

**Josée Cung**  
**Narrator**

**Sarah Mason**  
**Interviewer**

**November 14, 1980**  
**A restaurant**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota**

**SM:** I'm talking to Josée Cung on November 14, 1980 in Saint Paul, Minnesota. And we're going to talk generally about the Vietnamese community. Could you begin with some information, whatever you know, about the organizations in the community?

**JC:** Okay. Well, where I'd like to first start is that as far as I know, from the most recent statistics that I've got, and those were obtained from the Office of Refugees, the number of the Vietnamese refugees that have been resettled here is now about four thousand and five hundred.

**SM:** This is Vietnamese?

**JC:** Yes, and I'm just talking about the Vietnamese. I'm not talking about the other cultures at all.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** I think that's what you want. I mean, I . . .

**SM:** Yes. Yes. That's exactly it.

**JC:** However, those statistics are in a way misleading, because the Office of Refugees keep on changing that. And also they are talking about not recording second migration. People that move from other areas into this community, you know, into the Twin Cities. And also they're not taking account of those who are moving out.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** So I think their number is primarily based on welfare lists and also on, you know, information from the Vietnamese circles that [unclear]. To be more specific about those groups, I understand that the majority of them were formed . . . well, first of all, let's go back a little bit. Most of the Vietnamese there are here, there are two types. Those who have been initially from 1975, and they are . . . to date they are fairly resettled, they are very . . . they are, you know, doing very well in their resettlement. They . . . all of them have got houses and, you know, good

occupations, and really enjoying it, and their kids are in school. And very few of them are considering moving at all because they are beginning to like it a lot, you know, here.

**SM:** Are these largely professionals then or . . . ?

**JC:** It's hard to say, when you mean professional . . . now, what we have, and I hope that we will pick that up later on, is the fact that there have been changes in occupation and in social classes to what originally was, you know.

**SM:** Yes. That happens in immigration. Yes.

**JC:** Yes. So . . . it's very difficult just to say across the board that, yes, it's just the professionals that get good jobs, that get settled down, you know.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**JC:** And I have to refer to what I mean by professional. Do I mean people that start by being professionals in Vietnam, or who just got through school here and become professional here?

**SM:** Yes. This is a difference.

**JC:** So there is that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** However, you know, just say that, on the whole, those who were here in 1975 and have had time to resettle have done very well.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Now there are more recent ones. And I . . . again, those are information that I've got . . . not the [unclear] but information that I have gotten from my job. Most of them are ethnic Chinese Vietnamese. Most of them have been resettled in areas outside of the Twin Cities. You know, in communities like Lindstrom . . .

**SM:** Oh, in the outstate . . .

**JC:** Not outstate, within the state, and outside of the metropolitan area.

**SM:** Yes. Yes, we use the term outstate, not out-of-state, but outstate to mean not in the city.

**JC:** Oh, really? I didn't know [unclear].

**SM:** Yes, it's a Minnesota term, I think.

**JC:** Oh.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** Why do you do that? What's the connotation?

**SM:** They mean *out* in the countryside, I guess, or the small towns.

**JC:** Oh. Oh yes, like Lindstrom or . . .

**SM:** Yes. Yes.

**JC:** In the North, apparently.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** I've been to a couple workshops related to my work, and I've heard of, you know, way out counties, there have been one or two families of five [unclear] and that are all . . .

**SM:** Do they stay there?

**JC:** Well, they are fairly recent, so I presume because of that they're staying. How long they're staying, I'm not sure.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** See and but those are recent—when I mean recent, maybe in the last year or two years. But because those are ethnic Chinese, they have larger problems in the sense of language, of, you know, and because they were merchants and, you know, they have no skills, it's harder for them to get to work and they don't have capital to start their businesses.

**SM:** Oh, yes. That's really hard to [unclear].

**JC:** Their resettlement is going to be a little bit longer, and therefore they tend to remain where they are because that's the only place where they can get help. So those are, you know, in a very rough sketch . . .

**SM:** Did you say they had large families? Or is that mixed?

**JC:** I really don't . . . I don't have . . . that I would, you know, make the assumption that they don't just come in a small group of like a couple with one child.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Yes.

**JC:** Usually it's a large family of nine, ten . . . you know, things like that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** However, it's . . . you know, it's just my assumption, and I don't have any things to back that up.

**SM:** Is Lindstrom a particularly concentrated area at all?

**JC:** Not really. I only know about them because, as I said, you know, they invited us to come out one day. And I . . . as it turned out, they were interested in knowing about the Vietnamese culture in order to be able to deal with these people. And they were at a loss because they couldn't speak English and there was no way to communicate.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** And they got in touch with the Vietnamese Cultural Association and [Josée's husband] Tien [Thuc Cung] and Dam [Nyugen] and [Vu Khac] Khoan was putting up these things. As it turned out, I was just the person who was to be talking to the person who organized it. And she wants me to talk to these people. They couldn't even talk Vietnamese!

**SM:** Oh, no. [Gasps]

**JC:** As that turned out, they were not even . . .

**SM:** And they've lived there quite a while!

**JC:** They were Chinese. Ethnic Chinese Vietnamese citizens.

**SM:** Oh . . . [sighs]

**JC:** However, even within the Chinese community they were a very small group belonging to the Hainan, you know, of the other . . . not the Cantonese, which are the largest group of Chinese.

**SM:** Oh, yes. The Hainan? On that island?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Actually, they were Hre. I don't know the . . .

**SM:** [Unclear] or . . .

**JC:** We call them Hre, I don't what the English . . .

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** But they . . . they couldn't even speak . . . and I . . . I used Cantonese with them, but they . . .

**SM:** They couldn't speak that either. That varies so much.

**JC:** Well, they understand one or two words, but they couldn't understand even Cantonese.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Oh, no.

**JC:** And they were there . . . they were seen as Vietnamese.

**SM:** Oh . . . [sighs] Can you imagine?

**JC:** So you can imagine. And then finally when I did [unclear]. You know, but I couldn't explain all this to the sponsor, it didn't . . . you know, it was . . .

**SM:** [Sighs]

**JC:** I didn't think it would . . . and they were so scared.

**SM:** The people, the Chinese?

**JC:** The Chinese.

**SM:** Oh. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Because they want to be identified as Vietnamese.

**SM:** Oh, they *do* want to?

**JC:** They do—well, for political reasons, I guess, because . . .

**SM:** That's one thing I've been wondering about for these chapters, you know, which group they should go with. I think the Vietnamese, probably, since they *came* with the Vietnamese.

**JC:** No, they *are* Vietnamese in the sense where in Vietnam they've lived for maybe generations, but they were [unclear] the government never insisted that they have to learn the language or anything like that. However, they did have the option of taking up Vietnamese citizenship, which they did.

**SM:** Oh, they did?

**JC:** They have to.

**SM:** Did most of them or just this group?

**JC:** In 1956 there was a law ordering them.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** To declare whether they want to be Vietnamese or if they will want to be Chinese, they may have to pay foreign taxes.

**SM:** Oh, I see. So that wouldn't be very advantageous. [Chuckles]

**JC:** So but it was not . . . nobody could force them to become Vietnamese. There was *incentive* for them to become Vietnamese.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** In the sense that if you are Chinese, and you were a merchant, and you were taking up Vietnamese citizenship, you don't . . . there are benefits.

**SM:** Oh, yes. That was a smart idea.

**JC:** You know, you could practice your trade without having to pay taxes . . . a number of other taxes.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** However, if you want to remain Chinese and declare that, you'll be registered as a foreigner working or practicing your business in Vietnam.

**SM:** I see. That would be very disadvantaged, yes.

**JC:** And therefore you'd be liable to pay a certain type of taxes that only apply to foreigners, French, American, or British, are examples. So they . . . a lot of them, for that reason, opt for Vietnamese nationality.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** And, you know, it dates it from that. Later on, it was still the same thing, you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So in many senses, they were Vietnamese in the sense where they carry Vietnamese citizenship.

**SM:** Yes. But they haven't learned the language.

**JC:** But they never have to. They *never* have to.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** There was no such a thing which forced them to do that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** They could have their own school, they could speak their own language, keep their own . . . you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** We were . . . the government were . . .

**SM:** Was there some trend towards sending their children to Vietnamese schools now? Because a couple I've talked to did go to Vietnamese school. He's a young . . . he's a student now at the U, and he was . . .

**JC:** Well, if they want . . . well, they are always . . . there's nothing that compares them, as I said, but they could see that there was advantage.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Because the Chinese school was supported mainly, you know, themselves.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And it is closed there, they couldn't get . . .

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** Or there was like scholarships, they were giving out incentives for people that could compete, you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Like for me, I went on a scholarship, but only because I learned Vietnamese, I learned French. If they were to send their kids to a Chinese school, they wouldn't be able to compete for scholarships.

**SM:** Mmmm.

**JC:** So that in the end, yes, people do . . . you know, the Chinese did realize that in order to compete with the best educational opportunity, you have to put your school . . . your kids through the normal national educational system.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** You just can't go on your own. Although they do have their . . . usually at an elementary level.

**SM:** Well, there is some Chinese university in Singapore, I guess, isn't there? That some overseas people [unclear].

**JC:** Yes, but there's no . . . Scholarships were not given to the Chinese minority. They were given to the Vietnamese government.

