

LET'S CELEBRATE TOGETHER!



# YEAR OF THE HORSE

VIETNAMESE ASSOCIATION OF SUDBURY  
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# **PART 5**

# **PRESENT LIVES, FUTURE SIGHTS**

# **VIETNAMESE IN CANADA FROM HOMELAND NOSTALGIA TO COMMUNITY MISSION**

**By Trần Thu Hiền**

## **1. Tết in Canada: Quiet, Yet Deeply Moving**

Tết in Canada is not noisy; it often begins very softly. While snow still blankets the front porch, inside, we slowly arrange a small vase of flowers, cook a few familiar dishes, and turn on an old song... just to remind ourselves: we are still Vietnamese.

Tết is a time to look back at the past year, to see the stumbles, the silent efforts, the abandoned dreams, and then gently write the next chapter of life, not with regret, but with the belief that everything can still start anew.

## 2. Vietnamese in Canada, No Longer "Newcomers"

The Vietnamese community in Canada is no longer small. We are present everywhere, from Ontario and British Columbia to Quebec and Alberta; some work in healthcare, education, technology, and arts, some open shops, run small businesses, or provide services, some come to work with the desire to earn money to send back to help their families, and some start over from zero, but not with a weak mindset.

The Vietnamese community in Canada has gone through a challenging, yet equally proud, journey of integration. From initial manual labor jobs, there are now increasingly more Vietnamese stepping into leadership roles, becoming entrepreneurs and experts in various fields.

We are the builders and contributors shaping Canada's multicultural identity. A new generation of "global Vietnamese" is gradually forming, deeply integrating into Canadian society while maintaining their cultural roots, language, and national pride.

However, alongside this, there are still very real pressures:

- The pressure of integration
- The pressure of maintaining identity
- The pressure of parenting in a foreign land

## 3. Two Worlds Under One Roof and the Silence in Between

Many Vietnamese families in Canada are living in a "two-world model":

- The parent generation: Despite integrating, they still deeply retain traditional values, language, and community spirit.
- The child generation: Born or raised in Canada, speaking English more than Vietnamese, thinking freely, and living according to Western standards.

This difference is not wrong, but without connection, it will create a gap between family members. From differences to misunderstandings, then creating conflicts, and finally, distancing.

During Tết, reunion dinners are not just occasions for eating and drinking, but opportunities to sit down, listen to one another, and reconnect as a true family. Maybe it only takes one sincere sentence:

*"I doesn't completely understand you... but I wants to learn how to understand."*

That is enough to begin.

## 4. Integration is Not Just Blending In, But Renewing Oneself

Did you know? Many Vietnamese, with qualifications and experience, were once doctors, engineers, directors, or held high positions in companies and enterprises in Vietnam. They used to have very good incomes, owned houses and cars in Vietnam, but upon arriving in Canada, they had to start over, doing jobs entirely different from what they studied.

But behind that change is not only economic difficulty, but also mental pressure, the feeling of losing one's value, and the anxiety of not knowing if one is heading in the right direction.

And added to that are:

- Language barriers.
- Cultural differences.
- The feeling of not completely belonging anywhere.

If these issues are not faced directly, they will silently wear down the immigrant.

## 5. A New Year Begins, Let's Choose a New Story for Ourselves

We cannot change everything, but we can choose a new way of living. You can start right now by:

- Choosing a new story to tell about yourself; instead of saying "I am not recognized here," say: "I am learning to assert my value in a completely new place."
- Connecting with family, such as giving parents a small surprise, or telling your children: "I am proud of you."

- Participating in the community or volunteer associations. When you participate in community or volunteer activities, you not only help others, but you are also introducing an image of Vietnamese people full of compassion, responsibility, and bravery.

Every small action is a way for you to reclaim control of your life.

## 6. Vietnamese Anywhere Can Be a Strong Community

The Vietnamese community in Canada is not only integrating but also creating. Not only preserving cultural values, but also spreading them to the world through modern, sustainable, and inspiring forms.

We are building:

- A strong, distinct Vietnamese-Canadian identity.
- A generation of entrepreneurs with a nationalistic spirit, acting globally.
- A community that doesn't just co-exist, but accompanies and leads.

Whether you are in Toronto, Vancouver, or a small town, you are never alone.

We may have different journeys, but we share a common aspiration:

**To live kindly - to live happily - and to live meaningfully.**

Ask yourself:

- How do I want to represent the image of the Vietnamese people?
- How will I connect with my family and community?
- How will I retell Vietnamese culture to my children?

We cannot choose where we are born, but we can always choose the person we will become.

Wishing you a new year that is steadfast, awakened, and filled with enough love to go further and have a good life in Canada.

- Hiền Canada -

## About the Author

Hiền Trần (Hiền Canada) currently lives with her small family, including two sons, in Vancouver, Canada. She and her husband are building a small family business in bonsai, home decor, and gardening consulting, creating a space that connects people with nature amidst the urban pace of life.

A special point in their business journey is bringing many handmade products from Vietnam to Canada, such as conical hats (nón lá), rattan and bamboo items, and handmade planters, etc. Not merely a business, Hiền and her husband want to become a cultural bridge between Vietnam and Canada, introducing the beauty of Vietnamese culture, the delicacy of Vietnamese craftsmanship, and rustic, sustainable values to the local community.

Through products deeply imbued with homeland identity, they hope the image of the Vietnamese people will be loved, respected, and embraced by Canadians as a beautiful part of multicultural life here.