a church caretaker to the institution. The family also attends many of the social events that the church hosts, such as picnics and potluck suppers, and these functions provide many opportunities for furthering integration. Moreover, by setting a good example the Trans feel they can inspire members of the church to sponsor other refugee families. Furthermore, the Trans have a strong feeling of obligation to the church; Van repeatedly reminds his children that they must "be grateful for the rest of their lives" for what the church has done for them. Quy tells the children that they should take heed of the teachings of both Christianity and Buddhism, and that there is no conflict in doing so. She draws the line, however, at the prospect of a family member being baptized.

3.6.4 Changing Concepts of Leisure

Van feels that the way in which he spends his leisure time has changed substantially since he arrived in Canada. When in Vietnam, he attended many parties, drank excessively, and gambled compulsively. Today Van likes to spend his free time with his family and friends, and this both surprises and pleases his wife. Van believes that this change in attitude is more a function of age than the parameters of a new cultural environment.

Van's favorite game is table tennis, which he began playing at age eleven. He was a regional champion in the ARVN for three years, and plays the game now at least once a week. After settling down in Brownvale, his first sundry "non-

essential" purchase was a "ping pong" table. Van also likes to go fishing, for it was a pastime he enjoyed in Vietnam. He regularly takes his sons and their friends on his trips to nearby streams. Van also watches occasional movies about Vietnam, reads, plays tennis with Sy, and visits with local people in the nearby coffee shops. He enjoys listening to the local news and talking to different kinds of people. This pastime also allows people to meet him, which he hopes will foster community acceptance.

Quy's leisure time is often spent on domestic activities. She spends many hours cooking, which is her primary interest. She also makes items out of macrame, writes letters, watches television, and visits with her friends. In addition, Quy enjoys simply sitting and talking with her husband. In Vietnam she had little time with her family because of her work, and is happy that she can now spend more time with them.

Ai-Lan has little free time between school work and her part-time job. She reads a little, and visits or goes shopping with her friends. Her brothers, as mentioned earlier, are very active in sports. Phong also enjoys art, and has received commendations at school for his work. He learned these skills in Brownvale, but considers art a mere hobby and not a profession at which he can make money. Sy likes to roller-skate and to wander the streets in the evenings with his friends. He is a cause of concern to his parents, particularly when he stays out until 10 or 11 p.m., and they are obviously unhappy about the situation. Quy believes that Sy is learning adult behavioral patterns too quickly in Canada. She feels that in Vietnam the extended family could exercise a great degree of supervision. However, she and Van have had to work long hours at a combination of jobs to establish

themselves in Canada, and they simply have not had the time to supervise Sy as carefully as they would have been able to do in Vietnam.

The family members have varied preferences in music. Although none of the Trans play a musical instrument they like listening to music at home. Van and Quy prefer traditional Vietnamese music. This type of music is very soft, and most songs are various types of ballads. They prefer this music at least in part because they can understand the lyrics. Indeed, very little of this music is solely instrumental. Among Van and Quy's favorite songs are *Rung la thap* (Forest of thick and low bushes), *Ta tu trongdem* (Goodbye to midnight), and *Pho dem* (Downtown at night). They purchased most of the albums and tapes in the city although some cassettes were sent to them by friends living in San Francisco. All of the recordings they have were produced in California. Van also likes to listen to Vietnamese army songs and he has a few recordings. He and Quy also listen to Taiwanese music occasionally. They do not like contemporary pop music; they describe it as being "too noisy".

Ai-Lan prefers to listen to Vietnamese music and claims she can understand the lyrics. She also fancies western pop music at times. The boys do not listen to Vietnamese music. They feel that this music is "too classical" and, besides, they cannot understand the lyrics. Both Phong and Sy state a strong preference for rock music. Their albums include such artists as Supertramp, Dr. Hook, The Arrows, Lionel Richie, and Chicago. They do not fancy the more esoteric music produced by "new wave" groups. Sy in particular likes to use a Walkman, and this device seems to be permanently attached to his head. Ai-Lan claims that he often leaves it on when watching movies at the local theatre!

The Trans now spend their leisure time somewhat differently than when they lived in Vietnam. The time taken to earn a living has precluded having a significant amount of leisure time. As well, a change in the lifestyles of the family members seems to have altered some of their attitudes regarding the way in which they should spend their leisure time.

3.7 Perceptions and Problems

3.7.1 Life in Brownvale

The Trans were initially disconcerted when they were settled in a town of approximately 10,000 people. After Saigon, Brownvale appeared rather bleak and uninviting. Today, however, Van and Quy are happy with life in town. They find people friendlier than in the city, and there is much less crime than in a larger urban center. Still, Ai-Lan feels there are too few young people in Brownvale, and she finds life rather dull. Although she concedes that the town is picturesque and safe, she looks forward to the time when she can move to the city where there is more excitement. Phong and Sy share their parents' attitudes with respect to Brownvale. They have developed many friendships in town and are reluctant to leave. A few years ago Van and Quy considered moving to the city, but the weight of the boys' opinions helped convince them to stay. Phong and Sy are not enthusiastic over even the occasional excursion to the city, for Brownvale is truly home to them.

3.7.2 The Question of Nationalism

The Trans retain a strong attachment to their homeland, although such feelings of allegiance are less evident among the children than their parents. Van and Quy respond to questions as to their nationality by replying that they are Vietnamese who hold Canadian citizenship. Ai-Lan thinks of herself as being Vietnamese when at home but Canadian at school. Phong responds that the question of thinking of oneself as a Vietnamese or Canadian is immaterial to him. Sy, however, thinks of himself as a Canadian. All of the Trans have been Canadian citizens since 1983. Van, however, regards this status as being temporary, for he hopes that he can one day return to Vietnam and again become a citizen of that country.

As mentioned previously, Van keeps in touch with other Vietnamese through various organizations, and during his early years in Canada he regularly sent money to a Vietnamese group in the U.S. for the purchase of equipment and weapons to carry on the fight against the communists in Vietnam. He no longer does this, saying that it is more important now to help the Vietnamese in Canada. Van recognizes that he is too old now for combat, but muses that, if he had a chance to return to Vietnam and kill communists, he would do so. The organization to which Van belongs in the city is strongly anti-communist, and Van believes that it is necessary to be on one's guard, because there are communists among the refugees in Canada who report on the activities of Vietnamese here. He is concerned that some people in this country believe communist propaganda, and he does not want this ideology to spread in Canada. Van keeps a flag of the Republic of South Vietnam in his basement, which he salutes on occasion. He has also written essays on

patriotism which he has sent to various Vietnamese magazines, and one of these has been published.

Van seems to be more familiar with political events and trends in the United States than in Canada. He is critical of United States policy and also believes that the American government is not honest. He maintains that its policy concerning Vietnam up to 1975 was self-serving and erratic. Van is still angered at the U.S. troop withdrawals in the early 1970's, and also the curtailment of foreign aid to South Vietnam at that time. He claims that it is "better to be an enemy of the U.S. than a friend." Still, he believes President Reagan is a good leader because he provides a strong opposition to communism, and carries through on his promises.

Van does not understand the details of the political system in either the U.S. or Canada, and believes them to be about the same. He realizes the value, however, of responsible government, that is, decisions should be made to reflect public opinion rather than simply the will of the leaders. Moreover, Van rather naively believes that all Canadian politicians are honest, and that they do their best to serve the people of this country.

Van and Quy have exercised their vote regularly in Canada. Van claims to feel patriotic when he sees the Canadian flag or hears the national anthem. However, he adds that he feels the same way about the symbols of any country because they reflect the patriotism of people for a particular nation.

There seems to be a range of opinions among the members of the Tran family with respect to issues pertaining to nationalism. Van remains staunchly Vietnamese and views Canada as a temporary haven until he can return to his homeland.

Quy is willing to accept Canada as her new home, and puts her family's security and happiness before her love of the homeland. The children are ambivalent toward Vietnam and have difficulty understanding their father's sentiments. They would be willing to visit Vietnam for a vacation if and when conditions permit, but view Canada as their homeland.

3.7.3 Reflections on Canada

Van feels that one of the best aspects of living in Canada is the high quality of the educational system in this country. He also likes the moderate political climate and believes there is very little prejudice here. He claims that Canadians are generally open, friendly, honest, and dedicated to their friends. This rosy picture has a darker side, however. Van believes that Canadians enjoy too much political freedom such that they are overly-critical of duly elected governments. Moreover, he feels it is harmful to Canada to be perceived as having internal political quarrels. He wishes French-Canadians and English-Canadians would be more tolerant of each other. Van is also not impressed with the frequency with which people in this country sue each other. He believes court action to resolve differences should seldom be necessary. Furthermore, Van is bemused at the hectic pace of life in Canada. He would prefer Canadians to move more slowly, and take time to be more sociable. Van finds the Canadian winter far too cold, and he dislikes the vast distances that one is compelled to travel at times and the time that has to be expended on doing so.

Quy is extremely reluctant to be critical of Canada or Canadians. It appears that she is wary of making any statements that might cause her family even minor difficulties. She did admit that she would like Brownvale to have outdoor markets

as in Saigon, at least during the summer. She also misses seeing people in the streets, particularly during the winter months. The only criticism that Quy would add is that the temperatures are extremely low in the winter. An oblique criticism she once made was that she feels Sy has too many Canadian habits, and wishes he was more Vietnamese, like his brother. She declined, though, to elaborate on this point. Quy claims she likes the educational system in Canada and the personal freedom that citizens enjoy here. Quy is happy about their decision to come to Canada. Although these responses seemed to be given in a rote manner, she felt they provided an adequate description of her sentiments towards Canada.

Ai-Lan has very favorable opinions on Canada and Canadians. She feels there is much freedom here and that people can express themselves without fear of reprisal. She cites as an example the barbed political cartoons and the carricatures of politicians that are found in newspapers. Moreover, Ai-Lan believes in the notion that everyone seems to have a home of their own in Canada. Furthermore, she likes the lack of prejudice here, the high quality of the medical system, and the warm disposition of the people. Ai-Lan also likes the presence of a French cultural component in Canada, although in Brownvale this is characterized only by French language courses in the schools and the reception of broadcasts of a radio and a television station in French. Her major criticism of the government is that it portrays Canada as a land of opportunity while there is such a high unemployment rate. Furthermore, Ai-Lan feels that her fellow students tend to overuse alcohol, that many are on drugs, and that most spend their money frivolously on these and other items.

The Trans have extremely favorable opinions about Canada. Their praise of this country is so emphatic that one wonders if their understanding of life in Canada is rather superficial. It may be that they are unsure of themselves as yet and that they do not want to run the risk of expressing themselves freely. They do appear to have a lot to learn about the country in general and its governmental institutions and social structures in particular.

3.7.4 Problems of Integration

Socio-economic disparities are highlighted and associated conflicts are inevitable when people from different cultures come into contact. The settlement of the Trans in Brownvale proved to be no exception. Interestingly, the family is extremely reluctant to discuss these issues. Their rationale seems to be that because they are newcomers they should avoid causing problems and downplay the occasional difficulties they have had to cope with.

Some of the most severe problems the Trans have experienced involve other Vietnamese refugees. As previously mentioned, they were initially housed in a duplex in Brownvale, and the other half of the building was occupied by another Chinese-Vietnamese refugee family. This family had been privately sponsored by another group in town, and the Trans' sponsors seem to have thought that the two families could provide support for each other during their period of adaptation to life in a new setting. However, their hopes were not to be realized. The Trans had known the other refugee family while in the refugee camp in Hong Kong, and there had been an incident where a boy from this family had assaulted another child. This led Van to anticipate problems when he unexpectedly encountered the family upon arrival in Brownvale. He relates one incident where Ai-Lan had

planted some flowers and the neighbor's son had pulled them all up. Later, Phong was assaulted three times by this boy. Van spoke to the boy's father about these incidents, but says that the man refused to believe him. Van was reluctant to involve the authorities because he did not wish to cause trouble for his family or give refugees a bad reputation. He was very angry over these incidents and was concerned that he might lose his temper and assault his neighbor. Therefore the Trans decided the best course of action was to move to another residence.

Van is uncertain as to the reason for the actions of their neighbors. Both families had the same ethnic background and spoke the same language, and they both came from the southern part of South Vietnam. Both families had a like level of assets and they had been in Canada about the same length of time. Van surmises that his neighbor was overly protective of his children because of their traumatic experiences as refugees, and this caused him to defend his children even when they were in the wrong. After the Trans moved there were no further problems with this man and his family; the man was laid off his job in July 1985, and he took his family to Toronto. The Trans breathed a sigh of relief on their departure.