**SM:** Yes. Sure.

**JC:** Yes, it's for Vietnamese who can compete, you know.

**SM:** Right, naturally enough. [Chuckles]

**JC:** So, you know, so . . .

**SM:** Well, that's interesting. What did you call those people, He?

**JC:** He, H-E. [Transcriber's note: It sounds like she may be referring to the group of people known as Hre. However, there was also a group of some ethnic Chinese who were referred to as Hoa. So I'm not sure what is the correct term, and it sounds more like Hre in the way she says it, so I've used Hre here in this transcript.]

**SM:** Oh, just H-E.

**JC:** I don't know what . . .

**SM:** Were there quite a few of that particular group in Lindstrom or . . .?

**JC:** Yes, but they're primarily in the South of Vietnam, especially around the provinces around Cambodia, for some reason.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Yes, I don't know why. Anyway, to go back to, you know, the case of Minnesota. So that's it. But, as I said, my information is very scattered and, you know, I'm not really up to date as to who's who here.

**SM:** Yes. You haven't had word of the proportions of ethnic Chinese to the rest of the Vietnamese community?

**JC:** Here?

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Nobody knows.

**SM:** [Laughing] Nobody knows, that's right.

**JC:** Even the Office of Refugees doesn't know, because they don't do that.

**SM:** They don't seem to know at all.

**JC:** No.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** Because they don't . . . they don't record it.

**SM:** Yes, that is a problem as far as research.

**JC:** And the Chinese themselves, I would suspect they are fairly reluctant to declare that, you know, to go . . .

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** They don't want . . . they don't hide it. However, they don't go and tell the Office of Refugees, "Look, I am not Vietnamese." You know, they know that.

**SM:** It wouldn't pay off. [Chuckles]

**JC:** No. So, you see, and when you don't do that, and there's . . . in the official record of immigration, whatever, you are just the . . . somebody from Vietnam you are recorded Vietnamese. It's very hard to get a handle on it.

**SM:** Sure. Right.

**JC:** Maybe somebody like you, who are interested in the ethnic origins of each group, then you . . . you know, you should contact the Office of Refugees.

**SM:** Put a little pressure on them.

**JC:** If they will have it, a national policy to say, well, we would like to be able to record the ethnic origin of those groups that are coming in, you know.

**SM:** That's a good idea. Yes. That's a good idea, because there are ethnic Chinese with the Cambodians and Russians and so on, too.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** This is very good.

**JC:** Really? When we came from [unclear] to say, you know, [unclear] where were you born? And if you are born in Vietnam, you are Vietnamese. If you are born Cambodian, then Cambodia.

**SM:** Oh, it's strictly where you're born. What about in the latest census? Did they ask you a question about . . . ?

**JC:** In here? I'm not sure if Tien was doing that. I suspect with it . . . but I would again be very suspicious of the Chinese coming out and saying that . . .

**SM:** They would say they were Vietnamese, probably.

**JC:** Some probably wouldn't mind to say that they are of origin, but, you know, I suspect that unless they really are asked to stress that, they will just keep it and say they are Vietnamese. I don't want to kind of put the blame on them. I think they . . . it's just that, you know, for your interests, it seems to be [unclear] important to stress.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** But however, for their purpose of resettlement, they just want to be Vietnamese and be resettled, you know.

**SM:** Yes. And then some of the . . .

**JC:** It's not that they are hiding or they are . . .

**SM:** No.

**JC:** You know, I don't think it's intentional.

**SM:** And the officials that are deciding this are probably not at all concerned about . . . if they're aware even. [Chuckles] I see. Well . . .

**JC:** Now, most of the group that you've got there are really Vietnamese.

**SM:** That group here in Minnesota.

**JC:** Yes. The group, yes. And as you can see . . .

**SM:** Oh, these.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes, ethnic Chinese don't seem to have any organizations.

**JC:** No association, not yet, anyway.

**SM:** Oh, you think they will though?

**JC:** Ah, if they do . . . What I have found is that the ethnic Chinese who are here will tend to touch base with the Chinese that are already here, like some of the . . .

**SM:** Oh, the older immigrants.

**JC:** I've noticed like some of the Chinese Oriental grocery stores are employing ethnic Chinese Vietnamese.

**SM:** Ah.

**JC:** Primarily because they've got clientele of Vietnamese who come in and do not speak Chinese or English.

**SM:** Oh, yes. And these would buy . . .

**JC:** And they like to have one of those kinds . . . now there's one grocery store here which is called the Hong Kong International whatever.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** These people are Chinese but from Vietnam.

**SM:** That . . . I must get up there. It's on Broadway, isn't it?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And they are Chinese but they are . . . they are Vietnamese in, you know, in nationality. And that guy speaks . . . and they cater primarily to Vietnamese speakers. And that other Chinese

grocery store, they do not import a lot of things . . . you know, it's similar but the Vietnamese prefer other kinds of goods.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And he caters primarily to the Vietnamese clientele.

**SM:** To the Vietnamese. Oh.

**JC:** And he even gets supplies from, you know, Vietnamese wholesalers in California or Chicago, wherever he can find the right . . .

**SM:** I see. More than his Chinese things or . . .?

**JC:** Because of the good that we prefer to others. Like some of the sausage that are very . . . you know, they have Chinese sausage, which we use, too, but we also . . .

**SM:** Oh, do you? That lap cheong?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** We use, too, but we also have our own.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And the Chinese don't make that. The Vietnamese make that.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** So that store has got that.

**SM:** Ah.

**JC:** Or but like the case of International House over in Minneapolis. They've got two boys working there, two Chinese boys from Vietnam.

**SM:** International House or International Institute?

**JC:** No, International House. It's a grocery store.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, yes. And they have some ethnic Chinese working? Oh, International House of Foods. Oh, yes. I see. Well, I also found out that the Chinese church has sponsored some ethnic Chinese.

**JC:** I see.

**SM:** And this is the old Chinese church . . . I mean, not so old, but it's . . .

**JC:** I don't know about that. But, you know, it's interesting. Another one is the Oriental Plaza in Minneapolis also has got people working for them who are . . .

**SM:** The Oriental . . . what was it?

**JC:** Plaza.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** It's a grocery store.

**SM:** On North First and Glenwood about? [The Oriental Plaza Grocery Store, founded by Leonard James, was at 24 Glenwood Avenue in Minneapolis.]

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** They've got Chinese people who were always living . . . they are Cantonese, too.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So they speak Cantonese to one another, but the person who came from Vietnam always tries to, you know, wait on the Vietnamese, like when I come in.

**SM:** Oh, there is a Vietnamese working there then.

**JC:** Well, there's two ladies. They are Chinese Vietnamese.

**SM:** Oh, they are ethnic Chinese.

**JC:** [Unclear].

**SM:** There are two ethnic Chinese working there. I see. And they speak Vietnamese?

**JC:** Yes. Because the lady there doesn't speak English, the owner, she speaks Cantonese.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** And I speak Cantonese to her when I go there.

**SM:** Oh, do you?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** A lot of Vietnamese do not speak Chinese. And they have a hard time finding things, too. They've got those helpers.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** And they've got labels in Vietnamese, written in Vietnamese.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** And these people will help.

**SM:** So for business reasons it makes it . . .

**JC:** So what I'm trying to say is that they are Chinese Vietnamese. The ethnic Chinese Vietnamese who come here tend to look for Chinese who are here.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Primarily Cantonese, for to get, you know, a part time job or things like to get support. And I guess my suspicion is they get the support from those groups rather than from any of this group here that are organized.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** Which are primarily Vietnamese, you know, ethnic Vietnamese.

**SM:** Yes. Well, that is a good insight into it. Because I've asked several ethnic Chinese whether they have any organizations, you know, they don't seem to go to the Vietnamese ones either.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** But they do touch base with their own . . . I don't think they probably belong to any really Chinese organizations.

**JC:** Not yet [unclear].

**SM:** But maybe later. Yes. That's . . . you think they would then join the Chinese ones rather than the Vietnamese ones? Or it's hard to know . . .

**JC:** I think it's not anything intentional. Like those . . . any of those Vietnamese organizations are not discriminating against them, I don't think so.

**SM:** No. No.

**JC:** However, you know, when you . . .

**SM:** It's just . . . the way it goes.

**JC:** Yes, it's just [unclear] the way it goes. Alright, it's been set up and whoever wants to join. And there's no outreach or effort to include them.

**SM:** Right. Yes, I asked Reverend [unclear] whether he included Chinese . . . or if Chinese came to his church or something. He said if they speak Vietnamese, they're welcome. So I suppose there wouldn't be much point in coming if they didn't understand Vietnamese. [Chuckles] But that's probably true, there's no effort to get them or to encourage them.

**JC:** Oh, they don't even have outreach for Vietnamese.

**SM:** Oh, I see. So they don't have outreach, period.

**JC:** You see, so I mean, if I am interested, I just go and say, okay, Mr. Khoan or Mr. [unclear] I'm interested, I would like to join. But in the case of Vietnam, the Chinese, you know, those organizations are very, very informal. They . . .

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** I would tend to say that this . . . you know, maybe mainly people in here are going to listen to you and me, but I will still say that to you, is that, you know, they're not organized the way you think of [unclear] organized at all, you know. They . . .

**SM:** I see. They just get together informally?

**JC:** Yes, they do, and like official . . . but you know, I have a hard time getting the Cultural Association to be a little bit more active.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** You know, people like Professor Khoan, he's got so much prestige. But he doesn't want to do anything. He's not active, you know.

