MINDFULNESS PRACTICES AS A BRIDGE

BETWEEN VIETNAMESE PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

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A Project

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Abstract

of

Mindfulness Practices As A Bridge Between Vietnamese Parents And Their Children

by

Pho Duy Tran

There are intergenerational gaps of acculturation between parents and children that cause Vietnamese families to be dysfunctional. To improve the relationship between the parents and their children, the researcher applied the mindfulness practices as an intervention. The intervention helped parents and their chidren: (1) calm their minds, (2) listening deeply, and (3) talking lovingly, which have been gradually lost during adaptation to American culture. Over the four weeks, these three areas were covered. First, the study subjects participated in a 3-hour training instruction. After that, they practiced at home with their children or parents up to 30 minutes each night. Before and after the study, they were asked to complete a s scale. Forty-one study subjects' pretest and posttest results were collected. Their result scores created a sizeable difference and indicated their changes throughout the Asian American Family Conflict Scale. The observation, participant-observation, and personal interviews were also included. All the participants stated that they made progress in their family harmony. As a result, mindfulness practice as an intervention to re-establish the communication between parents and their children was effective.

Robin Kennedy, Ph.D., Committee Chair

5-20-05
Date

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disabled) as the three bodhisattvas who help him without any condition. He feels encouraged that his son and last daughter are outstanding students and are bilingual and bicultural.

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Chapter 1

Statement of Problem

Vietnamese Arrivals in the U.S

After World War II, the world was divided into two war fronts, communism led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and capitalism headed by the United States (U.S.). Both sides concentrated their resources on the arms race during the Cold War, in which Indochina, especially Vietnam, became a hot war field. The Vietnam War, which lasted 30 years, from 1945 to 1975, was the most tragic and longest war in recent history. Over 4 million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians on both sides, nearly 10% of the total population during the war, were killed and wounded. The U.S. used a total firepower that exceeded the amount used in all its previous wars, including both World Wars (Rumbaut, 1995). The war also cost the U.S. over 150 billion dollars. More than 2.2 million American soldiers fought in Vietnam. More than 58,000 were killed, more than 300,000 wounded, and almost 14,000 disabled (George, 1975).

The Vietnam War ended by the collapse of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) on April 30, 1975, but its effects have negatively impacted both the countries of Vietnam and the U.S. The U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War lasted a quarter of a century and ended with its failure. The former U.S. Secretary of Defense in the Vietnam War period, Robert McNamara (1995) points out that "if we are to learn from our experience in Vietnam, we must first pinpoint our failures" (p. 321). He determined the main causes of the failure to be: misjudgments of friends, enemies, and international situations; limitations of U.S. military equipment, forces, and tactics in the war; and failures

in competing pro and con forces in the U.S. The Vietnam War became a nightmare for Americans and a "Vietnam syndrome" that still affects American foreign policies.

Besides heavy casualties, the Vietnam War caused ecological devastation, political repression, and social dislocation for the Vietnamese (Tran, 2000). The whole country, both North and South Vietnam, was being cruelly governed by communist dictators. Hundreds of thousands of officers and government officials were sent to prisons of communists. Several million Vietnamese left their homeland to look for liberty (Nguyen and Luong, 2004). Directly or indirectly, the Vietnam War affected Vietnamese arrivals in the U.S.

Vietnamese Americans are a recently formed ethnic group in the United States. The first recorded Vietnamese immigration to the U.S. occurred in 1952, when eight immigrants were admitted (Rumbaut, 1995). Their growth is very rapid, from a population of insignificant size in the early 1970s to one that numbered over 615,000 by 1990, when it made up almost 10% of the nation's Asian American population (Giddens, 1996). According to the 2000 National Census, there were 1,223,736 Vietnamese Americans (U.S., 2003) including 612,970 males and 610,766 females, in which the number of children under 18 years old was 343,869 or 28.1% of the total Vietnamese American population (Vietnamese Studies, 2004). Most of them now live in California, particularly in Los Angeles and Orange County. Large numbers also live in the Houston and Dallas areas, the suburbs of Washington, DC, and the state of Washington, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois (Vietnamese Refugees, 2001). Little Saigon in Santa Ana, California is assumed to be the capitol of Vietnamese Americans.