Another Vietnamese man in Brownvale with whom Van has had difficulties is a janitor at the high school. He is ethnic Vietnamese and is in his early twenties. Van says that the man speaks with a Saigon accent, and believes he worked as a stevedore on the Saigon docks. He was sponsored by the government and settled in Brownvale immediately after arriving in Canada. Van has had problems with this individual because he has not been honest with the other janitors nor his employers, and Van feels these actions hurt the reputation of all the Vietnamese

in town. For example, this man had told the other janitors that he had been a school teacher in Vietnam. However, his claim would border on the ridiculous because he would have been a mere teenager at that time. Van has been unsuccessful in getting the man to change his ways and has disassociated himself from this individual.

Van has had a few problems with other Canadians too. For example, Van made vain attempts to grow a lawn at his new house because he failed to understand the directions on the seed package. A neighbor who watched his futile attempts later made it known that he thought Van should learn by process of trial and error. The neighbor's indifference made Van furious. In another instance, a man from the neighborhood stopped by the Trans' house and asked Van if he needed some help building a fence around his backyard. Van was confused and upset when he later realized the man expected to be paid for his help. Van held the opinion that neighbors should help each other, without monetary compensation.

In yet another instance, Van received a traffic ticket he felt he did not deserve. He was unable to adequately express himself to the police officer, and this frustrated him further. He was so upset about this incident that he stayed awake all night, but eventually paid the fine without protest. As a final example, Van indicated that he was once questioned about the disappearance of a purse at the United Church while he was working there as a caretaker. Church officials as well as the police interrogated him. Van was deeply hurt by this and nearly quit his job at the church, because he felt his honesty and integrity had been questioned.

Van repeatedly mentioned that one of the reasons he likes to live in Brownvale is because he feels he is treated like everyone else, and this applies even to his workplace. Van knows that prejudice against Vietnamese exists in Canada because he has read about it in the newspapers, but he denies first-hand experience. On the other hand, his favorable image of Brownvale may be a result of Van's circumspection in steering clear of potential problems. Indeed, Van believes that Vietnamese who are discriminated against often deserve such treatment because they fail to conduct themselves in a proper manner.

Quy seems to have encountered some discrimination. For example, at her former job in a local hotel she was paid $3.50 per hour. This was 30 cents less than what her fellow workers realized. After four and a half years at the job, she was earning $4.50 per hour, but this was still less than what others doing the same work earned. Quy felt that she had been treated unfairly, for she had sufficient command of English after several years to follow instructions with ease, and she had learned to do the work well. The fact that she was paid a lower wage made her angry, but her husband told her to ignore it, and not cause any trouble. The dissatisfaction over wages was a major factor in causing Quy to eventually leave this job.

The children too have experienced certain forms of discrimination. They noted that when they were new in town that people would often stop and stare at them. Ai-Lan and Phong recount that occasionally other children called them names at school. Phong downplays these incidents, saying that sometimes "kids just don't mean what they say." Ai-Lan feels that she has encountered relatively little discrimination because she has an outgoing personality. She believes that

some refugee students are too withdrawn, and that they thereby invite suspicion and ridicule. She still encounters some hostility, however, and is rather frustrated when it occurs. Van's response is to tell her to avoid those people who seem to dislike her. He maintains that they should not cause trouble unnecessarily because they are refugees and guests in Canada.

It is surprising that the children have not encountered more difficulties, given the closely-knit nature of the community and the numerous social contacts that occur at school. It may be that they simply downplay problems. Indeed, they seemed to be reluctant to discuss the subject of discrimination at all. However, it may be that the more frequent social interaction that occurs in a small town lessens discrimination. Perhaps the easy-going approach and attempts to meet local people on the part of the Trans have reduced the discrimination that they might otherwise have encountered.

Van has a few criticisms to make in turn about other Canadians, although he showed some reluctance to discuss these points. He feels that Canadians often do not like to work hard, and that they prefer to work more hours at a slower pace to complete a job. He is also annoyed at people in town who are ever so polite to the point of being dishonest. For example, he will be told by a dinner guest that their Vietnamese food is excellent, but will discover later that the guest in fact did not like the meal at all. Van would prefer people to be more open and frank. Finally, Van feels that Canadian children do not take advantage of the tremendous opportunities they have to improve themselves, and he is particularly concerned over their indifference towards learning. Education is highly important to Van, and he finds this lackadaisical attitude on the part of many students baffling.

3.7.5 Plans for the Future

Members of the Tran family have different ideas as to their future plans. Van claims that he only plans a few years ahead and has no firm future goals. However, his dream is to return to Vietnam and help rebuild that country. It is obvious that he is frustrated at the prospect of never returning to Vietnam and seeing his family and friends again. His hope is that in five or ten years he will be able to return to Saigon although objectively this seems extremely unlikely. If Van dies in Canada, he would like his body to be returned to his homeland. In the meantime, Van hopes to travel abroad, particularly to China to visit the graves of his grandparents.

Quy is quite content to remain in Canada, and does not nurture a hope of returning to Vietnam. Above all, she wants to remain with her children. Her immediate relatives will in the main be living outside of Vietnam in a few years, so there are few family-related reasons for her to return to that country. Moreover, she appreciates the high standard of living in Canada and realizes that her children have more opportunity in this country than they would have in Vietnam. However, Quy would like to travel to other countries. She is especially interested in travelling throughout North America.

The Tran children have few fixed ideas about their future goals. They are too young to have made definite plans. They like life in Canada, but find the winters too cold. They would not be adverse to moving to a warmer region in the United States. Ai-Lan claims to want to travel and live in various Asian countries. She hopes that she can learn skills which would allow her to earn sufficient money to enjoy a high standard of living. Phong is content to remain in Canada. He thinks

of this country as his homeland and hopes to make his way here. Sy tends to side with his father on most issues. He therefore claims to want to return to Vietnam one day. Sy appears to have adopted many Canadian attributes, so this attitude seems to be somewhat incongruous.

3.8 Resume

The Trans have adapted reasonably well to life in Canada, although their experiences have been at times frightening, confusing, and upsetting. After six years in this country there are obvious differences of opinion between family members regarding most aspects of life in Canada. Moreover, there are a number of factors which seem to have been especially important in aiding the integration of the Trans. The background of the family members, their status as refugees, and the type of sponsor to which they were assigned have been important considerations. As well, the locale in which they were resettled, their success at securing employment, and their ability to pick up the English language have been key factors. Furthermore, Van's membership in Vietnamese associations seems to have been an important consideration in helping his family to adapt to life in Canada. These factors will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

[1] Harvey H. Smith et al., *Area Handbook for South Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 17.

[2] *Canadian Climate Normals - Temperature and Precipitation 1951-1980. Prairie Provinces* (Ottawa: Canadian Climate Program, Environment Canada, 1982), p. 33.

[3] *Tables of Temperature, Relative Humidity and Precipitation for the World, Vol. V.* (London: Meteorological Office, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1982), p. 104.

[4] *Canadian Climate Normals*, p. 33.

[5] Edward B. Espenshade and Joel L. Morrison, eds., *Goodes World Atlas, 15th Edition* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1978), p. 11.

[6] Ellen Hammer, *Vietnam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1966), p. 47.

Chapter IV

AN ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Choice of Methodology

The writer had first established contact with the Tran family in 1981 while teaching at a school in Brownvale where Van was employed as a caretaker, and consequently there was almost daily contact between the writer and Van during this period. As a result the writer was invited to the Trans' home on several occasions, and eventually a good rapport was established. There was a break in this association between January 1984 and September 1984, and contact was then re-established and an interview schedule arranged.

Six weeks of interviews were carried out with the Tran family in May and June of 1985. A further two weeks of interviews were held in August 1985 and an additional two weeks in November of that year. In all, approximately eighty hours of interviews were held.

Each of the family members were interviewed individually, when no other persons were present. As well, group interviews took place when other family members were present. Interviews took place in the Trans' home, and at the school where Van is employed.

The Trans were clearly informed at the very beginning of the interviews as to the threefold purpose of the research project: namely, that it was designed to gain an insight into the background of the family, to ascertain the reasons for

their decision to leave Vietnam, and to investigate the problems they encountered in getting to and establishing themselves in Canada. This was done to counter any misgivings that the University of Victoria's Ethics Committee may have had with regard to a project dealing with the fortunes of human subjects. Moreover, it was hoped that this approach would create an atmosphere of trust whereby the Trans would feel they could express their opinions freely without concern as to any hidden motives on the part of the researcher. As Sue Jones states,

> Researchers are more likely to get good data, and know what data they are getting, if the interviewees are told at the outset what the research topic is, even if initially in relatively broad terms, and why the topic is of interest.[1]

The in-depth interviews were not completely unstructured. The initial questions posed were based on existing literature concerning inquiries into patterns and problems of social integration. However, these questions were merely used as starting points for discussion. As additional topics of relevance presented themselves during the interviews they were explored in detail.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into an exhaustive debate regarding the qualitative versus quantitative approaches to research. However, some clarification and justification of the qualitative methodology utilized in this study is in order.

Through conducting research based on surveys, generalizations can be made regarding certain qualities exhibited by groups of people. However, because of the limitations of time, cost, standardization, and so on, it is only possible to obtain a superficial level of data using this approach. This is not to say that the data thus derived is unimportant, but rather that depth is sacrificed for the sake of generalization. Moreover, individuals are unique, and generalizations may be of

questionable validity when dealing with only a few persons. As John Hughes states, "it is undoubtedly the case that properties can be predicated of social wholes that cannot be predicated of individuals."[2] That is to say, the researcher studying individual cases is concerned with the unique situations experienced by people or the settings in which these people are investigated. David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels note that "in social geography . . . attention to the realities of context is needed to attain an understanding or explanation of phenomena that . . . cannot be understood by positivist-abstracted empiricism alone."[3] Through attention to specifics a more complete in-depth understanding of a few individuals may be attained. This approach also lessens the likelihood of sacrificing validity for implied reliability.[4] Irwin Deutscher has stated that the capacity of the quantitative approach to:

> . . . concentrate on consistency without much concern with what it is we are being consistent about or whether we are consistently right or wrong. As a consequence we may have been learning a great deal about how to pursue an incorrect course with a maximum of precision.[5]

Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan support this idea in their comparison of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.

> By observing people in their everyday lives, listening to them talk about what is on their minds, and looking at the documents they produce, the qualitative researcher obtains first-hand knowledge of social life unfiltered through concepts, operational definitions, and rating scales.[6]

In contemporary geographical research, one has to decide whether to use a qualitative or quantitative approach or perhaps even a combination of the two approaches. Because there is such a wide variety of interests, Robert L. Walker claims that "certain questions simply cannot be answered by quantitative methods,

while others cannot be answered by qualitative ones."[7] In an age where quantitative techniques are popular, it must be remembered that although "quantification is a very useful approach to reality . . . there are other approaches to the empirical social world. Qualitative methodology represents an equally important and valid approach to reality."[8] Therefore, the qualitative methodology utilized in this study has as its goal the understanding of the lives of only one family of refugees. It is not the purpose of this research to produce generalizations about all refugees, or all the boat people. The investigation of a single family, in this case the Trans, admittedly will not lead to conclusions which can be thought of as being representative of a group. However, it can be held that "what is lost in representativeness is gained in insight . . . ."[9] The generalizations which emerge will take the form of hypotheses, which may be tested further through both qualitative and quantitative approaches. "The findings will be presented in terms of impressions gained, as hypotheses rather than as firm conclusions."[10]

The technique of using in-depth interviews has distinct benefits. For example, the researcher may use his innate human qualities to empathize with the individuals being interviewed. Walker argues that:

> . . . the researcher is himself a social being and is likely to share at least some of the social meanings of those he is studying and will have directly experiential analogous motives, reactions, emotions, and feelings of his own. There is the possibility therefore to acquire understanding through empathy and to achieve the degree of insight that Weber termed 'verstehen'.[11]

This research approach is inherently subjective, but through such subjectivity comes understanding. Indeed, Herbert Blumer believes that:

> To try and catch the interpretive approach by remaining aloof as a so-called "objective" observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism - the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own

> surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it.[12]

Furthermore, the in-depth interview is particularly advantageous when the researcher is working on a case study in a cross-cultural context. In this particular study, for example, the presence of a language barrier meant that topics under scrutiny and discussion had to be dealt with repeatedly and different approaches had to be taken in order to obtain a clear understanding of the information and associated views presented by the Tran family. A more rigid approach simply would not have succeeded. Furthermore, if the services of a translator had been solicited to obviate the language barrier, there would have been his bias to deal with as well as any reticence on the part of the Trans in speaking through a third party. The related issue of trust was particularly important, as the topics of discussion often were concerned with painful or embarrassing events. The presence of a third party in the form of an interpreter would likely have caused many a hiatus, and also inhibited free and open discussion.