**SM:** Is that right? [Chuckles]

**JC:** Because I . . .

**SM:** He wants to do his studies, I think.

**JC:** It's not that. It's just that, you know, I . . . you know, after three or five years here, I've learned the American quality of organization.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** I know that without organization, just . . . you can't go very far.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** You know.

**SM:** Oh, that's interesting.

**JC:** To let people . . . especially if you are in a group where members are from so many different backgrounds, have so different interests, unless you get some leaders who are very active and pull them together, nobody is going to do a lot, you know.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Right.

**JC:** So none of these organizations are . . . you know, they are there because of a need for grouping and for some things, but none of them are really working towards any particular goal.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** They're not very active, you know, except for things like to organize for the lunar year or things like that.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** But to do anything else, to be doing outreach work and say, getting more people to come in and pay you so that we can have the money to do this . . . they're not like that. You know, all of them, everyone there are in any organization will say, we haven't got the time to do that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** You know, it's a non-paid job, we'd like to do more, but, you know, it's hard, people are all over the place, it's so hard to get them to get involved. You know, there are hundreds of excuses why people are not . . . those things are . . . are there. And they . . .

**SM:** Do they raise money, or not too much or . . .?

**JC:** I don't know about the others, but like the Cultural Association, I'm probably the one that pushed them a lot on that.

**SM:** A lot.

**JC:** Yes. Originally, because I was working for the United Way, and I knew what . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** What's . . . you know, what are the ways to get . . . raise funds. But, you know, it's so difficult to get people to do things, to . . . They have good ideas, they would *like* to, but they don't . . . you know, they really don't . . . for some reason, they don't give [unclear]. Like I've been pushing for a really strong board of directors, people who are really committed, who have the time, you know, who can volunteer that. They haven't done that.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** And most of the things at the Cultural Association now is being handled by Tien.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** You know.

**SM:** So they don't have a board of directors then.

**JC:** Well, they have that executive committee, which is Professor Khoan and a number of others there, four or five of them. But . . . anyway, my point is that if any of those groups do not include ethnic Chinese minorities, it's not because of discrimination, or do not include other Vietnamese, it's just because there's no outreach effort.

**SM:** Yes. I see.

**JC:** And there's no such effort, nothing because they don't want to do it. It's just that they are not organized to the extent where they think that outreach is very important.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** Not yet.

**SM:** That's very interesting. Well, would you say these groups are meeting mainly to be together?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Ah ha. I see.

**JC:** When they do things now, like I know that the Buddhist Association, for instance . . .

**SM:** Which association?

**JC:** The Buddhist.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**JC:** Are sponsoring refugees from camps.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** However, what is . . . how it's working, it's primarily individual members that are in the Association who have got people that they'd like to sponsor because they are from the same village, or because they are somebody they've known before, and they'd like to be . . . you know, helping. But rather than to go on their own, which they feel that might slow down the process, it's always better for an organization . . .

**SM:** For an organization.

**JC:** A volunteer organization to come . . . you know, to actually apply for them, to be acting as a sponsor.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** But in actual fact, it's the individual that is within the organization who are actually doing it.

**SM:** [Unclear].

**JC:** So, you know, in that sense, it's working . . .

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** In that purpose. That's fine, it's not against the law or anything.

**SM:** Oh, no. No.

**JC:** It's true probably with some of the church . . .

**SM:** Is that true in the Hmong Association, too?

**JC:** I can't talk about the Hmong.

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles]

**JC:** I won't talk about that [unclear]. But I know the Vietnamese . . . you know. And I know that from firsthand experience.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Because I've got people *in* the Association that have *done* that, who have told me.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** And I've been asked to do that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And be in contact with somebody saying, "Would you sponsor someone?" And when I say, you know, I have to think about it, it's actually what you have to do is . . .

**SM:** Ask . . .

**JC:** The Buddhist Association who wants to do it, but however the Association is . . . nobody . . . it's the *people* still.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Yes.

**JC:** And, you know, [unclear].

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** So I know that and I'm telling that and I come talk to them and [unclear].

**SM:** Yes. Well, that's pretty understandable. Well, so these people are . . .

**JC:** Now I was . . . I suspect that the others are doing the same.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** I know the Cultural Association have not done that, the sponsorship. They haven't . . . they are not involved in that at all.

**SM:** They haven't. But what is . . .?

**JC:** But I suspect that . . . I know the Buddhists are doing it.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** And I suspect the other one might be involved in it. You know, how much I can't know.

**SM:** Well, do you belong to the Buddhist Association, too?

**JC:** No.

**SM:** Oh, no.

**JC:** Well, it's a kind of a . . . I don't belong but I volunteer with them.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** I'm very much against belonging in the sense where I don't believe in joining unless I do something, which is very unusual. Again, that's my Western [unclear] now.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** You know, I . . . to me, if I want to be in an association, I want to be really giving time and doing something for the association. In the case of the Buddhists, we're having . . . attending one or two functions. And I do volunteer, like at one point they were looking for people to sew up costumes. And I just say okay, if you can do it, you know, I'll do a couple. In that sense, you know. But I'm not a paying member.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** And I don't . . . you know, I don't want to attend their regular meetings and . . .

**SM:** You do go to some of their meetings or . . .?

**JC:** Sometimes. If they . . . if somebody asks me or if, you know, for some reason they want to do something that I feel that I can do on a need basis, then . . . And I'm not . . . so in that sense I . . . [Speaking to someone else] Who's there?

**Unknown woman:** Hi!

**SM:** Oh, hi!

**Unknown woman:** I don't believe it!

[Laughter]

**SM:** How are you?

**Unknown woman:** Fine, how are you?

**JC:** Fine. [Chuckles]

**Unknown woman:** [Laughter]

**SM:** I'm getting all the lowdown. [Chuckles]

**Unknown woman:** Oh, you are? Good for you. [Chuckles]

**SM:** I don't mean lowdown as the way it sounds. [Chuckles]

**Unknown woman:** Oh. [Chuckles]

**SM:** You know, the . . . the information.

**Unknown woman:** Yes. Great.

**JC:** It's nice to see you.

**Unknown woman:** Good to see you. I'm at a different occasion....

[Recording interruption]

**SM:** What kind of costumes are they sewing up? Is this for a celebration or . . .? Oh.

**JC:** It's for New Year's.

**SM:** Oh, I see. Yes.

**JC:** Not this . . . this year. I did that last year.

**SM:** It was last year.

**JC:** It was, you know, they needed some of the traditional costumes. And one girl who is quite an active member there was in [unclear] then, and she was calling everyone she knows and said, you know, could you take one or two. Things like that I do, but I'm not involved in the actual . . .

**SM:** Well, do these organizations get together on celebrating New Year or does each one have their own?

**JC:** Yes, one.

**SM:** They get together.

**JC:** There is only one in the whole Twin Cities.

**SM:** Oh. One celebration.

**JC:** There is one and all the organizations . . . the cultural organizations usually don't.

**SM:** Oh, they don't join?

**JC:** But not . . . not as an organization, but the individuals do.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** So at that celebration it's not one organization doing, it's the whole Vietnamese . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** And it's . . . there is no specification of which organization is . . .

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** What they do is they, for some reason, and in a way it is . . . it works out fine. You know, for some reason, the principle leaders of those organizations just take on themselves getting together and forming what they call a Tet, which is the New Year, a Tet meeting.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** And it is representatives from any of those; and some are not representatives even, but it doesn't matter.

**SM:** I see. Yes.

**JC:** So they all get together for that purpose. And it cuts across individual organizations, it's not the Alliance, it's not the League, it's not the Buddhist. It's all the Vietnamese together.

**SM:** Is there any other event that they all get together for? Or is that the main . . .?

**JC:** Occasionally there are things like they ask singers from out of state.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** The Cultural organization did that last February by asking other organizations to join in, you know.

**SM:** But it was their initiative and . . .?

**JC:** Yes. Because we . . . it was the time when they want to announce to the Vietnamese community that they've been formed. So it was to inaugurate that.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, I see. When was this [unclear]?

**JC:** Actually, it was December last year.

**SM:** Oh. Yes.

**JC:** So they invited a couple of, you know, well known Vietnamese—a writer, a songwriter, some singers over—and they asked other organizations to join in.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And it's . . . on the invitation it acknowledged that.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** You know, so again, it's kind of across, you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** It crossed the boundaries of organizations, in a sense. And every Vietnamese, whether you belong or if you don't belong . . .

**SM:** Can still go.

**JC:** You can come, you know.

**SM:** Do they have actual membership lists or . . .? I suppose.

**JC:** I think they do.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** We do in Cultural. The only one that I know really well is the Cultural because I don't belong to the others.

**SM:** Yes. Yes.

**JC:** But as I say, you know, not belonging to them does not mean that I don't attend . . . a Tet event, for instance.

**SM:** I see. Yes. So there's quite a lot of overlapping, I suppose, within any organization.

**JC:** Yes, so the organization is not so . . . compartmentalized that you have to be in it in order to attend it, you know.

**SM:** Yes. Oh, even their regular meetings, you could just go to one or the other?

**JC:** If you are interested, you could.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Actually, you forgot quite a few. I don't think your list is up to date.

**SM:** Oh. [Unclear].

**JC:** But there is one called the Armed Forces. They are primarily the soldiers in the area.

**SM:** Oh, yes. I've heard of them [unclear]. Armed Forces.

**JC:** I don't know the names, you know. I'll let you know.

**SM:** Okay.

**JC:** There's also the Students, the Vietnamese Students.

**SM:** Oh, yes. Right.

**JC:** Which is quite . . .

**SM:** It's a very bad list I have here. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Students . . . what about are there generational organizations like elderly or . . . nothing like that?