Background of the Problem

Researcher. This researcher is a former officer of the Army of South Vietnam. After the collapse of South Vietnam, he was among hundreds of thousands of people who were placed in so-called re-education camps. Those re-education camps were really huge prisons. Hunger, disease, hard work, blood, tears, and death were his real world as a prisoner for five and a half years. The author feels fortunate having survived this suffering while many of his fellow soldiers died in prisons. For this reason, the U.S. government allowed him and his family to come to this country as refugees on March 15, 1996. After two months in the U.S., he volunteered to teach Vietnamese children at Lac Hong Vietnamese Language and Culture School in Sacramento. He was also a Master Chief of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Group in Sacramento (VBYG) from 1996 to 2003. VBYG mentors Vietnamese children and young people. VBYG programs address Vietnamese language and culture, participation in outdoor activities, and strengthen relationships within Vietnamese families. In addition, he is a member of the Dear Park Group of Studying and Practicing Buddhism who study together monthly. The Dear Park Group members who are interested in children often meet together to share experiences in educating children and strengthening their relationships with their children. During the mentoring process and participating in Vietnamese community activities, this researcher observed, interviewed, and found that there were differences between children and their parents with regard to their culture, expectations, goals,

language, life perspectives, and behavior.

Conflicts. Vietnamese American parents prefer to retain their native language, cultural values, and traditional lifestyles despite the demands and pressures to socialize into mainstream society. Furthermore, they expect their children to maintain the traditional values and lifestyles. Individualism and individualized personal growth as expressed in the U.S. culture are not familiar characteristics to Vietnamese parents (Bui & Stimpfl, 2000). In contrast to parental expectations, children become acculturated very fast. For example, their acquisition of English as a primary language, adoption of Western values and lifestyles, consumption standards, and socialization into American society, serve as proof of rapidly changing values. At home, they hear that they must work hard to do well in school in order to move up, but on the streets, they learn a different lesson of rebellion against authority and rejection of the goals of achievement (Thai, 2002).

In Vietnam, parents have a major role in controlling their children's decisions. Children are taught to obey their parents and the elderly. When young Vietnamese become friends with young Americans and see the more informal relationships between them and their families, they want the same kind of independence; something their Vietnamese parents and the elderly find difficult to accept. More and more Vietnamese children who have immigrated to the U.S. as well as American born refuse guidance from their parents and make decisions without parental advice (Kibria, 1993).

Most parents came to the U.S. to give their children a better future. They usually place quite a bit of pressure on their children to study hard and become a doctor, dentist, or an engineer, rather than a writer, a teacher, or a scientist. They often complain and compare their children to those of other families who succeed in education or life. However, children prefer to choose a major by themselves. They also dislike being compared to other children. They want to be unique in their own way of life.

Traditionally, the Vietnamese view children as bamboo-like that will grow any which way if not controlled. Parents have the responsibility to teach their children morals and values at a young age so their children will grow to become upstanding citizens. Like many other Asian cultures, Vietnamese parents are allowed to discipline their children like having their children stand and face a wall, spanking, and hitting with a rod when their children are disobeying. A Vietnamese proverb says, "When we love our children, we give them a beating; when we hate our children, we give them sweet words" (Anonymous, n.d.). On the contrary, Vietnamese American children dislike their parents to use the aforementioned discipline techniques. They want to be encouraged to discuss problems with their parents rather than be ridiculed, yelled at, or beaten. A conflict arises in Vietnamese immigrants with regards to discipline their children because the types of discipline techniques in Vietnam are considered violence in the U.S.

Many Vietnamese born parents have difficulty learning to speak and understand English. Also, many children Vietnamese born and American born do not know the Vietnamese language, and siblings usually speak English to each other at home. Vietnamese children in the U.S. witness many events that affect them. Because of the language barrier, children find it difficult and uncomfortable to talk and share problems with their parents. They prefer talking to their peers rather than their parents. Consequently, few children stay home; they like going out. When the communication between children and their parents becomes limited, their relationships becomes weaker and weaker. As a result, parents feel they "lose control" over their children.