It can be maintained that the qualitative case study approach is inherently geographical. Richard Hartshorne states:

> That geography is a field of knowledge which is concerned to know and understand individual cases follows directly from its function as the study of places. The concept of place, like that of person or event, is in essence a concept of the specific.[13]

Therefore, an understanding of a specific person or family is an addition to geographical knowledge and as such is valuable in itself. To study two or more cases would mean that given practical constraints, including time and money, the depth of research in each case would be reduced. Moreover, although several cases would provide a limited basis for comparison, generalizations could still not be

made given that each of the cases might not be representative. If generalization is the goal, a nomothetic research methodology must be utilized. The disadvantages of such an approach, particularly with respect to cultural geography, have already been noted.

The material presented in this study also includes the history of the Tran family in Vietnam. This is necessary in order to provide a basis against which any changes following resettlement may be assessed. Moreover, the information contained in this history may in itself be a contribution to the sum total of knowledge regarding the boat people. Taylor and Bogdan state that "life histories stand as a rich source of understanding in and of themselves."[14] Moreover, it is argued that "more than through any other social science approach, the life history enables us to know people intimately, to see the world through their eyes and to enter their experiences vicariously."[15]

The question of bias is an important consideration in a case study. It may be defined as a prepossession or prejudice on the part of the researcher.[16] Bias is unavoidable in the research approach utilized in this study, but as has been mentioned, the bias inherent in a subjective approach may be used to the researcher's advantage. Indeed, Jones argues that "we use our 'bias' as human beings creatively and contingently to develop particular relationships with particular people, so that they can tell us about their worlds and we can hear them."[17] Bias is a part of the approach that allows the researcher to empathize with and therefore to understand the people he is interviewing. It is related to insight. Louis Wirth believes that this

> . . . insight may be regarded as the core of social knowledge. It is arrived at by being on the inside of the phenomena to be observed . . . . It is participation that generates interest, purpose, point of view, value, meaning, and intelligibility, as well as bias.[18]

Thus, bias should not be viewed with disdain, but rather as part of the process of obtaining an in-depth understanding of a subject or topic which is under study.

The inclusion of bias raises the question as to the validity of the findings of this study. Hughes argues that ". . . truth, if it can be attained at all, becomes a matter of negotiated agreement between social scientists and those they study."[19] Taylor and Bogdan echo these sentiments when they state that:

> . . . the issue of "truth" in qualitative research is a complicated one. What the qualitative researcher is interested in is not truth per se, but rather perspectives. Thus the interviewer tries to illicit a more or less honest rendering of how informants actually view themselves and their experiences.[20]

During the interviews themselves, the researcher is searching for an understanding of what the subjects believe to be true rather than what may be objectively true. However, the researcher must take his investigation a step further and compare the subjects' perceptions to other sources of information in order to determine, if possible, their validity. Therefore, cross-checking the informants' accounts against other sources of information is important. Hughes expresses this safeguard succinctly:

> Since the essence of social interaction lies in the individual meanings of agents, all valid social analysis must refer back to these. However, the insights gleaned in this manner must be supported by data of a scientific and statistical kind.[21]

Therefore, the remainder of this final chapter will be concerned with how the Trans' perceptions of their integration into Canadian life compare with the existing knowledge about this process. In this way their experiences may be related to existing theory regarding cultural integration.

The foregoing tract has attempted to outline a justification for adopting the qualitative empirical approach to studies of this nature. It has also delineated the

reasons for the choice and also the merits of a case study which is concerned in the main with people and human behavioral patterns. For, as Oscar Spate observes: "the soul of scientific method is verification and that is not always numerical."[22]

4.2 Themes in Integration

The following sections are concerned with an analysis of the features pertaining to the integration of the Tran family into Canadian society. Social scientists vary in their definitions of integration. Here it is defined as occuring ". . . when different groups maintain their cultural identity in some respects but merge into a superordinate group in other respects."[23] Through the course of the interviews with the Tran family a number of predominant "themes" and related questions emerged with respect to their integration to life in Canada. In reviewing the literature on integration, recurring themes were also evident. It therefore seems appropriate to attempt a comparison of the results of this case study with the findings and opinions expressed in previous research, and to do so within the context of these themes.

The following analysis of the factors contributing to and inhibiting integration, then, is framed within the context of seven themes. The first theme deals with the inherent experience of being a refugee, that is, the trauma of forced emigration. The second theme, sponsorship, includes the nature of the sponsoring group and the implications of such sponsorship. Finding employment contributes to the ease with which refugees will integrate, and is dealt with as a third theme. The fourth theme relates to the learning and use of the English language. The

fifth theme encompasses issues relating to the placement of refugees. The socioeconomic status of the refugees themselves constitutes the sixth theme. Membership in Vietnamese associations is considered as the seventh and final theme concerned with refugee integration.

4.2.1 On Being a Refugee

Being a refugee is often viewed as a harrowing experience and, indeed, the plight of these people as reported by the media has tended to confirm this view. The exodus of the boat people was a story of incredible human hardship and misery. Once resettled, the refugees encountered additional problems.

> Further compounding this feeling of loss and bereavement is a sense of uprootedness from a socio-cultural milieu within which one was born and reared, an awareness of forced dislocation from a social network comprising kin, neighbors, friends, and acquaintances.[24]

These problems were shared to some extent by the Tran family. Van in particular had a very difficult time accepting the "loss" of his country. During his first months in Canada, for example, he could rarely sleep and worked at three jobs at the same time to take his mind off his plight. Even today he suffers from bouts of severe depression, and on such occasions he feels homesick and extremely lonely, particularly when he thinks of the friends and relatives he left behind in Vietnam. Quy has a more pragmatic attitude, and occupies herself looking after her family in Brownvale, and being helpful to her relatives living in the U.S. The children were too young when they left Vietnam to have formed strong attachments to that country, and experience few feelings of loss and isolation.

As boat people, the Trans have encountered additional difficulties. The boat people served as a focal point for some of those resentments or prejudices in Can-

ada against newcomers. For example, one guest on a radio program in the early 1980's related that:

> Invective is perhaps too strong a term for many of the calls, which simply expressed fears of unemployment, fears of money going to others and not going to Canadians who were in need, fears based on sheer ignorance about the refugees. But it is clear that the media thrived on the controversy.[25]

Although the Trans state they have encountered few overt displays of racism, the attitudes in the community generated by the media-inspired "backlash" did create difficulties for them.

The experience of being a refugee cannot be viewed as completely unfortunate, however. "This trauma certainly has its effects on the subsequent adaptation of the immigrants, certainly not always deleterious or negative effects."[26] Therefore, in spite of the array of problems which such an experience engenders, there are a number of positive factors which are often downplayed, but which are exemplified in the Tran family.

The media, although later providing a forum for the expression of adverse reactions to the presence of refugees, was initially instrumental in focussing the attention and sympathies of Canadians on the boat people.

> To use Toronto as a sample: if every news reference is counted . . . 68 items appeared in the *Globe and Mail* and 109 in the *Toronto Star* during July 1979. The *Canadian Newspaper Index* records a total of 255 entries under the "Boat People" heading during the ten-week period of June 17 to August 25, 1979. During this period there were 190 items in the *Toronto Star*, 177 in the *Star* and 188 in the *Globe and Mail*.[27]

A direct result of this extensive coverage was the outpouring of sympathy which led to a large number of refugees being sponsored by organizations and individuals in Canada. This country admitted more refugees than any other country in the

world, when the number accommodated is expressed as a ratio of the total population. The Trans were fortunate enough to be accepted under the ensuing refugee sponsorship program initiated by the government. They also benefitted from the status of "legitimacy" that the Canadian government conferred on the boat people. Whether the newly-elected Conservative party after May 1979 was motivated by humanitarian concerns or the desire to make political gains either internally or abroad is a moot point. The important consideration is that the government thought fit to help the refugees, and the leadership they provided inspired many Canadians to follow suit. Y. Amir argues that cross-cultural contact is favorable "when an 'authority' and/or the social climate are in favor of and promote the intergroup contact."[28] Therefore, encouragement aided the Trans in that they were given special assistance during their initial period of settlement. Displaced persons so helped "have certain advantages over the ordinary . . . immigrant because government agencies mobilize all kinds of resources that are not normally available . . . ."[29] In addition to these special government services, the Trans benefitted from the favorable social climate in Brownvale. Their sponsor as well as the community in general were predisposed to give them help and encouragement when they arrived, because the policies of the government had influenced them in a positive manner. Indeed, Van repeatedly tells his children that they should be "grateful for the rest of their lives" to the Canadian people.

In addition to the foregoing considerations, the attitudes of the refugees themselves helped speed up their integration. The boat people fled an oppressive regime which had made life extremely difficult for them in Vietnam. The Tran family had experienced many deprivations, including the loss of their livelihood

and the two-year long incarceration of Van himself in a "re-education" camp. They also feared being sent to a New Economic Zone (N.E.Z.) by the authorities. "Many refugees believed that people sent there lacked food, water, medicine, and even tools to work the land with, and that being sent to a New Economic Zone was almost certain death."[30] The belief that they were fortunate to have escaped from Vietnam led many refugees to expect that the difficulties caused by their relocation would be minor compared to those they might have encountered at home.

> Moreover, they realize they have escaped death, imprisonment, persecution, or simply a way of life that has become oppressive and abhorent. That, they feel, must be paid for, and privations and sacrifices are but the price of life and liberty.[31]

In one study, a Vietnamese respondent put the situation more succinctly. "'We have been through so much 'crap' in Vietnam that [starting over in] America is easy' said one, suggesting a parallel to Nietszhe's comment, 'that which does not kill me, strengthens me.'"[32] Tran Minh Tung believes this strength comes from a sense of realism. "Realism, as a viewpoint, primarily means that they are well aware of the problems coming their way. In fact, they accept hardship and misery as the inevitable consequence of the course they have chosen."[33] The adversity encountered by refugees may also breed stoicism ". . . which extolls the idea of endurance and, by making a virtue out of necessity, demands that one should bear one's life tribulations with fortitude."[34] The Trans show evidence of this strength. They worked at low-status jobs in spite of their relatively high socio-economic background in Saigon. They also endured the bitter winter weather of the Canadian prairies, and dealt with a host of other problems with a surprising degree of fortitude. In this respect, the realization that they might have had to

face greater difficulties had they stayed in Vietnam undoubtedly assisted in their integration: the Trans were essentially forced to begin life in a new country, and indeed felt fortunate in being allowed to do so.

Additional motivations came about in more indirect ways. For example, the initial bouts of depression that Van went through over the loss of his country may have turned out to be beneficial in some respects.

> From this viewpoint has come a frequent device used for coping with almost every unhappy situation: to keep oneself busy, to work to the point of sheer exhaustion, to take two or three full-time jobs . . . all at the same time. Not only will there be less time for brooding and worrying, but the assurance is also given that a concrete effort has been made to attack the roots of the problems, for example by ensuring economic security.[35]

This description fits the Tran family. Van worked at three full-time jobs in an attempt to put unhappy circumstances behind him, and this led eventually to a firm financial foundation for his family, early economic independence from his sponsor, and a realization that he could financially support himself and his family in a new country. The self-confidence that this generated undoubtedly reduced his anxiety, and engendered a more positive attitude toward himself and his new homeland.

Much of the literature dealing with integration of people spells out a host of attendant problems such as the absence of familial support, the disruption of social relations, psychological disorders, and so on.[36] However, there are some observers who point out the beneficial aspects of having to start over from scratch. The experience of the Trans substantiates both of these points of view. They encountered initial difficulties and in some cases these problems still exist. However, like many others in the same predicament, they were relieved to have

found a new homeland, and they have made good in spite of the problems posed by resettlement. Their status as near destitute refugees would seem to have been an important factor contributing to their comparatively speedy integration into life in Canada.

4.2.2 The Role and Patterns of Sponsorship

The composition and diligence of the group that sponsored the Tran family were factors in helping the refugees to integrate into life in Canada. Gertrud Neuwirth has developed a useful framework for the analysis of the role of the sponsor as it pertains to integration. "Conceptually, the sponsoring role can be seen as comprising three dimensions - an instrumental dimension, a socially-supportive or expressive dimension and a dimension [called] cultural mediation."[37] The Trans' interaction with their sponsors will be evaluated within this framework.