**JC:** Hmm.

**SM:** Koreans have some of them.

**JC:** But there are also a number of groups [unclear]. I just know one, but I'm sure there are more.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** They are not legal organized.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** In the sense they didn't . . . you know, they don't have it . . .

**SM:** Incorporated . . .

**JC:** Incorporated.

**SM:** But these others are?

**JC:** Those . . . all those.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Now there's . . . I know one group of young people. They are primarily young adults. They might be students but who might be working. But they are in their twenties to late thirties who formed groups, you know, just because they feel that, you know, they can do more on a smaller basis. And they are not incorporated, they are very . . . they . . . I don't even think they have memberships. They just . . . if they are interested, they just join. And they are kind of a social like your clubs here, what you . . .

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** Which meet at their . . . you know, they change places. It's usually at the individuals' homes and things like that.

**SM:** Yes. Well . . .

**JC:** What they do is just they . . . if they are interested in going to it, it would be maybe going to a meeting and singing and, you know, things like that.

**SM:** Oh. Right. Well, one day I went with a Vietnamese student down to the Bamboo Village. On the weekend they have a band and . . .

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Well, where does that group, the people that come to that, where do they fit into the community? They seem to be young adults mainly, at that time, anyway.

**JC:** Usually . . . usually they are young people who like Western culture, [unclear].

**SM:** Oh, I see. They would be maybe urban . . . they would have maybe come from Saigon or something then?

**JC:** Yes. Urban. Probably middle class. But they go there because even in Saigon it was quite fashionable for young people to go into nightclubs listening to Vietnamese music. But, you

know, kind of compared to the traditional music that I [unclear] in the seminar, they are Western music.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** But, you know, with . . .

**SM:** But a little . . .

**JC:** Written by Vietnamese songwriters, and in Western mode, you know, using the twelve tones.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** They are our young version of pop music.

**SM:** Ah ha.

**JC:** But they are with Vietnamese lyrics, Vietnamese-inspired tunes, melodies, themes.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** But it's . . . you know, it's one of the . . .

**SM:** Yes. Is it sort of mixed with French influence, too, and American?

**JC:** No, it American but there is some pop and some rock. There is lots of tangoes and Latin American rhythms. But those are not . . . you know, those are things that are seen from my point of view as entertainment as [unclear].

**SM:** Yes. Yes.

**JC:** And it's . . . they are . . . in Saigon it was the same thing.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Because there is very little entertainment, you know, besides movies and socializing. When you go in to a movie you don't speak, really, you don't meet anyone.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** And out here they . . . they come here to socialize with a group of friends and drink and they sing and they dance and they [unclear].

**SM:** Yes. Well, how would the people that go there compare with these . . . this unincorporated group you were talking about? Would they be the same people or a different group?

**JC:** Maybe the same, but different interests.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Now, the ones that goes for dancing are more of a . . . to entertain, you know. They don't care about cultural, they just go there and *dance*, you know. If they can imitate 'the hustle' they'll do that. Now the other groups are more conscious about their roots and they are more culturally oriented.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** They go back, you know. One group being . . . is trying to [unclear] a book and learn about what [unclear] in the nineteenth century [unclear]. So they are more culturally oriented and more conscious about where they come from, their heritage, and to bring that up to their consciousness.

**SM:** They would be more intellectual [unclear] here?

**JC:** Not necessarily.

**SM:** Not necessarily.

**JC:** The guys that goes to [unclear] might be a student but they are there just to, you know, to spend their energy.

**SM:** Oh, yes Yes, I see.

**JC:** And to be, you know, having fun.

**SM:** So some might go to both, is that possible?

**JC:** Yes. Sure.

**SM:** Yes. Some might be just young working people or . . .?

**JC:** Which ones?

**SM:** At the dancing.

**JC:** Most of them are rich young [unclear] works and makes lots of money.

**SM:** Yes, you'd have to have money. Right.

**JC:** Makes a lot of money who has no other entertainment.

**SM:** Would they be married people or . . . ?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** There was . . . were at least some who brought some children. But I didn't know maybe whether it was a place of young unmarried people who met there or something.

**JC:** [Unclear]. No, no. It's not.

**SM:** Not that.

**JC:** I've been to that once and it's . . . well, it's got some . . . also some nostalgia attached to it.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, I see.

**JC:** It's . . . I don't know if you know . . . have noticed, but you go there, you see a lot of Vietnamese, you know, and it reminds very much of the nightclubs in Saigon.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**JC:** And the songs there are Vietnamese songs.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Although they are not traditional songs in the same way.

**SM:** Saigon pop [unclear].

**JC:** Yes, you know, tradition means Vietnamese, non-Western. But they are written by Vietnamese songwriters, [unclear] and they are, you know, on the rhythm of a slow [unclear] in it.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** It's kind of pleasant and, you know, it's relaxing.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So and it's . . . and it's Vietnamese and it reminds you of home, you know, things like that. So it's . . .

**SM:** Reminds them of the old days in Saigon. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Yes, in Saigon.

**SM:** Yes. Well, these people would be largely married or unmarried?

**JC:** Which ones?

**SM:** The ones in the cultural, more cultural. Would you call it a cultural group? Or not especially?

**JC:** I wouldn't say that because I don't . . . I don't think that that's all they do. They can also be planning a picnic or, you know.

**SM:** Yes. Social and cultural.

**JC:** Yes, things like that. Or they might be very concerned about some of the people in the camps.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** They have a little bit more purpose than those that goes to the nightclub.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Because the guys that goes to the nightclub obviously don't go every week.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** They probably will once a month or something like that. Now those groups here will tend to have a little bit more of a regular pattern, you know, of meeting say on a week or month or whatever basis.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Now the kids, the young people that go to Bamboo Village really do [unclear] school [unclear] and when their moods for, you know, dancing comes or at New Year's or, you know, over the weekend, or things like that.

**SM:** I see. That's pretty interesting. I've never been able to figure out who those were [unclear]. [Chuckles] Because they didn't look like anyone I had interviewed or, you know, met. But they probably dress differently for the evening out dancing, too, maybe.

**JC:** They usually dress very, you know, elegantly.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** In their best Western fashions.

**SM:** Yes. And sort of Vietnamese flair to it, too, though. Baggy pants kind of. [Unclear] pants.

**JC:** Yes. Things like that. So those are . . . tend to be urban young people that are [unclear] Western style kind of life. You know, there's nothing wrong with it.

**SM:** No.

**JC:** You know, I used to be like that when I was twenty, you know.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** So it the same . . .

**SM:** It's fun [unclear].

**JC:** In Washington they have one nightclub exactly the same as this.

**SM:** Oh, they do?

**JC:** Fills up every weekend.

**SM:** This seemed to be full, too. But I wasn't sure whether they were even all Vietnamese, but this . . .

**JC:** Most of them.

**SM:** I asked this man about if any Hmong were there and he said, "Oh no, they don't know how to dance." [Chuckles]

**JC:** I think it's mostly Vietnamese.

**SM:** It seemed . . . must be. But in the same place they have one Latin American on Friday nights, a Latin band, Cuban or something like that. And then . . .

**JC:** [Unclear].

**SM:** Oh, two nights of the weekend they have Vietnamese. And they had two different bands, too. It was quite . . . one had a violinist with him, he seemed like out of the concert hall rather than the nightclub circuit. But who knows.

**JC:** We've been there once. And as I say, when I was in Washington, [unclear] where, you know, we went to one in Washington. And it's . . . and really what it is, it reminds me a lot of those Saigon evenings when Saigon was at war. Vietnam was at war.

**SM:** During the war.

**JC:** And a lot of people were trying to look to forget war.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** You know, things. And especially if you are . . . and the kids in Vietnam would visit nightclubs, would mix with Vietnamese and foreigners [unclear] who didn't really know what to do during the night and went there and had nice food, just to dance and there are girls there that you can dance with.

**SM:** Well, that's a common . . .

**JC:** Yes, it's a kind of a same mood thing. However, here it's become . . . in Washington it's quite acceptable . . .

**SM:** I'm sure.

**JC:** Of course, they have a better band.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** So the [unclear] is a little bit more . . . the Bamboo Village seems to pander primarily to the young . . .

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** You know, young group, young adults. In that sense, it keeps up things like . . . we went there with the [unclear – sounds like Khoans] one day.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** And they were horrified.

**SM:** Oh, they were? [Chuckles]

**JC:** But I . . . you know. I had a good time. Although Tien was complaining about the quality of the band, but, you know . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** So what? You know, that's the only one they have.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** But, you know, we don't go there every day.

**SM:** [Chuckles] Right.

**JC:** Actually, I've been there only once.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** But sometimes it's . . .

**SM:** But the one in Washington included a broader age range or . . . ?

**JC:** Yes. And of course they have more Vietnamese.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** And they tend to have a program that is a little bit better in quality, like they the same, it's...

[Recording interruption]

**JC:** ...in Rochester.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** And were somehow are working with some of the medical facilities there. But anyway, I have . . . I've met him recently, since I came here. But when he was . . . we were invited at a friend's place in Northfield and he was one of them. And we haven't seen him . . . I think I met him in 1969 the first time, and I met him again another occasion, and that's it. I've never heard . . . I've heard a lot about him around Saigon, even with Vietnamese who knows . . . who knows Americans have heard of him. Now I haven't seen him since then. But when was it? That was so . . . and it must have been in 1979, at that friend's place. But you know, when he saw me, it was as if we've been friends for . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] Oh, no!