An example of the Vietnamese language barrier conflict between a Vietnamese father and his two acculturated American sons is now being experienced. A 61-year old father who married later in life, arrived in the U.S. as a trauma survivor from the Vietnam War and communist prison. This father could not speak English well. He only hoped that his two

boys, 5 and 7 years old, could understand and speak English as soon as they immigrated to the U.S. He did not care or require his children to learn or speak Vietnamese at home. He was afraid that learning Vietnamese would limit his children's English skills. In the beginning, the children spoke English at home to practice the language. Gradually, they preferred speaking English to Vietnamese. After three years in America, it became too difficult for the boys to speak and understand Vietnamese. Without the Vietnamese language, they also did not know about the Vietnamese culture. They always spoke English at home. The father and his wife could not understand what their children spoke of together or what their children were saying to them. Sometimes the children said that he and his wife were "stupid" (Interview with T. Vo, 2005). He was depressed and very angry with his sons. He recognized his mistake in not teaching his children to learn their native language. He often complained that he was losing his kids. Unfortunately, his negative experience is not unusual in Vietnamese families.

When children grow up, they find how vulnerable their parents are in the American society. Some children lose respect for their parents. This hurts parents' self-esteem. Oftentimes, parents must rely on public assistance. They have difficultly acquiring knowledge and skills in the American society. Children become translators for their parents. With minimal English skills, parents accept hard, low-paying jobs such as delivering newspapers or washing dishes in restaurants. Due to working long hours, they have little time to take care of their children. Many parents feel that they only provide finance and housing for their kids, and they are unable to pay attention to their children's needs.

Many teenagers attend parties and develop close relationships with the opposite sex. Many have sexual relationships early. While parents want to maintain the Vietnamese traditions such as wedding celebrations before a couple lives together, young people want to be free and individualized. Parents also have found that early dating takes away valuable

time for studying. They do not expect their children to date until after they graduate from college.

It is clear that such acculturation differences cause family conflicts that undermine their harmony in family life (Zhou, 2000). The failure within Vietnamese families to resolve the acculturation differences, especially cultural value differences, compounds the normal generational gap (Lee, Choe, Kim, and Ngo 2000). As a result, there are greater misunderstandings, miscommunications, and eventual conflicts among family members. These problems can result in child neglect, child abuse, running away, gangs, and teenaged pregnancy. Unfortunately, few treatment models address these culturally specific family conflicts (Landau, 1982).

Statement of the Research Problem

There are intergenerational gaps of acculturation between parents and children that cause Vietnamese families to be dysfunctional. To improve the relationship between the parents and their children, the researcher plans to apply mindfulness practices as an intervention. The Research question is: Does applying mindfulness practices between Vietnamese parents and their children improve communication and strengthen families?

The purpose of this study is to help parents and their children calm their minds and to help them re-establish listening and talking lovingly which have been gradually lost during adaptation to American culture. Over the six weeks, these three areas will be covered.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses two frameworks and a doctrine that emphasize on family relationships and their effects. The biopsychosocial conceptual framework (Sands, 2001) is a helpful tool to understand the study subjects. This framework views each individual as a whole, including the biological, psychological, and social environmental perspectives. It

views human being's minds and bodies as inseparable and the relationship between individuals and society is interdependent.

Genetics create Vietnamese parents and children who have different physical characteristics and spiritual philosophies. For example, differences include weight, height, color of skin, eyes, hair, IQ, fondness of learning, and working hard. Meanwhile, the social environments of Vietnamese born parents' particular ways of life makes it hard for them as adults to change their beliefs and values. The American Vietnamese parents face challenges of language, employment, and social interactions, while their conditions of age and health limit their skills, and therefore, their success. As a consequence, most of them have low self-esteem in the American society. On the other hand, their children become Americanized quickly because their beliefs and values have not yet become a tradition, and their capacity for rapid development is considerable.

Likewise, the integrated child and family model (Webb, 2003) sees each family as a unified whole. It also blends two separate approaches based on individual-centered and family-centered therapy. Webb (2003) argues, "The purpose of seeing the entire family together is twofold: (1) to see firsthand how family members relate to one another and (2) to help the family find and use more positive and gratifying ways of relating" (p. 125).

The integrated child and family model renews parent-child communication and conveys the sense that the parents, children, and the researcher are all working together to alleviate the problem situation. It addresses the goal to re-establish family communication. Although cultural differences between parents and children cause misunderstandings, the mutual relationships between them help them correct and connect. During interventions

(either individual-centered or family-centered) both the parents and their children can recognize that they are a part of the family and they belong to each other.

The biopsychosocial conceptual framework and integrated child and family model compliment one another in this study, and they can work with the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination. Dependent origination is the law of the conditionality of all physical and spiritual phenomena (Nyanatiloka, 1970). Accordingly, all phenomena in the universe result from complicated causes and effects, so that all things are interdependent. For example, there is no self-nature or existence on its own.