The instrumental dimension outlined by Neuwirth ". . . refers to specific kinds of assistance and services given to the refugees in order to assist them in becoming self-sufficient."[38] This function is particularly important in the initial stages of resettlement, but has applications extending over the entire period of sponsorship and beyond. There were a number of qualities which the Trans' sponsors possessed that allowed them to effectively aid the family with respect to their "instrumental" concerns and thereby facilitate their integration.

A federal government report evaluating Indochinese sponsorship in Canada maintains that the organization of the sponsoring group is important for effective sponsorship. "A fairly formal group structure, with clearly defined responsibilities and mode of decision making, appeared to be more effective than a loosely-

organized group."[39] Those who sponsored the Trans, as pointed out in Chapter III, were very well-organized. The overall sponsorship committee was apportioned into sub-committees, and each of these had specific responsibilities. This arrangement avoided, to a significant extent, the duplication of functions and associated services. Furthermore, this approach made matters less confusing for members of the Tran family because it shielded them from being subjected to more than one point of view on any particular issue at the same time. The structured approach also maximized the efforts of individuals in the group and minimized confusion. And, this proved doubly effective in aiding the Trans during the first months in Brownvale when they were the most bewildered and in need of thoughtful support. This phase of bewilderment has been called "culture shock" by some researchers. "In brief, culture shock is a summary term which refers to the accumulated stresses and strains which stem from being forced to meet one's everyday needs . . . in unfamiliar ways."[40] As this initial period of adjustment was most trying for the Trans, the purposeful work of well-organized sponsors who anticipated and dealt with needs and concerns such as medical and dental care, insurance, housing, food and clothing, and schooling, greatly helped the family to adapt to life in Canada.

A primary responsibility of the sponsoring group was finding employment for Van. This was important for several reasons. C. Michael Lanphier states that "sponsors, for their part, are highly motivated to assist the refugee in finding work, as wages from employment reduce the amount of financial commitment which the sponsor must provide."[41] The Trans' sponsors were not under financial pressure because they had been able to raise sufficient funds through donations,

and they also had an umbrella agreement with the United Church national organization for additional funds. Moreover, they believed that it was essential to find employment for Van quickly in the interests of giving the family a measure of independence. One survey of sponsorship indicates that:

> Many sponsors interviewed asserted that employment and economic independence was also the priority of the refugees and that language fluency would be obtained faster when the refugee was integrated into the labor market.[42]

Van confirms this point of view. He was anxious to begin work as soon as possible, and started only a few days after arrival. His desire to work at several jobs at the same time surprised even his sponsors. Moreover, because Van was willing to associate freely with his co-workers, and because the latter in turn accepted him, he was able to learn English very quickly. Quy, in contrast, took a year of English lessons before entering the labor force, yet her command of English is very poor in comparison to her husband's. Therefore, English may be learned most quickly when it is used in the workplace rather than in formal English classes.[43] It is apparent that because the sponsors found Van early employment they furthered his integration into Canadian society rather quickly.

In their quest for employment, the Trans were fortunate in having been sponsored privately rather than through government agencies. Tony Richmond points out that ". . . voluntary agencies get involved much more actively in trying to help refugees get that first job that will help them to become economically independent."[44] Phylis Johnson found similar results in a survey of Indochinese refugees in Vancouver. "Increased likelihood of employment for privately sponsored refugees is not surprising as the private sponsors often helped in the job search, created a job, or knew people who would hire a refugee."[45] A 1982 survey of Indochi-

nese refugees in Alberta found that "sponsors were the main source of assistance for refugees in locating their first employment position: 44% of them obtained employment through their sponsors."[46] A national survey confirms this finding: "jobs were found by or through the assistance of the sponsor about *four times as often* as by C.E.C. [Canada Employment Center] offices or by the refugee himself."[47] Those who sponsored Van located all of the jobs in which he was eventually employed, including his present position. Therefore, it would seem that private sponsorship was an important factor in Van obtaining financial independence early, and as a result his integration into Canadian life was smoother than in most cases.

On the other hand, several studies of refugee integration point out some of the drawbacks that beset refugees who have had well-financed and generous sponsors. In a study of Indochinese refugees in Victoria, Yuen-Fong Woon found that "being over-protected, many privately-sponsored refugee households suffered from consequences of [economic] recession and downward mobility after one year."[48] There are a number of reasons why the Trans did not encounter like problems. Van worked extremely hard during his first two-and-a-half years in Canada, thereby maintaining a steady and relatively high income. In addition, Quy joined the workforce at the end of their first year in Brownvale. Moreover, the Trans were financially independent after only five months, and as such they were not dependent on their sponsors for long. Furthermore, opportunities for obtaining employment in the harsher climatic setting of Brownvale were conceivably better than in Victoria, which tends to have a higher than average unemployment rate than most communities in Western Canada. Rather than suffering a decline in

their standard of living as was the case cited for Victoria, the Trans have demonstrated a steady improvement in this respect since their arrival in Canada.

A second problem which is likely to occur during the initial stages of resettlement is that the refugee may become not only financially but also psychologically dependent on the sponsor. Johnson found that, "for example, some private sponsors . . . tended to do things for the refugees rather than helping them in making decisions."[49] As well, a federal report states that "a real danger in private sponsorship is its tendency to foster dependency on the part of the refugee."[50] Again, the experiences of the Trans do not substantiate these findings. This would seem to be at least partially because of the approach or strategy adopted by their sponsors. For example, rather than paying bills for the family, the sponsors provided the Trans with the money and made it clear that they should pay the bills themselves. This was a farsighted move on the part of the sponsors, and the Trans had to quickly learn the various procedures of making payments in Canada. To the Trans' credit, they learned quickly and indeed were very willing to undertake these tasks. This no doubt enabled the family to familiarize themselves with yet another aspect of life in a new domicile.

Neuwirth entitles the second aspect of sponsorship "the socially-supportive or expressive dimension [which] refers to the sponsor's attempt to establish a bond of friendship and trust with the refugees."[51] Here too the approach used by the Trans' sponsors was obviously appropriate. Furthermore, Gertrud Neuwirth and Lynn Clark state that "it is reasonable to assume . . . that the refugees' ability or willingness to integrate will depend, to a significant extent, on the nature of their interaction with sponsors."[52] Private sponsorship of this kind seems to have

worked well with many refugees. A national survey found that "[such] sponsorship provides refugees with a friendship group and source of emotional support during the crucial dependency period immediately following arrival in Canada."[53] This support often led to close bonds between sponsor and refugee. "In most cases refugees saw their sponsors as either adopted parents or friends and expressed satisfaction with the amount of social contact."[54] The sentiments expressed by the Tran family support these observations. The relationship with the Johnsons of Brownvale, one of the families in the sponsoring group, remains very close. The Trans consider them among their best friends in Canada. Indeed, Van and his wife requested at one point that Mrs. Johnson become a Godmother to their younger son Sy: this was indeed a reflection of the high esteem they had for the Johnsons. Today the Trans visit the Johnsons at least once a month, and spend every Christmas day with them. Numerous times during the interviews the Trans expressed their affection for this family, and it would seem that this contact has strengthened their desire to become wholly acceptable to the local community.

The role that the Johnsons played illustrates an important point in the published literature on integration. They had much more contact with the Trans than any other member of the sponsoring group. Neuwirth and Clark found a similar trend among sponsors of refugees.

> In all groups a core of "special friends" took the leading role orienting the refugees to the new society. They interacted frequently, at the beginning almost daily with the refugees, identified problems which had to be dealt with and had a major voice in decision-making concerning refugees.[55]

A federal government survey confirms the value of this feature. "The use of a 'contact family' concept as part of the settlement approach of sponsor groups

appeared to work well."[56] Again, this illustrates that the modus operandi of the sponsoring group, that is its use of a "contact family", made integration easier for the Tran family.

Another characteristic which the sponsors displayed was a high degree of empathy. Richard Brislin has noted that "empathetic people are able to understand the feelings of others, or to place themselves in the position of the others and to sense how they are reacting."[57] Howard Adelman states that this empathy is related to prior experience on the part of the sponsor.

> [A] very significant factor was the historical experience . . . of the sponsors as refugees; this was particularly the case if that experience . . . involved not simply persecution for ideological reasons but identification with the status of homelessness and helplessness.[58]

Indeed a 1983 survey of sponsors in Alberta revealed that 31.2% of them were European immigrants and that 14.3% had parents, close relatives or close friends who were also immigrants.[59] Therefore it would seem that such experiences, particularly as refugees, on the part of the sponsor lead to empathy and an increased understanding of problems faced by refugees. This in turn allows the sponsor to anticipate problems which are likely to hinder the integration of refugees. In this respect the Trans were fortunate in being sponsored by a group which had members who had an awareness of such problems. Brownvale is itself a relatively new town; its origins date back no more than 80 years. Therefore, many residents have parents or grandparents who were either refugees or immigrants. Indeed, Mrs. Johnson's grandparents were German-Russian refugees, so she had an increased empathy for the Trans.

It has been suggested in some of the literature on integration that if the sponsors or people in the community were composed largely of immigrants, that

resentment towards more recent refugees rather than understanding may result. "Former immigrants occasionally commented that they had had to adjust to Canada the hard way, by working hard, while the refugees received very generous support."[60] The experience of the Trans does not support this finding. This may be because the Trans showed a willingness to work hard, and this enabled them to be financially independent of their sponsors at an early date. In fact, after only five months in Brownvale, they were in a position to request that their sponsors discontinue support payments. Neither the Johnsons nor the Trans indicated encountering any resentment from members of the community because funds were being made available to the refugee family.

A related problem which has occurred in sponsorship is the lack of friendship between sponsor and refugee because of their "official" relationship. Kwok B. Chan and Lawrence Lam point out that:

> We have observed that sponsor-refugee relations are largely perceived by our refugee respondents as master-dependent relations underlined by a fundamental cognitive status difference which makes the cultivation of a friendship based on economic relationship difficult if not impossible.[61]

A government survey concurs. "The financial relationship, and the associated direct control that the sponsor thereby holds over the refugee's material survival, may lessen the effectiveness of sponsor groups to provide emotional support and friendship."[62] Doreen Indra has identified the basic elements in the sponsor-refugee relationship which leads to frustration on the part of the refugee.

> From the refugees' point-of-view, sponsorship is at once rewarding and extremely frustrating. Refugees are well aware they are being assisted in settlement in some very substantial ways. They are grateful but do not know how to respond. Traditional values demand that they reciprocate, but how can they?[63]

The Trans obviously felt uncomfortable about being dependent on their sponsors. However, the careful approach initiated by the Johnsons in particular, was designed to promote early psychological independence. This seems to have avoided many of the pitfalls associated with the "master-dependent" relationship as far as the Trans were concerned. Moreover, the early financial independence achieved by the family removed this impediment to the development of a lasting friendship. Nevertheless, the Trans are unlikely to forget their debt to the Johnsons, and continue to express their gratitude through giving overly-generous gifts. Mrs. Johnson remarks that at Christmas they receive far more gifts from the Trans than is necessary. She would prefer token presents, but notes that the family has a "tremendous desire to show appreciation".

Neuwirth suggests that the third main element in the role played by sponsors is the way in which refugees are made aware of the cultural attributes of the host society.

> The dimension of cultural mediation covers the sponsor's role as cultural interpreter. It refers to the sponsor's efforts to acquaint the refugees with those social and cultural practises which are basic to our way of life.[64]

Lanphier notes that "the role of the sponsor becomes crucial in the implementation of emphasis on cultural adaptation."[65] A federal government survey supports this observation: "Sponsor groups provided an effective means to convey information about Canadian culture and values, and to provide necessary life skills."[66] Finally, Woon found in a study that privately-sponsored refugees had a greater measure of contact with Canadians than did government-sponsored refugees. The latter "sought emotional support only among fellow Vietnamese."[67] The experiences of the Trans support these observations. All members of the

family show a reasonable understanding of Canadian norms and customs. Van in particular is very outgoing and takes advantage of each and every opportunity to mix with other Canadians. Although this may be thought of as being primarily a function of personality, it is more than apparent that the sponsors helped the Tran family to meet local residents. Indeed, Mrs. Johnson believes the Trans were quite at ease in the company of others after only a year in Brownvale.

A final element with regard to the integration of the Tran family is the role played by the church. The family was sponsored by the United Church in Brownvale, and opinions expressed by the Trans during the interviews conducted by the writer indicate that this was an important factor which helped their integration. This is borne out by the findings of other studies as well.