**JC:** And it's . . . it's so weird because he's got a photographic picture of everything that has happened.

**SM:** You're *kidding*.

**JC:** It gave me the creeps.

**SM:** A real photograph? Or you mean a mental . . . mental thing.

**JC:** No. No, he . . . he was able to tell me what had happened at the first . . .

**SM:** [Sighs] Oh!

**JC:** And yet, you know, it was 1969. And I was only able to tell you because he told me of why we . . . when we first . . . When I saw him, he was there in front of me, and I . . . you know, my friend, our friend has said, “[Unclear] Bob Jones.” And I said maybe it was the same guy, I wasn’t sure. It turned out to be the same guy, even though he looks different. Because my memory of him in 1969 is very blurred.

**SM:** It’s a long time ago.

**JC:** And he was different. Now he’s changed, now he’s aged.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** But he was looking at me and I said, you know, “Do you know me? I think I’ve met you.” And I wasn’t sure. And he said, “Yes.” And then he said, “Are you [unclear]?” And he was telling me what had happened the first night when we went there.

**SM:** Oh, wow.

**JC:** He said, “Do you remember? I was sitting on that hammock and you went through my books and talked.” And Tien and I, we were like [unclear]. And it was so *scary* that somebody when we met, you know. And yet he was [unclear] just as we . . . we are just one Vietnamese in the whole of Saigon, which has [unclear] people.

**SM:** Oh, sure. He probably . . . he knows many people.

**JC:** And yet he was able to recount that. And he said, “I remember why you didn’t . . . you didn’t want me on that research. I remember you telling me that.” And he was telling me . . .

**SM:** Did he know why you didn’t want him to know that?

**JC:** I told him.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** I said I didn’t want it. However, he had . . . What he wanted was he had a couple of Vietnamese workers before that he’d trained, that were supposed to be so excellent that there was no [unclear] whatsoever. And I said no. Those guys will . . . you know . . .

**SM:** Report.

**JC:** Too urban. And they were going to go into the village and talk to them. And I said I couldn't . . . I would have to consider that, and I was telling them that he's trained them so much that they were forgetting they were Vietnamese.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** And it was going to be difficult for me to, you know, to [unclear]. And he *remembered* that. It was *so* astonishing.

**SM:** [Sighs]

**JC:** But anyway, when we met him, he was apparently very mad about the whole government, the United States government.

**SM:** When you met him in 1969?

**JC:** No, in 1979 in Northfield. And he was mad about . . . Apparently, what had happened was he tried very much after Vietnam when he got back to be involved with the refugee . . . the whole refugee program effort, whether in Washington or Minnesota, I'm not sure. But he didn't . . . he was kicked around a lot.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** It was a lot. Even within the government there was something about him that . . . they were literally cutting him out.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** That's what *he* told me, and I've heard since about it.

**SM:** Oh, then maybe he is just a free floating kind of . . .

**JC:** No, I think what he . . . I think he was probably connected, but maybe he's gone a little bit too far or whatever, I'm not sure. Anyway . . .

**SM:** Connected with what, do you think? [Chuckles]

**JC:** I'm sure it was some intelligence service.

**SM:** Yes, I am, too.

**JC:** You know, which is okay. You know. It is necessary.

**SM:** Well, yes. But it just makes you a little uneasy if you're trying to deal with it. I seemed to meet him at every conference that had to do with Asia.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Always there.

**JC:** And I've heard that when the governor of the state was setting up a task force for the refugees here . . .

**SM:** Here in Minnesota?

**JC:** In the Twin Cities. He was one of the candidates for the job of coordinator.

**SM:** Oh, coordinator. Oh.

**JC:** Which then went later on to . . . do you know [unclear] is?

**SM:** Oh, I thought he was with the American Refugee Committee.

**JC:** That's only after.

**SM:** Oh, I see. He was originally . . .

**JC:** In 1975, he was originally at the head of the . . .

**SM:** Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, I see.

**JC:** Breen. Is it Breen?

**SM:** Oh, Breen is? Oh, yes. I think it is Breen. Yes, you're right. [Stanley S. Breen served as the task force director of the Indochinese Refugee Task Force.]

**JC:** But anyway, check that. Ask my . . . Understand, it was before I came here. But that's what I heard. Okay. Check that.

**SM:** Of the Task Force [unclear].

**JC:** Something . . . it's called . . . yes.

**SM:** Indochinese [unclear].

**JC:** Resettle . . . Anyway, Bob Jones wanted that job. It was . . . he was not given that job. And Stan Breen got it.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** He later wanted to have some other position and he couldn't get it either.

**SM:** Oh. So the government doesn't want him either.

**JC:** So when I heard . . . when I saw him in 1979, he was, you know, trashing that out to me, saying how bad and with all his, you know, knowledge of Vietnam and so on, this and that. And, you know, people were not wanting to use him because they were very biased and whatever. You know, he's complaining. Anyway, he was then out of a job. However, recently I've heard that he's now executive director of some social service nonprofit organization in Rochester.

**SM:** Oh, here in the Twin . . . ?

**JC:** No, in Rochester.

**SM:** Oh, in Rochester.

**JC:** He's still there now. So you might want to . . .

**SM:** Get in touch with him? [Chuckles] No thanks! No, I'm just kidding.

**JC:** Well, he should know a lot about the Vietnamese here.

**SM:** He does, I'm sure.

**JC:** But it is funny how, you know, your interests and your concerns about anything, if it's . . . not here, people always . . . it's, you know . . .

**SM:** I was very suspicious of him.

**JC:** [Unclear]. I don't know, whatever. Like when we were talking to him in 1979, it was a long dinner. We sat and talked about the Vietnamese [unclear]. You know, the information he gave us, somehow it's . . . and I'm saying this with every Vietnamese that's come across and met Bob Jones, every one of us there was very suspicious. And yet we never [unclear]. You know, people that might have known him before [unclear]. And everyone said, "Gee, that guy. He knows so much. Why is it he can go into details?" You know, and it's . . . it's so unaccountable . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] That's really [unclear].

**JC:** Because, you know, I don't know if you know what I mean.

**SM:** I do. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Especially when you are in a small minority, and for somebody to be able to see . . . *perceive* you, you know.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** So directly.

**SM:** Well, one thing . . .

**JC:** And yet to have no function. I mean, if he were a social worker, or . . .

**SM:** Yes, if you know they're attached to some organization. Well, there was....

[Recording interruption]

**JC:** ...you know, open about it.

**SM:** Yes, CIA are sometimes very open. Yes.

**JC:** Yes. And that guy is . . . it's a [unclear] guy that we . . . You know, in Saigon he was one guy in just a million guys there. And then we feel quite uncomfortable because it's the behavior that makes you feel uncomfortable.

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles]

**JC:** But as I said, he speaks very good Vietnamese. He . . . actually, too good. He learned the bad thing about the Vietnamese. You know, the . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] The bad thing.

**JC:** You know, if you meet . . . you know what I mean?

**SM:** He knows so much . . .

**JC:** You know, and he . . . he's too . . . too perceptive to go into the weaknesses. You know, enough so it puts your . . . it makes . . . not that I don't want everyone to see me as I am. But, you know, I know I have weaknesses. But when somebody who is . . . who doesn't really . . . has not yet established a mutual rapport, and yet he can see and [unclear] your . . . your bad side.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** It makes you feel uncomfortable. You know what I mean?

**SM:** It would be very unnerving, yes.

**JC:** I mean, I don't mind if one day you come to me, you know, and know a lot about us, because, you know, there is originally a trust between us. Now when somebody hasn't done that and has started to . . . to impress you in a . . . in a negative sense. And then for him to be able to go on and perceive . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And he speaks our language. However, his accent is not good. But he has a very good grasp of our language.

**SM:** Oh. But he doesn't speak like a native then. I mean it wouldn't be like he grew up there or something.

**JC:** Almost. No, no. No, he . . . he's been there, I suspect . . . When I met him in 1969, he must have been there six or seven years. So in total, there was a lot of discussion among the Vietnamese who have known him of when he left Vietnam.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, I see.

**JC:** To some people, he's left before 1975. After the war wound down.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Which is around 1973. And I haven't seen him in Vietnam since then, so I don't know. However, he claims that he left the last day.

**SM:** Oh, he claims he left the last day?

**JC:** He said . . . he claimed the last day. But there are some other Vietnamese who are convinced for some reason that he'd left before that. I don't know why. So I don't . . . but I don't know if you'll have a chance to talk to either Vietnamese who have lived in Saigon and who were more or less . . . a little bit more active than the average.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** In the affairs of the nation, so to speak. And who . . . you know, you wouldn't be surprised to learn that . . .

**SM:** They've heard of him, too. [Chuckles]

**JC:** They've heard of Bob Jones, which just amazes me.

**SM:** Yes. That's interesting.

**JC:** And yet, and you would see the same . . . you know.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** You would heard the same . . . you know, the same . . .

**SM:** Same sort of suspicion.

**JC:** Yes. I don't what's the [unclear]. The same hesitation about thinking of him as one of us or not one of us.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** That's the best way I can . . .

**SM:** Well, I can understand that. Were there other Americans in that kind of position?

**JC:** No.

**SM:** Just . . .

**JC:** I've known [unclear] one who work for the State Department who is Vietnamese. He's super . . . is even much better than the Vietnamese. He was so well known and so well respected. He's also, you know, he's actually one of the members of the delegation that was in [unclear] for the negotiation of Paris [unclear].

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** It's really very [unclear]. That guy has a lot of respect for . . . from the Vietnamese. Everywhere he goes. And yet he's well known to be working also in intelligence to be able to know [unclear].

**SM:** Yes. I see. Yes, something intelligence related.

**JC:** But then he's got . . . he's got so much respect that people who really talked about him mentioned about him with a lot of admiration, you know, unlike Bob Jones.

**SM:** Well, there is one of those with the Hmong, too. Well, of course the Hmong worked with him in the CIA, but there is that . . . Buell [sp?].

**JC:** I don't know him.

**SM:** They all . . . they have . . . he's in those pictures in [unclear]. And he was an intelligence worker, but apparently really was trusted by the Hmong.

**JC:** So it's . . . it's, you know, in your own defense . . .

**SM:** There's something else about this guy, I guess.

**JC:** Yes. And the thing is, you know, Bob Jones was never able to tell anyone what he was doing. And then he was living in that [unclear].

**SM:** Did anybody ask him what he was doing?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** And he wouldn't tell you?

**JC:** And as I said, he was supposed to be the head of that corporation that he was there. That nobody could see, you know, anything happening.

**SM:** Sounds a little fishy, doesn't it?

**JC:** Yes. And yet, you know, he was there and he was . . . I understand that most of the treasure that he's got from Vietnam is still there in Rochester. And he's . . . the thing is, he's very unwilling to let anyone borrow . . .

**SM:** Unwilling?

**JC:** Yes. And the Vietnamese are . . .

**SM:** Well, he could have left the last day if he brought all that, couldn't he have?

**JC:** Yes. And the Vietnamese are very resentful because, you know, like the cultural and things, they would like sometime to be able to . . .

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** Ask him to show, and to borrow to show. Because he's got some lovely [unclear] antiques.

**SM:** He won't let it out [unclear]?

**JC:** Both in porcelain and in the furniture. Finally, they are so precious . . . Even back in Vietnam, you know, we don't have . . . it's astonishing how he could find them. You know, it's not just like you can go and buy them. You have to know who has got them.

**SM:** He must have been a real scholar of Vietnam before he went over there.

**JC:** He's got . . . I've seen his place when he was in Vietnam, and even in Vietnam, it opens up people's eyes to Vietnamese [unclear]. The well-to-do families, you know, like my family, we've got a couple things, but it's nothing compared to his. It was so *astounding*.

**SM:** That's really strange.

**JC:** And some of those pieces were so unusual and rare that you wonder how he found them. You know, it's not in a market or in a store you just go with money. It's not that, you know. Those things are buried in families' treasures and stolen by anyone or whatever . . . I'm sure he's involved with some underground, some . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles] He must be. Well, I think I asked him at one conference where he'd been and what he did. And he said he was living with his parents in Rochester and writing a book. That's what he said, and I didn't believe him at all. But maybe it's true then, now that you say he does live in Rochester.

**JC:** It was true at that time. In 1979 he was very bitter, primarily because he didn't have a job. And he was telling us that he was writing a book about Vietnam.

**SM:** [Sighs] Oh.

**JC:** But ever since, we've never . . . he's given us the address and asked us to come and visit him. But . . .

**SM:** But you haven't taken him up on it. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Yes, I mean, that's okay. But I have no . . . no interest to share, in spite of the fact that, you know, he's someone who has been in Vietnam a long time.

**SM:** He's what?

**JC:** In spite of the fact that he's lived in Vietnam and having just . . . you know, shares with us some of the experiences. Where are we at?

**SM:** Well, we've been sort of skipping around, but I was just thinking, I wanted to ask you whether in the Vietnamese community in Minnesota, are there really outstanding or charismatic leaders? You know, similar to the Hmong have, if there are any. I don't . . . I mean, don't mean to keep comparing them, but it's very sharp with them.

**JC:** Yes. But when I say . . . my institute is . . . and again, it's just my own view of things.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** [Unclear]. We still as . . . you know, as a society, there is still that tradition of looking up to certain people because of that person's achievement, whether in the world creativity, you know, in literature or whatever, or for other social achievements like being useful to somebody in a time of crisis, or for some political past experiences. Now in Minnesota, of course, there is the case of Professor Khoan. But I think that I've told you, he's really . . . among here, he's looked at

a lot in a way . . . up a little bit because he used to be a teacher, not a professor, at home. And among people . . .

**SM:** You mean a high school teacher?

**JC:** Yes, among people like Tien's generation, they were all, you know, students of his. Not all, but a large number. Tien was not, but a couple . . .

**SM:** Oh, here.

**JC:** There are a few people who can identify themselves.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Or if they didn't study under him, they were of the generation, you know, that could be his student at the school that he taught.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And you know that we have that . . . like the Chinese that we have that veneration for teachers. It doesn't matter how long you teach, if you've been a teacher one day and you have students . . .

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** Those students will always have that feeling for you of respect, of veneration, you see.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Even if you were a very bad student. Now I don't know about Professor Khoan at all as far as students. I never learned under him. And I had the French educational system, so I don't know. He was teaching in Vietnamese [unclear]. So I have no exposure to him.

**SM:** He was teaching in a Vietnamese [unclear]? Well, was he a university professor later or . . .?

**JC:** What happened, and I understand that from other people, is that sometime in the . . . I think it was in early 1970s or maybe late 1960s, his brother-in-law was a politician. You know, he's now still in Vietnam. That's the brother of his wife. He became Minister of Education for one term.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**JC:** And it's . . . as you know that in those countries, when you have somebody in the family who's done well, you know, you will benefit.

**SM:** Yes. Right.

**JC:** You call it nepotism. [Pronounces it differently] Or nepotism?

**SM:** Nepotism.

**JC:** But in Vietnam it's accepted, you know. Anyway, because he's the Minister of Education, he was able to . . . you know, and the Ministry of Education in Vietnam, it's a very centralized educational system.

**SM:** Like the French [unclear].

**JC:** The Minister is really . . . has a lot of power within the system.

**SM:** Hmmm.

**JC:** So anyway, partly, I think, actually, thanks to that brother-in-law, that Professor Khoan was given the title of professor.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** But not at the university. But for a new . . . then newly created academy of music and arts, it's called. And it's essentially theatrical performing arts. So he was given, you know, a position there.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** And he was in charge of the theater department.

**SM:** Oh, you mean . . .?

**JC:** And he's only a professor for that, not . . . I mean, nothing else.

**SM:** I see. Well, was he well known in Vietnam or not?

**JC:** Actually, he's well known because he . . . besides teaching, he has written a couple of plays that I've never read.

**SM:** Oh, he's better known as a playwright then or . . .?

**JC:** I can't really say that. It all depends. Now, if you are a student, you know him as a teacher who has written plays.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Now if you are an outside . . . an adult, you know, in the artist circle or the so-called educated circle, then you would tend to know him because his plays.

**SM:** Yes, it's not as though the whole population would know him, I suppose.

**JC:** No. And you would be surprised, you know, I've talked to a lot of people who are like me who were educated in the French education . . . I've never heard of him before.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** I only knew of him . . . I think I've talked to you on the phone, after I got married to Tien.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** And Tien is very artistically inclined, you know.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And when . . . because I married and his circle became mine, then Khoan is just one of the so-called artists that he frequents with, not only as a teacher, but as a friend. So . . . and I've never really known about his prestige until I came here. [Chuckles]

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** Because back home, you know, we move within so many circles.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** We've got, you know . . . I worked for the Embassy and we worked with . . . I have a lot of [unclear] diplomatic people. We have these other Vietnamese friends who call themselves artists; you know, they are painters, they are writers, they are singers, they are composers. Khoan is just one. And we have also a set of other friends from childhood. So, you know, all these things . . .

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** It's . . . you know, we have a very large group of friends, and Khoan is just one. And I never really thought of him as somebody who really I consider, you know, like my leader. I certainly don't, even now.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** I have respect for him because, primarily, he's much older.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** He . . . you know, he's not as old as my parents. However, he's certainly the age of my parents' . . . you know, of my parents' generation.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** [Unclear] Vietnam. Our relationship now is a bit like that. We put ourselves . . . we address ourselves to them, we call them [unclear]. I call him teacher in literal translation, although I've never learned under him. But I think I explained to you, Tien went to school at the school where he taught.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And Tien did never study under him, but he was a teacher there.

**SM:** But still probably . . .

**JC:** And, you know, you call a teacher, teacher.

**SM:** What was the name of that school?

**JC:** Thupan An. T-H-U-P-A-N, A-N. I think so.

**SM:** Academy or school?

**JC:** No, it's just a high school.

**SM:** Well, is he much . . . he isn't then really a strong leader here in Minnesota though?

**JC:** Well, there's another that has recently come who is of comparable background. And this guy is really a professor. They've come here, they've just been resettled. They came here about over a year ago. His name is Tran, T-R-A-N.

**SM:** T-R-E-N?

**JC:** A-N.

**SM:** Oh, A-N.

**JC:** Van, V-A-N. Dinh, D-I-N-H. And he's got a brother called [unclear].

**SM:** Jun or J?

**JC:** Dinh, the same.

**SM:** Oh, so he's . . . I keep trying to use the Chinese spelling. [Chuckles]

**JC:** And then K-I-E-N. Now Dinh is Tran Van Dinh, he's a professor. And he taught both at the University of Arts in Saigon . . . I'm not sure when [unclear].