As discussed in Chapter II, church organizations in Canada played a major role in sponsoring refugees. Adelman states that ". . . the most important force in actually organizing the sponsorship of refugees, and in providing moral support and back-up services, was the Christian churches."[68] Indeed, a 1983 survey of sponsors in Alberta noted that 62.2% of them had church affiliations.[69] Church groups were generally well suited to act as sponsors. A national survey notes that:

> Church groups generally make good sponsor groups because of their stability and homogeneity. As well, the experience and orientation of many churches to international relief and aid, and to charity work and helping others; and the ability to spread the financial burden over large numbers of individuals were clear assets.[70]

Indeed, the umbrella agreement between the United Church and the federal government with respect to sponsorship was important in relieving economic pressure on the local parish which sponsored the Trans. "National agreements with the churches smooth the work for the local parishes; they also act as a psychological

cushion in regarding who is ultimately responsible legally and financially for the sponsorship."[71] Therefore, the sponsors were not forced to put pressure on the family to enter the workforce immediately, or to withhold services from them because of financial constraints. That Van did begin work early was a personal choice, and the absence of pressure on him to do so no doubt made him think well of his sponsors. This in turn may have increased his desire to become an acceptable member of the community.

Chan and Lam report in their study that church-sponsored as compared to government-sponsored refugees were well-cared for during resettlement.

> . . . those sponsored by church . . . groups reported that they were relatively well-provided for as far as accommodation, household furnishings, and winter and summer clothing were concerned. They were also more often given assistance in seeking employment and coping with various job-related problems. There were also more frequent mutual visits between the church [members] . . . and the refugees on special and festive occasions.[72]

The experience of the Trans substantiates these findings. Indeed, they continue to maintain a fairly close relationship with the United Church and its members in Brownvale, although they seem to be more concerned with individuals rather than the teachings and associated support that the church provides. Problems have indeed arisen in Canada between sponsors and refugees over this latter point. "For a minority of church groups the main purpose of sponsorship was to convert them."[73] Woon has also noted this tendency on the part of some church groups to be preoccupied with proselytizing.[74] The Trans admit to no overt pressure on them to attend the United Church, and their attendance rate has dropped noticeably over their six years in Canada. However, the fact that they do attend although they are Buddhist would indicate some degree of internal or external

stimulus. From the data gathered during the interviews it would seem that the Trans look on attendance at church as both a form of showing their gratitude to the church for sponsoring them as well as an opportunity for maintaining social contacts with other Canadians. Moreover, the church does provide a job for Quy, and this is a source of income she would hardly wish to lose.

The literature on integration suggests that sponsors play a key role in the resettlement and integration of refugees. Sponsors are important during the initial period of settlement, for they provide social contacts for the refugees and also opportunities to adapt themselves to the social conventions of the host community. Private-sponsorship of the Trans through a church organization has indeed had an extremely important influence on the comparative ease with which they have integrated themselves into Canadian life.

4.2.3 The Importance of Finding Ready Employment

The literature on integration suggests that the finding of ready employment by refugees and their ability to keep a job is of paramount importance. This section will outline the various arguments presented in this respect, and to what extent they are applicable to the Tran family.

As noted in the foregoing section, refugees experience culture shock on being resettled in a foreign land.

> The evidence suggests that when people move from one culture to another they frequently find the experience bewildering, depressing, anxiety-provoking, humiliating, embarrassing and generally stressful in nature.[75]

Judith Bentley suggests that securing steady employment is crucial to overcoming these initial difficulties.

> Finding a good job is essential to the refugee's adjustment. It restores a sense of self-worth and provides contacts with other people, an opportunity to learn and use the language, and a way to discover and conform to [North] American life.[76]

Richmond stresses the economic independence which results from finding employment quickly:

> The immediate problem facing any immigrant in a new society, of course, is getting a job, making a living, becoming economically independent so they no longer have to rely either on government handouts or their sponsor's assistance . . . .[77]

Indeed, a 1982 Alberta government survey of refugees indicated that "employment played a crucial role in economic adjustment, i.e. becoming self-reliant and self-sufficient."[78]

Finding employment not only alleviates immediate economic problems, but also speeds integration. Lanphier argues that by getting a job "refugees gain a type of independence which allows an initial adaptation to Western social life."[79] Christine Finnan found similar results. "Generally, refugees who are working and self-sufficient have fewer adjustment problems than those who remain at home or accept public assistance for extended periods."[80] Of course, once a refugee is caught up in a cycle of dependency and relative poverty, the chances of securing employment are significantly reduced. In this context, Lechi Tran Oggeri stresses the importance of being able to achieve upward mobility: ". . . their success motivates them toward being more completely acculturated in order to improve their status, thus, upward mobility is an important factor facilitating acculturation."[81] As Norman Buchignari found, most refugees are indeed willing to find work:

> Many refugees are actually eager to get a job as soon as possible . . . . They dislike being economically dependent and consider it immoral, self-denigrating, or a nasty necessity to be eliminated as soon as possible.[82]

These findings are similar to those of David Haines et al., who in an interview survey conducted in 1981 discovered that "second only to family in frequency of mention was the importance of work and the ability of the Vietnamese to perform it."[83]

The experience of the Trans seems to substantiate the aforementioned findings with respect to income level. In 1980 they had a family income of approximately $20,000, but they now enjoy an annual family income of approximately $30,000. This is unusually high given that in 1980 ". . . only 3.2% of Indochinese families had incomes exceeding $20,000 . . . ."[84] Moreover, data from interviews with the Trans suggest that, as previously mentioned, Van's early heavy work schedule was therapeutic in that it helped to ameliorate his culture shock. Success at their jobs also gave the Trans early economic independence, and this in turn made their integration easier, although the lack of job satisfaction continued to be a problem.

However, even if refugees are able to find work, a hostile atmosphere in the work place or in the community at large may turn out to be a source of discouragement. Often they have to contend with resentment found in their host country. "It is something of a double-bind for the bewildered refugees. If they fail to adjust they are lambasted as a burden on the taxpayer. When they succeed, they are accused of taking jobs or businesses away from native [North] Americans."[85] A federal study revealed that "overall, people surveyed believe immigrants add to unemployment, compete with Canadians for educational and employment opportunities, and add to their tax burden if they are unable to find work."[86] With respect to the latter contention, the available figures would suggest otherwise. In

1979 it was reported that of the "refugees from Indochina who have arrived since 1975, 93% have found employment. The 7% unemployed includes recent arrivals."[87] Moreover, the money expended on refugee programs is quickly returned to the host country.

> One doesn't have to be a sophisticated economist to realize that the government disbursements to the refugees will quickly be made up through the contribution they make as Canadians to the gross national product and the direct and indirect taxes they will be paying.[88]

The Trans deny that anyone has accused them of being an economic burden. Although repeatedly questioned on the subject they would not admit to having encountered even the slightest show of resentment. These responses could be construed as an attempt by them to downplay any difficulties. On the other hand, it is conceivable that perhaps their good employment record served to silence any critics.

The Trans were more likely to have come under criticism with regard to the second charge often laid against refugees, namely that they took jobs away from Canadians. Again, the Trans would not admit to having encountered any problems on this score. If this is true, it may have been because they took low-level employment at the onset, as did most other Indochinese refugees. With respect to low wages, Buchignani reports that:

> Marginal jobs mean marginal income. In the light of . . . occupational constraints . . . it should be no surprise that post-1977 refugees make very little money - typically earning less than $5 an hour . . . .[89]

Indeed, three of the first four jobs at which Van worked paid $3.50 per hour. At his present job he began at $6.00 per hour and he now earns more than $10.00 per hour. Therefore, it would seem that he worked for wages that Canadians often

disdain, and this may have tempered criticism from Canadians earning either high or low incomes. The literature on integration suggests that most refugees shared this experience. Richmond states that:

> The experience of coming to Canada for almost all immigrants of whatever nationality or circumstances is that they do not immediately get jobs that are fully commensurate with their educational qualifications or occupational skills.[90]

Gail Kelly found a similar situation among Vietnamese refugees working in the United States:

> The jobs Vietnamese held were not only lower-level, poorly paying jobs, they were jobs that held out little opportunity for advancement. Dishwashing, busboy, janitorial, secretarial, and day laborer positions do not lead to better paying, more skilled work.[91]

A federal government survey in Canada confirmed that this problem was also prevalent in this country.

> . . . Sponsors revealed that the refugees were often employed at "dead end" jobs where the ability to speak the language was not essential; and that future mobility was often hampered by the lack of language facility.[92]

The employment history of the Trans supports this evidence. Van has worked as a gas-station attendant and dishwasher, and is now employed as a janitor. Quy has worked as a kitchen aide and is now also employed as a janitor. This may have created qualms pertaining to the maintenance of self-respect and psychological problems in regard to issues related to social adjustment, but it undoubtedly led to the low level of criticism that they encountered with respect to the charge that they were taking jobs away from Canadians. Generally speaking, it would seem that refugees invariably worked at jobs that Canadians found to be of inferior status. Thus, although integration is somewhat hindered by a lowered status, the refugee is thereby cushioned by the reduced level of resentment he encounters.

Studies suggest that refugees taking low-status employment tend to pin their future hopes on their children. "The middle-aged refugees do not believe they can ever go back to the 'good old days' they had in Indochina when they had their own businesses and servants, but they do have a great hope for their children."[93] The Trans exhibit evidence of this hope. Van encourages his children to work, and all three of them work at one job or another. Moreover, he pressures his children to do well at school. Phong is at the top of his class, and Van encourages him to be the best in town. Sy puts up with hours of tuition to enable him to better his academic performance. Van realizes that he has little hope of getting a more lucrative job, but he is confident that through maintaining a steady income as at present, he will be able to afford to send his children to university. He is determined to see to it that his children will have the opportunity for fuller integration into Canadian society.

The Trans' employment history seems to support the finding in the literature concerning the relationship between the nature or type of employment and levels of integration. The ability to find employment immediately after arrival lessens culture shock and allows the refugee to achieve a good measure of economic independence and psychological stability. Earning a good income increases the prospect of integration. The relegation to low paying and low status employment would seem to cause the refugees some difficulties, but on the other hand this perhaps reduces their vulnerability to criticism by the public on the grounds that refugees are an unwanted burden on taxpayers or that they take jobs away from Canadians. Of course, the issue is complex. In this case, low-paying or low-status employment may also lead to discrimination on economic grounds. Still, the hold-

ing of a low status job seems to increase the desire on the part of parents that their children make a success of their lives in the host society. Therefore, what is lost in self-respect could be gained in public acceptance, and this in turn could facilitate integration.

4.2.4 The Need to Attain Proficiency in the Use of the English Language

The need to be able to use the English language effectively was a predominant topic during the interviews with the Tran family. To them it was the key to attaining an understanding of the host community, to making their needs and desires known, finding employment, and being accepted by Canadians.

Language is a fundamental element which distinguishes people of different cultures. Michael Argyle states that language ". . . is one of the most important differences between many cultures, and one of the greatest barriers."[94] Furthermore, it is to be noted that: "It is common experience that following contact, a language shift typically occurs which is more likely to take place in the non-dominant group."[95] The extent to which this occurs is directly related to the ease with which the minority will integrate into the host culture.

The literature suggests that the integration of a refugee will be in jeopardy if that person is unable to speak the language of the host group. Indra argues that:

> Of all these [settlement] difficulties, the most important relate to language . . . . Many refugees know little English and consequently feel isolated, unable to control their situation, and unable to communicate their needs and interests to others.[96]

In regard to the foregoing, the Trans provide a case in point; they felt bewildered and frightened during the initial period of resettlement, and were almost completely dependent on sketchy written communication with their sponsor.

In addition, there is a far lesser chance of being discriminated against if one is conversant with the English language. "Immigrants are especially vulnerable to discrimination if they do not have language skills enabling them to learn about and to express their rights guaranteed by law."[97] Although the Trans were reluctant to discuss matters related to discrimination, the incident concerning a traffic violation related in Chapter III shows the need to know English if one is to defend oneself. The incident reveals how frustrating it can be for a new immigrant if one is unable to make oneself understood.