**SM:** University of Saigon?

**JC:** Yes, I'm not sure in what faculty. Maybe it's arts. But he also taught at the Institute of Public Administration, which is a [unclear] tertiary label. Educational Institute.

**SM:** Tertiary label?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** I thought that . . . that Khoan talked about a university at Da Lat.

**JC:** For him?

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Yes, later on he taught there.

**SM:** Oh, later he taught there.

**JC:** Yes, part time. In his . . . I don't think he ever had tenure there.

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** He was invited to do . . . I think he was lecturing in . . . what was it?

**SM:** Theater, I think.

**JC:** [Unclear] I really don't know a lot about it.

**SM:** Yes. Was that part of the University of Da Lat?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Oh, I see.

**JC:** But anyway, he's a professor. And his brother Kien used to be . . . again, had . . .

**SM:** Was that the way you spell that? K-I-E-N?

**JC:** Kien, yes.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** He was Minister of Finance.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Under one government, I'm not sure when. If [unclear] around . . . Tien will know that better. Probably in the late 1960s, early 1970s, for a short period. And both of them are here. And [unclear] you know, as far as background, they are from a very big family. I think their father's a scholar or something like that.

**SM:** Was what?

**JC:** Was a scholar, [unclear] scholar in Vietnam. So they come from a very good background. And among the Vietnamese here, you know, they command also respect.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Of those that know them, you know. If you talk to a Chinese ethnic minority, they do not know Khoan or Dinh at all. Or even if you talk to somebody from the province, they wouldn't know. Those are people that live in Saigon.

**SM:** Sure. Well, that would be the same here.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** So I think those . . . but I wouldn't really . . . I make . . . that's my own opinion. I would be very hesitant to say that I'm looking at especially with Professor Khoan as my leader, I don't . . . I have respect for them.

**SM:** Yes. That's what I sort of had the feeling. But I wasn't . . .

**JC:** I have respect for him. And when I talk to them . . .

**SM:** Well, that's different. Yes.

**JC:** You know, I know that . . . You know. But they are just my elders. They are not . . . You know, if I want to do anything . . .

**SM:** They don't tell you what to do or . . . [Chuckles]

**JC:** No. And I, you know, I think that they've had their time, and it's my time now.

**SM:** Sure.

**JC:** You know, that's the way I feel. It's not that I don't like them, you know.

**SM:** No.

**JC:** As I said, we have a very good relationship with Khoan's family.

**SM:** Sure. But that's a different thing.

**JC:** Yes. And like . . .

**SM:** Would other Vietnamese feel probably about the same way, that these are respected people?

**JC:** It's the same thing.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** That's the reason why Khoan was elected chairman of the Buddhist Association first. And he's now chairman of the Cultural Association.

**SM:** Oh, he is? Oh.

**JC:** Dinh was . . . well, actually, Professor Dinh was suggested to be at the head of the Cultural. Because the community here find that . . . The Vietnamese that were here before find that Khoan did not do a lot for the Buddhist Association, and they were getting tired. When we set up the Cultural Association and held the election of the officers, they were going to elect Professor Dinh, who had just come three months then.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** But then Dinh didn't want it because . . . on the grounds that he'd just come. And he didn't . . . you know, he didn't know enough; who was here and what to do. And he still was looking for a job, and he didn't still . . . he didn't have a house and all this. So he didn't want it. But so that tells you a little bit of the public feeling among the Vietnamese about these people.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Khoan is still . . . he still commands some kind of respect, but people are finding that he really is not doing a lot for them, you know, which is . . . the feeling is that he should, because he's not working.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** You know, I mean, he's more settled.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And he should be a little bit more inspiring. It's probably an unfair expectation, but they feel that now you have . . . you know, you are the best around here, you should be able to lead us or, you know, to give us some direction. But he's not doing it. And he's . . .

**SM:** But see, to me, when I talked to him, he was more interested in his own writing, when it gets down to it.

**JC:** Yes, that's how he is. That's right.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And a lot of the people are frustrated about that because they feel that . . . like he writes . . . he occasionally writes something and sends to papers that are published somewhere in Washington or in Seattle, whenever . . .

**SM:** Rather than here.

**JC:** And, you know, the writing is primarily about what had happened to him during his golden days and his personal experience.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And he's never concerned about, you know, the people here, about their problems. You know, so people . . . it might be unfair, but that's what it is when you are a leader, you know. And if you want to be seen a leader . . .

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** You should project the image that you are doing something for all this.

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles]

**JC:** But if you don't, people say . . . but [unclear].

**SM:** Maybe he doesn't really want to be in this . . .

**JC:** He . . . well, this is what he said.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** You know, and he has a perfect reason. He said, "I didn't want it." And it's true.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** I can vouch for it. He was elected chairman of the Buddhist Association reluctantly, I know, because he couldn't see . . .

**SM:** Maybe he [unclear].

**JC:** No.

**SM:** Oh, he didn't want it back.

**JC:** He didn't want it.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And what he has told us is that, "They want me, and I . . . you know, I just couldn't say no."

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Now, you know, I've told him, there's nothing I can do. It's not my area. He's not interested in Buddhism.

**SM:** Oh, he isn't even interested in Buddhism, really? [Chuckles]

**JC:** Well, he's a Buddhist, but he's . . .

**SM:** He is Buddhist, but . . .

**JC:** You know, he's not . . . you know, his interest is in theater.

**SM:** Yes. Yes, that's true.

**JC:** You know, so . . . you know, it's hard. I asked him to change now. But you see people tend to think that because you are a leader of Buddhist Association, you should be a little bit more knowledgeable about that, and this and that, which he . . . he's not.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So there is a lot of . . .

**SM:** I think he said he did organize . . . he was sort of proud of the fact that he'd organized a protest on the steps of the Capitol. Or helped to organize it.

**JC:** I don't know. I wasn't here.

**SM:** It was just a one day thing.

**JC:** I wasn't here, so I don't know.

**SM:** Oh. And it was something to do with protesting the condition of refugees, you know, during the large outflow of [unclear] or something.

**JC:** That must be [unclear] and I don't know. But I know that he's not . . . you know, his heart is not in that.

**SM:** No. It didn't seem to be.

**JC:** Now, he's a little bit more in his water with the Cultural Association.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** However, again . . .

**SM:** Yes, he might be more interested in that.

**JC:** Again, all he's interested in is in our theater. And he doesn't . . . he's not interested in anything else. And yet Cultural has got so many other things. But theater happens to be a very literal part of the Vietnamese literature.

**SM:** Yes. [Chuckles] Yes.

**JC:** You know, it's very frustrating. And now, you see, what happened with that Association is that, again, as I said, you know, those who . . . we had the election and there other people [unclear] Professor Dinh, primarily because they felt that, you know, he's comparable [unclear].

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** They just wanted, you know, him. But Dinh didn't want it. He said maybe in a year or two, you know. And they were just three months in, so I could understand. What happened then when Khoan was elected chairman, another guy, Dam Nguyen, he works for the Minnesota Finance . . .

**SM:** The what?

**JC:** With the State Finance Department.

**SM:** Oh. What is his name?

**JC:** Dam, D-A-M, Nguyen.

**SM:** Dam Nguyen.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** N-G-U-Y-E-N?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Yes. Dam Nguyen. N-G-U-Y-E-N.

**JC:** This is a guy who is of our generation. He's [unclear].

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Three or four years older than Tien, but, you know, of our generation. He was . . . he graduated in political science. He's got a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Before . . . before he came here.

**SM:** Oh. Oh, I see.

**JC:** And then he came home and then got out again. He's married to a Filipino girl.

**SM:** [Unclear].

**JC:** He was doing . . . he was preparing the Ph.D. . . .

**SM:** Oh, what is her name?

**JC:** I'm not sure about her.

**SM:** I think I met her that night at the Historical Society. Yes.

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** You know, when that program was there. Oh, yes.

**JC:** Yes. That's his wife.

**SM:** That's why this name sounded familiar.

**JC:** And Dam was there.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** He was talking about the language, remember?

**SM:** Yes. That's right. That's why it sounded familiar.

**JC:** Well, I wasn't there.

**SM:** Oh, you weren't there then.

**JC:** I didn't come.

**SM:** Yes. But you went with them to Lindstrom.

**JC:** Yes. Only because somebody [unclear]. Khoan backed out.

**SM:** Oh. [Chuckles] He would. What does this guy do for a living? Dam.

**JC:** Now he works with the State Finance.

**SM:** Oh, that's it. Right.

**JC:** Actually, [unclear], now he's . . .

**SM:** What about . . . did Dinh and Kien get jobs? Do they work anywhere?

**JC:** Dinh now works with a school district.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** I'm not sure when he . . . I think he's a consultant or something, I'm not sure.

**SM:** The Saint Paul schools?

**JC:** Hmmm?

**SM:** Saint Paul school district?

**JC:** Yes.

**SM:** Ah.

**JC:** His brother has moved because he couldn't find a job here.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** So he's in Washington now. He is also teaching in high schools and . . .

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** But they've just come, so I'm sure they will move to another job, too.