One of the most important areas where a command of English is near essential for a refugee is with respect to obtaining a job. Buchignani found that "lack of English is a significant difficulty in finding employment."[98] Nguyen Quy Bong, in studies carried out in 1975-76 relates that "for all three surveys, language proficiency tended to be associated with chances for employment."[99] Furthermore, an Alberta government survey found that ". . . generally, the higher the level of English competence, the greater the chance of being employed."[100] The literature on integration also suggests that the level of satisfaction that is reached in the workplace is related to the degree of proficiency in English. Neuwirth found that ". . . one of the major barriers to employment and job satisfaction was the language barrier."[101] Moreover, in an article on refugees, Alan Forest stated that, "because of language problems, they have trouble getting good jobs, even if they have the skills. They tend to work as janitors or kitchen help for low pay."[102]

In Van's case, though, he did not seem to be greatly hindered by his lack of English. His sponsors had anticipated the problem and had found him work where

the use of English was not a necessity. However, it is a reflection of Van's personality that he quickly acquired the basic phrases necessary to carry out his work effectively. For example, he had his fellow janitors, who were for the most part English-speaking Canadians, teach him the vocabulary necessary to follow instructions and procedures on how to do his job at the school. Conversely, Quy feels that her lack of English impeded her ability to secure employment. However, it would also seem that the Trans' sponsor encouraged her to not enter the workforce directly upon arrival, but to look after her children and also take lessons in English. With respect to job satisfaction, the experience of the Trans supports the findings in the literature. Both Van and Quy have had to settle for low-level employment, and their lack of English seems to have kept them at these jobs. In Quy's case this is particularly true, and she laments her inability to secure better employment on this score. Van could perhaps obtain a better job now, although he has not attempted to do so. He puts more emphasis on security than employment satisfaction, and therefore continues to work as a janitor.

The Trans' experience highlights an additional problem, namely that refugees are not being used to their fullest potential by Canadian employers because of their lack of competence in English. An Alberta government survey of refugees indicates that "language incompetency may be an important reason for the underutilization of the refugees."[103] Johnson also found in a survey of Indochinese refugees in Vancouver that "if they thought there would be any [employment] difficulty, the main reason given was lack of English."[104] There seems to be no immediate solution to this problem. As time passes and the refugees improve their English they may be able to find better jobs, although discrimination may continue to make this difficult.

There is a substantial amount of literature linking the degree of competence in English directly to levels of integration. It has been pointed out that simply the act of learning English is an integrative process:

> The learning of English in itself produces some adaptation on the part of the "Sapir-Whorf" hypothesis, i.e., "the difference between . . . languages suggests that people speaking different languages must experience the world in different ways."[105]

Oggeri supports this relationship between the learning of languages and the adoption of associated cultural attributes. "The cultural barrier of language does not reside only in the difference of vocabulary, syntax, and rules of pronunciation, but also in the response pattern."[106] Beyond the appreciation of inherent cultural values through language itself, a deeper knowledge of a language allows one to gain a greater understanding of members of the host community. Han T. Doan argues that "language must be absorbed first before one can have a touch [sic] on other aspects of the new culture."[107] Moreover, refugees themselves perceive this statement to be true. A government survey of Indochinese refugees indicated that "language training was considered most important for the integration of the refugee."[108] The different levels of proficiency in English between members of the Tran family is reflected in their varied understanding and appreciation of the Canadian scene. The Tran children, for example, are fluent in English and seem to have adopted most of the habits of their fellows; they are obviously completely at ease in their new surroundings. Van, who now has a reasonable command of English, has acquired a fairly good understanding of the norms and customs in Brownvale, but he is frustrated and confused by some of the prevalent attitudes. For example, he does not understand why there is a lack of respect for education among Canadian youth. If he were more widely read concerning educational

trends in Canada, or if he was able to have serious discussions with teachers on this subject, he might better understand the reasons for this attitude. Quy has the least understanding of Canadian norms of any of the family members. Her English is poor because she does not practise it with members of the community and she does not use it much at home either. This in turn causes her to observe Canadian life as an outsider. Moreover, the lack of communication increases her sense of isolation, and she turns to her Vietnamese friends for support. This seems to further inhibit her integration into Canadian society. Indeed, a study by the Alberta government suggests the importance ". . . of reinforcing the need for more language training for women if their role of interaction [sic] with Canadians is to increase."[109]

There is no doubt that competence in English, or French if one is in Quebec, is a key factor in allowing the refugee to learn more about Canada and to adapt to life in this country. The greater the level of proficiency, the greater are the chances of more rewarding employment, increased contact with other Canadians, and consequent upward social mobility. The different levels of integration hitherto achieved by members of the Tran family and the varied aspirations displayed by them are illustrative of these issues.

4.2.5 Issues on the Placement of Refugees

The literature suggests two major trends. On the one hand there is clear evidence that refugees who are initially settled in smaller communities tend to move to larger ones. The assumption is that there are more opportunities for rapid integration in larger towns and cities because there is a greater possibility of gaining the support of a like ethnic group. Van's membership in a *Hui*, dealt with

later in this chapter, is an example of such support. On the other hand, there is substantial evidence that integration can be easily achieved even in a small host community. The history of the Trans in Brownvale tends to give credence to this point of view.

The internal movement of Indochinese refugees in North America from their initial resettlement areas to larger urban centers has been documented in Chapter II. To reiterate, the refugees have tended to "move from small towns to large metropolitan areas, forming substantial ethnic communities in Dallas, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Los Angeles."[110] In Alberta, for example, "by the end of 1980 [only] about thirty percent of refugees had settled outside of Edmonton and Calgary."[111] Moreover, "there were almost no instances of refugees who had initially located in any of the six larger centers [Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal, Winnipeg, Toronto] moving to another center."[112] There were a number of reasons for this movement to the cities, including the existence of a similar and supportive ethnic community, the availability of English instruction, and greater employment opportunities. In addition, it has been argued that refugees who were settled in smaller centers felt lonely and isolated. One study recommended to the Canadian government that "refugees should not be dispersed in an attempt to speed assimilation. This will result in further trauma and increased anxiety."[113]

The information supplied by the Trans provided some justification for the above-mentioned opinions. After two years in Brownvale the family considered moving to the nearby urban center, because they felt that opportunities for employment would be greater and that they would have the support of the Viet-

namese community there. However, a number of factors influenced them to remain in Brownvale. Van was gainfully employed in town and was reluctant to give up a secure job for the unknown in the city. As well, the family had developed very close personal relationships with their sponsor, and besides they did not want to lose an assured support base. Furthermore, Phong and Sy had formed a number of friendships in Brownvale and wanted these to continue. Moreover, Brownvale had a very low crime rate and the incidence of juvenile delinquency was negligible when compared to the city. Van and Quy were concerned about both the future safety and the moral well-being of their children if they moved to the city, and these reasons led them to stay on in Brownvale.

On the one hand, there are a number of arguments in the literature on integration which suggest that settlement in smaller centers is advantageous to refugees. One of these relates to the feature that Canada's population is multicultural in composition. It is argued that "migrants experience less stress in multicultural societies than in unicultural societies . . . ."[114] Moreover, Bong states that "certainly, there is awareness of the contributions former immigrants have made to the character and enrichment of Canadian civilization."[115] It may be argued that in smaller centers the residents are less mobile, and demonstrate a closer relationship with their cultural roots than do people living in the cities. Brownvale, for example, is predominantly a stable, farming-based community, and many of the local people came directly from various parts of Europe to farm the land. Most other local residents are second-generation farmers, and are well-aware of their cultural roots. Moreover, Brownvale is a major retirement community for these people and they maintain their connections with their homeland through a

number of cultural associations in the town. Therefore, it may be held that the Trans were viewed as "fellow-immigrants" by many, and that there was a greater empathy for their circumstances than might have been the case in a relatively impersonal metropolis. Certainly Van declares that he is well-accepted in the community, and spends much of his free time in the local coffee shops associating with the older residents.

On the other hand, the fortunes of the Trans in a small community is unusual in comparison to the experiences other refugees have had in similar situations. "In a poll published in *Weekend Magazine* in June 1979, the opposition to an increase in visible minorities tends to have greater support [sic] in rural areas."[116] Moreover, "the opposition is connected [sic] to low income, low education and little experience with visible minorities."[117] With respect to prejudice against minorities, Brislin argues that this is a function of "symbolic racism".[118] This term refers to "negative feelings about a given group because they feel that the group is interfering with aspects of their culture with which they have become familiar."[119] However, Brownvale has almost no visible minority; certainly not enough people to cause interference with the dominant culture. As the Trans were not perceived of as a threat, there was little or no resentment towards them. The situation in which the Trans found themselves in Brownvale is in marked contrast to the phenomena of sizeable ethnic ghettos in larger urban centers. In such circumstances the larger numbers of a visible minority may serve as a focal point for growing resentment and perhaps even continued harassment of minorities.

In light of the foregoing, a case can be made for placing refugees in relatively isolated smaller communities, provided of course that the placement is done with some forethought.

In a small center people tend to know each other, and there is frequent interpersonal contact. Although "contact in itself does not guarantee favorable results",[120] the potential is there for a newcomer to rapidly expand his circle of acquaintances. Moreover, because of the fewer number of people in a town, they tend to know each other better. The key point here is that superficial contacts are minimized. It has been suggested that ". . . casual, superficial contacts may often do more harm than good, but that contact accompanied by true acquaintance usually does lessen prejudice."[121] This contact allows residents of a smaller community to see the newcomers as people, rather than as faceless members of larger groups as is often the case in larger conurbations.

> With intimate contact, people have the opportunity to formulate some variation on this basic thought: "I always thought they were different . . . . Now I've learned that they are much like us in many ways."[122]

Such changes in thought are more likely in a small center because personal contacts are more frequent, and because there is likely to be a more measured dissemination of information between individuals in such a community. Canadians often have a stereotyped notion of refugees; they see the recent "immigrants as poor, mostly from third-world countries, uneducated, untrained, reluctant to assimilate, prone to congregation in urban ghettos, and as a potential burden."[123] But, in Brownvale the community rapidly perceived that the Trans were able to establish themselves quickly despite their lowly beginnings. Both Van and Quy came from a relatively well-educated strata of society in Saigon and were able to reason matters out, and their children have acquitted themselves very well in school since coming to Canada. All of the family members except Quy became involved in the community, and demonstrated a willingness to adopt some of the

prevalent cultural mores. Their success was evident to all and they have been readily accepted by the community.

A second reason given by many refugees for moving to the larger urban centers was the increased access to English-instruction in such locales. However, tutoring in English as a Second Language (ESL) was made available to the Trans upon their arrival, so this did not present a problem for them. Moreover, by making calculated efforts to mix with English-speaking Canadians and by not isolating themselves within a Vietnamese community in an urban ghetto, the Trans increased their potential for learning English. Oggeri found that "when refugees congregate together "they speak their own language and, consequently, do not improve their English."[124] Furthermore, a study of refugees in Denver illustrated that "generally, families living within the Vietnamese community had poorer English-language abilities than families living in the general Denver metropolitan area."[125] In the case of the Trans, the fact that they lived some distance from other members of their ethnic group compelled the family to use English more frequently, and this in turn aided their integration.

Finally, the literature on integration suggests that the refugee will adapt more quickly to the cultural mores of the host society if he has to establish himself outside the framework of compatriot groups. Paul D. Star and Alden E. Roberts conducted a survey on this topic. "The results also show that the stronger the person's Vietnamese reference group or traditional cultural point-of-view, the poorer his or her adaptation."[126] Moreover, James A. Pisarowicz and Vicki Tosher found that ". . . without the immediately available Vietnamese community for a reference group, non-community refugees may have begun to compare

themselves with the Americans about them."[127] Therefore, the speed of the Trans' integration may in some degree be a result of their isolation from a larger Vietnamese group.

It would seem that certain conditions must prevail in order for a refugee family to live successfully in a small center. The sponsors need to be highly supportive and circumspect, steady employment has to be ensured, and opportunities for language instruction made available. And of course, much depends on the level of tolerance shown by members of the host community. The Trans were given the necessary support and they have done well. On their part they have taken full advantage of the benefits to be had in being members of a small community; these include more frequent opportunities for close interpersonal contact, the attendant opportunity to practise English, and the empathy and support of the local population. With respect to the latter point, the strength of character displayed by the members of the Tran family was important. For example, if they had not risen to the challenge of life in a small center, and had opted for the lazy route and become welfare recipients, or had caused civic problems or if the children had proved a nuisance to the school authorities, they would have been looked upon with disfavor by the community. Placement in a small center can work to the advantage or disadvantage of a refugee. It is also evident that the impact of a refugee family is more quickly and profoundly felt in a smaller community than a larger one. In the case of the Trans, the more beneficial consequences of placement in a small center have indeed been highlighted.

4.2.6 Considerations Affecting Socioeconomic Status

When the Trans arrived in Brownvale in 1979, they presented an image of refugees which was quite unlike what many people had expected. They were resourceful, resilient, adapted quickly, and were independent of their sponsors in a very short time. In the course of the interviews it became evident that the socioeconomic background of the Tran family in Vietnam had a lot to do with their success. This is not to say that the Trans had money or material assets when they arrived in Canada; indeed, they had almost nothing. The Trans did not have a history of wealth. Rather, Quy's father had built a successful business through dint of hard work and with the help of his relatives in the workplace. Van had risen in the military hierarchy as well, at least in part because of his resourcefulness. These personal qualities are inseparable from the argument presented here that the Trans have made good in Brownvale because they came from a relatively high socioeconomic strata of Vietnamese society.