**SM:** Yes, they're still looking, I'm sure.

**JC:** Yes. Anyway, Dam is the advisory chairman of the Association.

**SM:** The Cultural Association. Oh. What about Pham Vy? What kind of role does he play?

**JC:** He's here with the other ones.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** He is with the . . . either the Alliance or the League. He's there.

**SM:** Well, what is the difference between these?

**JC:** These are two different groups.

**SM:** I mean, are they different interests or . . .?

**JC:** No. It's just . . .

**SM:** Because Pham Vy is not an intellectual, is he? But he was a labor leader or something, wasn't he? In Vietnam?

**JC:** I'm not sure of his background. I don't know him.

**SM:** Oh. Yes, he was . . .

**JC:** I know . . . I've talked to him, but, you know.

**SM:** He seemed like quite an interesting guy when I talked to him. He was very active in the union organizations in Vietnam and has been . . .

**JC:** [Unclear] I don't know his background at all.

**SM:** Well, I guess he's been part of the international labor organization for many years. And he would go to Geneva for those meetings and so on.

**JC:** Oh.

**SM:** But I don't know what kind of role he plays in the community here. I know he was sent to California for some . . . a strike. There was a strike in the chicken industry and then some Chinese workers were brought in to break the strike. And people thought they were Vietnamese sponsored by the government. [Chuckles] You can imagine [unclear] so ridiculous. So he was called in to negotiate or whatever.

**JC:** Now, I don't know . . . I don't even socialize with . . . I met him two or three times, work-related, in work-related situations, which is unusual.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** But I've talked to him recently. I would suspect that he's probably . . . he has his own circle. He's not with our Cultural Association.

**SM:** Yes, I wouldn't imagine.

**JC:** And also there are people that are based in Minneapolis.

**SM:** Oh, I guess he is with the League, I think, because his name is with that.

**JC:** Yes. This is a . . . yes, this is what I [unclear].

**SM:** Is that sort of a different group from some of the others or . . .?

**JC:** It's different from this one.

**SM:** I mean, is it a different . . . is it people that are different in some way that are a matter of . . .?

**JC:** No. It's just . . .

**SM:** It just happens.

**JC:** It's just that . . . I haven't seen a statement of purpose. As I said, you know, when I meet . . . when I say those organizations.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** They are organizations but they are not organized, it would seem like. And I've been telling the Cultural people, I say, "You need to have a statement of purpose translated and have it printed so that people . . ."

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** You know, because everyone that I talk to, and I try to get people to help us or to support us, they all say, “But what are you doing?”

**SM:** Yes, everybody wants to know that.

**JC:** And we don’t have. We don’t have that. And, you know, rather than trying just to repeat it a hundred times . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** And people have . . . don’t believe in it. It’s why they have to sit down and write it up, you know, whatever it takes. None of these have got it, I’m sure.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** It’s probably . . . it’s probably in their by-laws but nobody knows what it is.

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** You know what I mean?

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** So, in that sense, I say they are not organized and I’m sure of that. You know.

**SM:** It’s not too hard. [Chuckles] But they probably just don’t see it as important.

**JC:** But I said, you know . . . yes. That’s the . . . this is, as I said, you know, it’s the mentality that if you set it up, those are things that you have to do. And they are not because . . . We need to do them not because we need to file it and put it in a shelf . . .

**SM:** [Chuckles]

**JC:** But for you to go out and sell that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** You know. And you need to get it to sell that, because if you don’t, then it stays as it is. And we’ll never advance and never, you know, do anything. And the Cultural is a little bit like that.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** And I’ve been pushing Tien. And I say, “If you don’t do it, then I have no function in there.” I told . . . they want me to be the fundraiser. And I said that until . . .

**SM:** Until you have a statement of purpose. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Until you sit down and have a statement of purpose, and list the board of . . . who is in that and what it is, what you want to accomplish, I cannot go out and raise funds for you. Because it's such a . . .

**SM:** Right, because everyone wants to know what for.

**JC:** Yes, and it is difficult now. What it is, they want me to go on an ad-hoc basis for them. And I said [unclear] for what purpose? And I say, "It's not going to commit you to plan, you know." If you don't have one, if you don't have an overall plan, you can't . . . you don't know what you're doing the next day. But they are not invested and we're still fighting. And every time the subject's come up . . . And after I talked to you, I talked to Dam. And Khoan is in France, they've left for France a couple of weeks ago and they won't be back [unclear]. And there are people telling me, "Okay, wait until Khoan has come back." And I said, "You know Khoan is going to let us discuss and he just goes along." You know.

**SM:** Oh, yes. So why wait until he comes back. [Chuckles]

**JC:** So we . . . and I said, "If you want me to do anything, that's the way I work. And I would not have anything to do unless, you know, you go the way I want." And the way I want it, is for them to get themselves organized, to get themselves beyond the . . . you know, there's [unclear].

**SM:** [Chuckles] Well, are there organizations comparable to this in Vietnam? I mean, is this modeled on any kind of organizations in Vietnam? Or is this really an immigrant . . .?

**JC:** Which one? The Cultural?

**SM:** All of these here. Or these are, I suppose, really *immigrant* immigrant organizations.

**JC:** Oh, no. We have a lot at home.

**SM:** You have similar things at home.

**JC:** At home, at every level, we call it xom, which is the united urban . . .

**SM:** Som?

**JC:** Xom. X-O-M.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** Which the equivalent of your neighborhood . . . whatever it is. But a xom is . . . it probably literally translates like that. And it could comprise of, you know, two or three blocks of housing or it could be wider. It depends, you know, if people identify themselves as part of the same

group, then it becomes a xom. And every xom has got . . . because we don't have a social security.

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** And so then to have . . . we don't have things . . . all the things that we have . . .

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** So people are really looking towards the xom as the . . .

**SM:** Self-help organization.

**JC:** The kind of self-help . . . and it . . . actually, I think one . . . I have to get a copy of that paper that we did in 1968 with two professors, on the [unclear].

**SM:** Oh. Does that concern this . . . ?

**JC:** Yes, of the xoms, of the structures.

**SM:** Oh, that would be really interesting to see.

**JC:** And I . . . my name is on that.

**SM:** Oh. Oh.

**JC:** And it's . . .

**SM:** I would love to see a copy.

**JC:** It's a paper by [unclear] University. It's [unclear].

**SM:** Oh.

**JC:** [Unclear] meant to send you copy and I will give it to you.

**SM:** I would really like to see that.

**JC:** Anyway, it's . . . it's not relevant anymore because, you know, it deals with Vietnam . . . but to answer to your question . . .

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** Of course, the cultural things, it's probably an immigration phenomenon. However, at home we went . . . when I say circle, in a way it's that, you know, the fact that people with the same

interests are gathered together. Here the only difference is it's . . . we're not organized legally as an entity.

**SM:** Right.

**JC:** Incorporated and to get . . . go and raise funds or anything. We are just . . . you know, by interest. Like many of your [unclear].

**SM:** I see.

**JC:** We just see one another, you know.

**SM:** Oh, so the way . . . what you're, you know, saying about these organizations is some . . . is similar then to organizations in Vietnam, but they aren't tightly structured, they're more informally organized or . . .?

**JC:** Except that those, you see . . . As I said, I don't know about them.

**SM:** Oh, yes.

**JC:** However, I say, obviously, they are, in a way, a product of refugee . . .

**SM:** Yes, the situation . . .

**JC:** Yes, the situation.

**SM:** . . . calls for them to have . . .

**JC:** But the idea for Vietnamese to form other informal or in formal groups of self-support, it's not new.

**SM:** I see. Okay.

**JC:** But this one, their *raison d'être* [reason for existing] is because they are refugees.

**SM:** Yes, but they are modeled somewhat on this.

**JC:** [Unclear]. And also I would suspect that the membership also is not as based primarily on geographic or on interests.

**SM:** Oh, yes. It would [unclear].

**JC:** However, back home, the xom is primarily geographic and also interests of class or whatever you want to call it. You know, a xom, is . . . if you live in a good neighborhood, you tend to get people who are from the same class of [unclear].

**SM:** Sure. Yes.

**JC:** It's the same like here.

**SM:** Sure. Right.

**JC:** Now a xom in a poorer neighborhood, in a . . . what we call in a [unclear] neighborhood, would have only businessmen who are there and who are doing what they like best. You know, and are in a . . . they are a xom that [unclear] small merchants or small . . . public servant, you know. A low level public servant who lives in that particular area.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So we can identify them because of their occupation, because of their . . . the area where their house is located.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** So these . . . the [unclear] Vietnamese are organized, it's not just a refugee phenomenon.

**SM:** Yes. That's the same with the Chinese, or those based on older type . . .

**JC:** But those things are. Those things.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Because of the membership.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** Take the case of Khoan. You know, at home he would never be heading a Buddhist Association. But here he is. Because . . .

**SM:** Because they drafted him to do it. [Chuckles]

**JC:** Or because, you know, because of the refugee situation maybe at that time he did feel, yes, he needs something, you know, a group with . . . you know.

**SM:** Oh, I see. At home would he take part in a xom then?

**JC:** In his xom, yes.

**SM:** Yes, he would.

**JC:** What I am saying, you know, not all of us have [unclear]. It's a kind of . . . it's like your neighbor; it's how much you want to be involved.

**SM:** Yes. Sure.

**JC:** Some are more than others.

**SM:** Yes.

**JC:** There are some leaders who are very involved and will do things like if the xom is in [unclear] he will be the one who is more active than others. That's just part of it. But that....

[End of interview]

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