The literature on integration suggests that the culture shock which a refugee experiences upon resettlement is mitigated if the refugee has had a prior exposure to the norms and customs of the host country.

> The kinds of problems Vietnamese faced in adjusting to the United Stated varied in intensity by individual immigrant, depending on his or her prior exposure to western urban life and on previous class backgrounds.[128]

This idea is supported by J. B. Rotters' Social Learning Theory of Personality. "In the viewpoint of Social Learning Theory, the individual's behavior in familiar situations will be guided mainly by his previous reinforcement history in those situations."[129] In other words, if a situation in which a refugee finds himself is not entirely new, he will be able to use past experiences to cope with it. In Vietnam

Van had to associate with people of many different nationalities because of his position as a manager of a motor pool. Moreover, he came into contact with a number of Americans because of his military background. He was also able to observe their lifestyle, particularly in the period from 1965-73 when American intervention in Vietnam was at its height. Therefore, it may be assumed that when he arrived in Canada he had at least some familiarity with the social system and related values he was to encounter. This likely aided his integration. Of course, it should be noted at the same time that interacting with Americans in Vietnam may have led to some later adjustment problems. For example, cultural differences between Canadians and Americans may have caused some confusion. Moreover, American soldiers may have promoted an unrealistic image of North America to the Vietnamese. Therefore, contact with Americans in Vietnam may have mitigated the benefits of prior cultural contact in this instance.

Van's military position and the money which he received from Quy's family allowed him to mix frequently with people of different backgrounds. His gregarious personality has been documented in Chapter II. It may be argued that his ability to move comfortably in social circles comprised of persons of different ethnic background as well as varied socioeconomic status proved to be an advantage when settling in Canada. Moreover, one reason why Quy did not integrate as well may have been her lack of such exposure, other than for her prominent position within the context of her immediate family and their business activities.

Van's outgoing nature would seem to have made it easier for people in Brownvale to associate with him and his family. Brislin argues that interacting with unfamiliar groups can be very stressful for members of the host culture. It is eas-

ier ". . . simply not to go through the discomfort which stems from reaching out to people from different backgrounds and, instead, to stick with one's own group."[130] This is not to say that the members of a host community are unreceptive to newcomers as a rule, but rather that "people are unfamiliar with outgroups; they don't interact because they don't know how; and so they are unable to develop any sensitivity and understanding."[131] Certainly the initial media coverage of the boat people was beneficial here, as were the articles in the local newspapers concerning the Trans, and Van capitalized on the media coverage. It would seem to be a reflection of his background and intelligence that he was able to guage what was expected of him and to use this to his family's advantage.

There is some controversy in the literature with respect to whether people of higher socioeconomic status adjust more rapidly to a new environment than those from the lower ranges. Bruce Grant argues for the latter proposition:

> While humbler Vietnamese often did better in America than they had in Vietnam, responding enthusiastically to the new opportunities, many from the former upper classes were depressed by their inability to find correspondingly high-status employment.[132]

Kelly supports this argument:

> Cabinet ministers, generals, lawyers, radio station mangers, etc. found themselves faced with employment as cooks, waiters, bellboys, dishwashers, and janitors. Their newfound class position in the short run did much to precipitate emotional crises.[133]

However, there are equally strong arguments for the position that refugees of higher socio-economic status fared better in their new homelands. Bentley, for example, believes that Vietnamese professionals integrated easily into the U.S.:

> The professional has more contact with the dominant culture and shares the middle-class goals of achievement and success. The lower-class immigrant may place more value on family loyalty than on economic achievement.[134]

Oggeri argues that educated Vietnamese fared well in the U.S. because of the nature of their ethnic group.

> . . . Vietnamese are pragmatic and courageous and they have even more contempt for people on welfare than for those who are in manual labor. Therefore, they accepted underemployment, consoling themselves with the proverb, "Ai lam sao minh lam vay" (What other people can do, we can).[135]

Moreover, Padilla found in a quantitative study on acculturation that "the less acculturated respondents . . . fall into the lower educational levels while significantly more [acculturated] respondents are found among the higher educational groups."[136]

The experience of the Trans supports the latter argument. There are a number of factors here which may be important. Kelly's study, for example, focuses on the initial group of Vietnamese who left Vietnam in 1975 along with the last Americans. Their status was generally very high, and because they were moved hastily and deposited in the United States, they experienced significant problems of adjustment. The Trans, however, spent four years in Vietnam under the new regime, during which time they experienced a steady decline in their fortunes. At the time of their departure their fortunes had declined sharply, and they had had to come to terms with this new reality. Moreover, Van's traumatic experiences in the re-education camps had psychologically prepared him to accept hardships on beginning a new life in another country. After leaving Vietnam, he felt that his fortunes could only improve if he was given the opportunity to start a new life, although he did not seem to have the inflated expectations of life in North America that were shared by some refugees. As well, the Trans' experiences as boat people - their perilous sea voyage and subsequent life in squalid refugee camps -

adapted the Trans to a degree of hardship and deprivation. Furthermore, the Tran family was accustomed to hard work; they had done so to achieve a successful lifestyle in Vietnam, and were prepared to continue to do so in another country. In short, they did not suffer unduly from a drop in socioeconomic status as did, for example, many a high ranking personage, particularly if they had to leave all or a goodly part of their wealth behind. Finally, because Van had been in the military he was able to observe the steady decline in South Vietnam's stability after the American troop withdrawals in the early 1970's. As a soldier, perhaps he was more psychologically prepared to face the consequences of being a member of a defeated army. He anticipated future hardship.

Oggeri states the associated point of view succinctly:

> . . . the acculturation process seems to follow Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. Usually immigrants who are high achievers, alert, and aggressive manage to become successful and join the mainstream in spite of any discrimination.[137]

These considerations, when viewed along with the changing fortunes of the Trans in Vietnam, had the effect of reducing the culture shock the family experienced upon resettlement.

4.2.7 The Need for and the Implications of Membership in Vietnamese Associations

As indicated in the foregoing section, there are some advantages to be had with respect to integration when refugees are settled in comparative isolation within the dominant cultural group. Furthermore, any shortcomings of resettlement in such a setting can be tempered through the refugees affiliating themselves with Vietnamese ethnic organizations in larger urban centers. The Trans

did just that. On the one hand they were forced to associate with members of their small host community because they were ensconced within it, and on the other, they were able to establish links with Vietnamese organizations in the nearest city. Consequently, the family realized benefits from both sectors.

It should be recognized at the outset that membership in a familiar group is a basic human need.

> . . . almost all people want to form relationships with others that involve frequent interaction in mutually developed activities and affective ties such that individuals look after one another and are concerned with each other's feelings.[138]

As such, it is only natural that the Trans would want to join Vietnamese group organizations; there were inherent psychological advantages in doing so. There was little opportunity for the Trans to have contact with Vietnamese in Brownvale, and membership in a formal organization in the city provided them with a focal point or base from which to extend their contacts with other Vietnamese. This is of significance because only 19% of the Vietnamese in Alberta claim membership in a Vietnamese association.[139] This would indeed suggest the need for a more structured approach to the resettlement of refugees: an approach that would take cognizance of the fact that the difficulties faced by refugees settled in isolated communities could be ameliorated through the establishment of linkages with group organizations of their compatriots in other locales.

The literature on integration outlines a number of specific advantages a Vietnamese refugee could realize through being a member of a Vietnamese association. One argument presented here is that such an organization functions as a surrogate for the traditional Vietnamese extended family. The Trans, on leaving Vietnam, lost the economic and social support of their extended family. Bong

argues that, for the refugees, the Vietnamese extended family "remains the basic source of security and meaning to their existence."[140] Indra adds that "the [extended] family is the fundamental social unit in their lives."[141] Moreover, upon immigration such family groupings "give people a sense of place. To a certain extent they also help people re-define who they are and get their bearings on this new country."[142] Furthermore, the extended family is the traditional economic unit for the Vietnamese, and as such the extended family is a near essential prop for Vietnamese refugees. Individuals who find themselves on their own tend to flounder. "The people who seem to suffer the most severe psychological problems are those who are isolated from their family and friends."[143] It is understandable, therefore, that the Trans should seek out affiliation with a Vietnamese association.

One of the most important roles of a Vietnamese group organization is that it helps to lessen the culture shock experienced by compatriots upon resettlement in a new land.

> [A] problem is the profound sense of cultural and social discontinuity felt by most of the refugees. A sense of anxiety exists about many aspects of life, for their hard-won establishment here is very tenuous.[144]

Membership in a Vietnamese association helps ameliorate this sense of uncertainty. Woon found Vietnamese grouped together because of "their strong psychological insecurity in the impersonal world of North America."[145] R. Taft supports this finding:

> . . . changes in a newcomer to a culture are less abrupt when he is able to fall back into a familiar and accepting group within the new society for his primary social relationships, his recreation, and catharsis for his frustrations and balm for his psychic wounds.[146]

Van joined various Vietnamese associations because they obviously provided him and his family with both psychological benefits and practical advantages. They "receive[d] information about job possibilities, housing, schools, and the legal requirements of the new country . . . [and] guidance concerning what might be called 'everyday survival.'"[147] Richmond sums up the advantages of group membership when he states that "the ethnic organizations play an important part in facilitating the integration and adaptation of their members into Canadian society."[148] Certainly the importance which Van places on his membership in Vietnamese associations supports this argument.

There are a number of other functions served by Vietnamese group organizations in Canada. The newsletters brought out by various associations help Vietnamese to follow the fortunes of their compatriots in Canada and around the world. Some organizations focus on social events, providing notice of forthcoming meetings and theatrical events. Others furnish information on Vietnamese books, magazines, and music. For example, "Ngo Honah, president of the Toronto Vietnamese Fraternal Association, describes his association as a non-political, social organization designed to help the refugees adjust to a new society."[149] Some organizations though are more politically motivated. Ph Le relates, for example, that "the Union of Vietnamese in Canada plays an important role in reporting new events and developments in Vietnam to all Vietnamese in Canada."[150] Some groups have a more specific goal, that is, they focus a "common bitterness towards the new socialist regime at home."[151] The views expressed by Vietnamese organizations may also be directed at members of the host culture. "Another deep felt need was to explain their situation and their culture to Canadians."[152]

Van's membership in at least half a dozen organizations reflects the validity of the opinions expressed in the foregoing paragraphs. He has been a member of extreme right-wing groups whose purpose was to purchase weapons to continue the battle against the Hanoi regime. Other organizations to which he belongs are more concerned with informing Canadians about their Vietnamese culture while others are oriented to disseminating news about social and cultural events to the Vietnamese community in Canada and the United States. It would seem that Van feels a strong need to participate in the Vietnamese group organizations for a variety of reasons. He looks on them as vehicles to achieving fuller integration, for they have helped to reduce his anxieties. The Vietnamese organizations have indeed provided support, and have also furthered understanding between ethnic Vietnamese and members of the host culture.

A final function of Vietnamese associations is to encourage the observance of traditional mores and customs, and thereby ensure the continuity of a Vietnamese heritage. Woon found that refugees, for example, ". . . emphatically hope that they and their descendants retain such Confucian family virtues as respect for parents and the elderly and being good parents, raising good children."[153] In a broader perspective, Kelly found that in the U.S., the proliferation of Vietnamese organizations:

> . . . indicates that Vietnamese, as immigrants, feel they need each other in America: to help them assimilate into American culture, to preserve their cultural heritage, and to form the basis for the emergence of a Vietnamese-American culture in the future.[154]

Indra has stated a similar goal for Vietnamese associations in Canada:

> The leadership's activities clearly reflect an *integrationist stance* prevalent in their community: this is to say that they would like the Vietnamese to be able to perserve aspects of their traditional culture while at the same time becoming an integral part of Canadian society.[155]

Moreover, these goals are in harmony with Canada's policy of multiculturalism, and the associated extension of support to the development of ethnic organizations.

The evidence gleaned from the Tran family supports these findings. During interviews, Van repeatedly spoke of how important it is to him that his children retain their Vietnamese identity. He pays a great deal of attention to the question of their retaining traditional customs and maintaining or improving their proficiency in the Vietnamese language. For example, upon initial resettlement in Brownvale he requested that his family members speak only Vietnamese in their home so that Sy would learn the language well. That the youngest son has difficulties in doing so is a source of disappointment to his parents, since both Van and Quy are keen that their children retain their ethnic heritage.

The *Hui* is a particular kind of Vietnamese association which seems to have played a significant role as far as the Trans are concerned, but which has not been dealt with in the literature on integration. Indeed, little has been written on *Huis* in general. The *Hui* is composed of a group of people, usually ten in number. They may get together to fulfill a purely social purpose, such as perhaps a bridge club does in Canada, but there are added obligations. These usually include such things as providing emotional support when a member is experiencing personal difficulties, or the offer of labor for a specific project, for example, when a member needs to build a house. In this way the bonds of the *Hui* may be likened to the affiliations which existed between farm families in western Canada in the early twentieth century. The relative isolation of Vietnamese in Canada, and the fact that many of them have to make do without the support of their extended fami-

lies, makes this type of association even more important. The *Hui*, though, is more often formed for strictly economic purposes. The membership meets once a month prepared to pool an agreed upon amount of money in case there is a member who is in need. There is usually a patron who functions as a chairman, and he is often wealthier than the others. If there is more than one member who is in need of money at the same time, a bidding system is utilized, with the winner being the one who bids the highest rate of return on the members' money. For example, if the group has pooled $1,000, one member may bid $950 and another $925. The person bidding the latter amount will accept $925 as a loan and undertake to repay the group $1,000 by a stipulated time, thereby giving the membership a de facto interest rate on their "investment". Because there are no legalities involved, membership in such a type of *Hui* is based on trust, and the individuals involved have often known each other for many years.

Huis were widespread in Vietnam partly because poorer people had difficulty in raising money, and they were not familiar with or would not be considered for a loan by a bank. In Canada, Vietnamese are still often reluctant to utilize the credit system provided by financial institutions, and depend on other Vietnamese to provide this function.

Van was a member of several *Huis* in Vietnam. The groups with which he gambled often functioned as *Huis*, which covered a member's losses for a suitable rate of interest. Although Van no longer gambles, he is a member of several *Huis* in the city, which act occasionally as social support mechanisms, but more often provide financial services for Vietnamese who do not or cannot use the banks. Van himself frequently uses the established credit institutions in Canada, although he

has had some problems with it, as recounted in Chapter III. In the *Huis* he belongs to at present he is more often than not a lender, and thereby earns non-taxable interest on his money.

The *Hui* seems to serve a worthwhile purpose for Van and his family; the social connections allow him to be an integral part of a Vietnamese group, and this gives him the added benefits of belonging to an association, although in the long-term such attachments may hinder rather than foster integration. Still, it gives him short-term social support and ready access to money if he should need it, and it can also be a source of revenue. The *Hui* now functions in Canada and plays a similar role as in Vietnam. As such, it is surprising that this particular type of traditional organization has been overlooked in the available literature on integration.

4.3 Resume

The foregoing chapter has highlighted some of the factors that have influenced the integration of the Tran family. The fortitude and perseverence shown by the Trans, for example, helped them to become accepted by Canadians. A sympathetic and astute sponsoring group enhanced this acceptance and lessened many of the difficulties often encountered by refugees. Securing steady employment and learning English were also important considerations, and the success of the Tran family in this respect was related to the size and nature of the community in which they were resettled. Furthermore, the Trans' middle-class background was a major factor in helping them to cope with the hardships of making their way in a new land. Finally, Van's efforts to establish contact with other

Vietnamese refugee group organizations contributed to the ease with which his family integrated into life in Canada.

The research findings presented in this chapter demonstrate the role of an empirical, qualitative approach in cultural geography. The manner in which the Trans adapted to life in this country cannot be used as a resettlement model for all refugees. In some respects their experiences have been unique and distinct. Rather than being used as the basis for generalizations, it is hoped that the research findings outlined here may add to the sum total of knowledge concerning the integration of Vietnamese refugees into life in Canada.

[1] Sue Jones, "Depth Interviewing," in *Applied Qualitative Research*, ed. Robert L. Walker (Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Co., 1985), p. 48.

[2] John Hughes, *The Philosophy of Social Research* (New York: Longman Inc., 1980), p. 44.

[3] David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels, "Introduction: Contexts of Modern Humanism in Geography," in *Humanistic Geography*, ed. David Ley and Marwyn S. Samuels (Chicago: Maaroufa Press Inc., 1978), p. 12.

[4] Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984), p. 7.

[5] William J. Filsted, "Introduction," in *Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement with the Social World* (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970), p. 3, quoting "Words and Deeds: Social Science and Social Policy," *Social Problems* 13.

[6] Taylor and Bogdan, *Introduction*, p. 7.

[7] Robert L. Walker, "An Introduction to Applied Qualitative Research," in *Applied Qualitative Research*, p. 16.

[8] Filsted, *Firsthand Involvement*, p. 8.

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Chapter V

CONCLUSION

The foregoing case study of a Vietnamese refugee family has been concerned with outlining those factors important to their integration into life in Canada. The study initially set out the reasons why the boat people were not allowed to settle in the Southeast Asian countries to which they fled. It was clearly not a lack of available land nor economic opportunities which led to the refugees being denied rights to permanent residence in these countries. Rather, the explanation was essentially socio-political, for it was feared that the massive influx of the boat people, who were conceived of as predominantly ethnic-Chinese, would upset the delicate racial balance in the countries of Southeast Asia and lead to internal political instability.

Malaysia, for example, has nearly equal numbers of Malays and Chinese. Each of these ethnic groups is concerned about losing their present levels of political influence and economic standing in the country. Consequently, the Malays pressured the government to stop the boat people from being resettled in Malaysia. Moreover, Malaysia had experienced a 'state of emergency' for nearly a decade prior to independence because of the disruption caused by communist terrorism, and the terrorists were primarily Chinese. Therefore, there is a continuing suspicion of the Chinese by the other ethnic groups in Malaysia. That the boat people came from a communist country reinforced these fears, thereby strengthening the

determination of the government to prevent the refugees from settling there. For their part, the Chinese community in Malaysia too did little to muster any support for the boat people. They and their political leaders were more concerned with safeguarding their own interests; any show of sympathy for the refugees could have had disastrous consequences on their future prospects. Socio-political considerations of a like nature resulted in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines shunning the refugees. Moreover, it is unlikely that the refugees would have willingly colonized the empty lands of Southeast Asia because they would have shown a strong preference for urban life.

The response on the part of the countries of East Asia was varied. China took in a goodly number of the refugees. In one sense the reason for this may have been to demonstrate to the world that China was capable of exercising a degree of compassion to those in dire straits. Indeed, the decision to accept refugees must have been made somewhat reluctantly, given the comparatively weak economy of that country. Moreover, the social differences between the Hoa and the Chinese of the People's Republic may have been of concern to both the Chinese authorities as well as the refugees themselves, particularly with regard to the urban background of the Hoa. It is a moot point, however, whether life in the atmosphere of collective farming is to the liking of refugees who were largely from an urban environment. In the final analysis, the acceptance of the Hoa by the People's Republic of China may be simply an extension of the historical vendetta against the Vietnamese. With regard to South Korea and Taiwan, their reluctance to take in appreciable numbers of refugees could be linked directly to their concerns with potential communist subversive activity. In the case of Japan, however, reserva-

tions other than on economic or political grounds can be discerned. In this respect the sorry plight of the Korean minority in Japan because of their ethnic background comes to mind. And, finally in Hong Kong, burdened as it has been with refugees from China through the last few decades, the boat people were offered a temporary sanctuary at best.

Because of the aforementioned considerations, it was left to the developed countries to provide most of the boat people with new homelands, and there were a number of reasons why these countries were compelled to resettle large numbers of them. No doubt one of the reasons which prompted positive action was a genuine sense of humanitarianism. The coverage given the boat people by the international news media created much sympathy within western countries for the plight of the refugees. This led many governments to resettle the refugees in order to make political capital. In some cases, international political pressure also aided the boat people. Japan, for example, resisted accepting refugees until a fear of losing international markets led to a reluctant demonstration of humanitarianism on a very limited scale. The United States, which provided a homeland for the majority of the boat people, did so at least in part for the foregoing reasons. In addition, the United States undoubtedly felt a strong sense of guilt, as American interference in Vietnam was largely responsible for creating the problem. The goal of Canada's foreign policy has often been to show Canadians in a good light. Such objectives may often make our foreign policy seem too idealistic or moralistic. However, this approach was of benefit to the boat people. Canada was second only to the United States in the numbers of refugees admitted relative to population numbers in recipient countries. In terms of natural environmental con-

ditions and associated lifestyles Southeast Asia would undoubtedly have been a more suitable homeland for the refugees, but socio-political considerations precluded this alternative. Consequently, the developed countries of the mid-latitudes, with the exception of China, had to carry the burden of resettling the boat people, and the major part of this responsibility fell on the United States and to a lesser extent on Canada.

The boat people who came to Canada encountered numerous obstacles in their attempts to make their way in this country. Some of these difficulties were alleviated by the establishment of a reasonably efficient system of resettlement. The government encouraged private groups to sponsor refugees, and their efforts helped many boat people to resettle successfully. Churches in particular played a major role in the sponsorship and effective resettlement of the refugees. Some of the success of the Tran family can be traced to the good work done by church groups.

The personal attributes of individual refugees were also important to their adaptation to life in Canada. Refugees encountered difficulties for a number of reasons. In some cases, boat people who had lost their wealth when they left Vietnam did not have the initiative to begin again, particularly when this involved working at a low-status or low-paying job. For others, the English language proved to be a nearly insurmountable barrier. Often refugees had left most or all of their family behind in Vietnam and this caused varying degrees of instability, which interfered with their adaptation to life in Canada. Unaccompanied minors presented special problems, as they often resorted to gang membership to give them the psychological and material support which would normally have been pro-

vided by their elders. Other refugees simply fell back on the support provided by the social service system; many found this expedient, if not preferable to working at a lowly job.

While some refugees had problems in adapting to new circumstances, others integrated quickly to life in Canada. The Trans, for example, succeeded for a number of reasons. Van's convivial attitude helped him to make the best of his circumstances. It also aided his acceptance by Canadians, and the resultant frequency of contact with local residents allowed him to learn English quickly. The work ethic of the Tran family and their determination to make good gave them early financial independence. This in turn facilitated their integration with respect to material considerations. The Trans also had some good luck. They were fortunate in being sponsored by a caring and effective group. They also were placed in a small township community set in farming surrounds, and this proved to have some distinct advantages over initial settlement in a large urban center because the family members had to associate with long established Canadian families rather than with newer arrivals. Moreover, they arrived in Canada at a time when employment opportunities were good. Furthermore, the ages of the family members were an important consideration. All of the children could be enrolled in school immediately after coming to Brownvale. This meant that they met Canadian children, learned English quickly, and became familiar with Canadian customs. This increased the extent to which they integrated into life in Canada. Furthermore, because the children attended school, they were not an undue burden on their parents. If they had been young adults and had attempted to secure rewarding employment upon arrival in Brownvale, they likely would have encoun-

tered severe difficulties and become frustrated. In this respect, the Trans had the good fortune of having young children who were able to quickly adapt to life in Canada.

Quy has encountered, in many respects, the most difficulties in settling in Canada. Although she does not pine for life in Vietnam to the same extent as her husband, she appears to be rather unhappy in this country. She is somewhat house-bound in Brownvale, still finds difficulty in communicating effectively with other Canadians, and is consequently rather isolated from the mainstream of society. Moreover, she is separated from her extended family, and obviously misses the support that it provided when they lived in Vietnam. Quy reflects many of the difficulties encountered by adult refugees who tend to have matronly attitudes. Their cultural background leads them to remain in the home, and this inhibits their integration into the host society. It would seem that the Canadian government should be more concerned with this group when formulating policies pertaining to sponsorship.

Finally, Van's membership in Vietnamese associations in general, and *Huis* in particular, seems to have played an important role in the integration of the Tran family. The paucity of data on this topic indicates that there may be a need for further research in this particular area.

The purpose of the methodological approach favoured in this study was to allow for an in-depth examination of the lives of the members of a refugee family, and the ways in which they have adapted to life in Canada. It has been demonstrated that their circumstances, in some respects, differ from those of other refugees. Persons and families are unique, and the Tran family has to be treated as

such, both as individuals and in a composite sense. Viewed in this light the setting out of generalizations may prove to be unwise. Generalizations are useful in some fields of investigations, but in a study of the kind that has been undertaken here there is the danger of compartmentalizing individuals as a group phenomenon. Consequently, superficial knowledge may be the end product rather than real understanding. It is hoped that this study has provided an in-depth understanding of at least one small part of the refugee question, and that the findings will be of value to the Vietnamese community, other Canadians, and the academic community at large.

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