> All phenomena arise depending upon a number of causal factors. In other words, it exists in condition that the others exist; it has in condition that others have; it extinguishes in condition that others extinguish; it has not in condition that others have not (Glossary of Buddhist terms, 2004).

Doctrine of dependent origination determines that family relationships are interdependent. Because parents are happy, their children are happy. When children suffer, their parents suffer. When a family member experiences a problem, the whole household experiences the problem. A Vietnamese proverb says, "A horse that is ill-being makes others dislike eating" (Anonymous, n.d.). A family is dysfunctional because its household members misunderstand each other, so it is up to them to re-establish their communication in order to re-establish family harmony.

The doctrine of dependent origination also emphasizes that ecological environments and social interaction play an important role in an individual's behavior. It is important to look at how they make friends, choose residential areas, and view television shows. In

essences, an individual's behavior reflects negatively or positively on his/her family and community.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation. Cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture. The outcome is a new culture consisting of elements of both cultures in which cultural groups are involved in a reciprocal give-and-take relationship (Robbins, Chatterjee, and Canda, 1998).

Meditation. Meditation is a conscious effort to change how the mind works. The function of meditation practice is to heal and transform. It helps practitioners to be whole, and to look deeply into themselves and around them in order to recognize what is really there. Meditation is the essentials of Buddhism. The Buddha awakened enlightenment throughout the deep meditation (Thich, 1999).

Mindfulness. Mindfulness is the heart of meditation based on the Buddha's teachings. It is the energy that is used in meditation. Mindfulness lights up the recesses of the practitioners' mind or helps them look into the heart of things in order to see their true nature. When mindfulness is present, meditation is present. Mindfulness helps practitioners understand the true essence of the object of meditation whether it is a perception, an emotion, an action, a reaction, or the presence of a person or object (Booklet, 2005).

Assumptions and Justification

Although the intervention of mindfulness practices is based on Buddhist teachings, it does not require one to adhere to Buddhist beliefs or practices. Many of the Buddha's teachings are not religious at all.

The problems between these study subjects are similar to those of other Vietnamese families, as well as Asian immigrants in the United States, making this intervention potentially applicable to other Vietnamese families and immigrant communities.

The dysfunctional family is a big problem and causes domestic violence in the current American society. For Vietnamese Americans, they face more challenges due to the gaps of intergenerations and acculturation during adjustment to the new society. This study applies the mindfulness practices as an intervention to decrease family conflicts and increase in family harmony. Regardless of any problem, when parents and children sit together, calm their minds, listen deeply, and talk lovingly to each other, they can create positive changes in their relationship.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This study applies mindfulness practices to bridge the gap between two current Vietnamese generations in the U.S. They are the first generation of Vietnamese parents and the second generation of Vietnamese children. The gap exists because of misunderstandings and miscommunication between the parents and their children throughout adaptting to the multicultural American society. Before exploring applications of mindfulness practices, it is necessary to review the ecological environments that affected the study subjects' ways of life.

Ecological Environment in Vietnam

*Geography***.** The physical environment in Vietnam plays a vital role in the personality of the Vietnamese and their development of economics, politics, society, and culture. The land of Vietnam is shaped like the letter "S" and located in Southeast Asia. Its geographical position in extreme co-ordinates is between 23.22 and 8.30 degree latitude north and 109.21 and 102.10 longitude east. To the North of Vietnam is China, to the East and the South lies the East Sea, and the West borders with Cambodia and Laos. Vietnam is in the crossway of the two ancient civilizations of China and India, so there was early influence by these both civilizations. Its area is 127,816 square miles; three-fourths of Vietnam is covered by mountains and forests (Vu, 1978).

Northern Vietnam has a tropical monsoon climate with four distinct seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter. Weather conditions in the valley of the Red River, where Vietnamese ancestors settled, were very severe. Because the water level of the Red River is higher than residents' field level, building and maintaining a system of dykes at both sides of the Red River were the primary priority of the early Vietnamese community. Southern Vietnam lies closer to the equator, so it has a hot and humid climate and two seasons: one dry and one rainy. Mekong plain provides rice; the main staple of Vietnamese cuisine for most

of the population. Throughout the country, the climate variously changes throughout of the year. Dozens of dangerous floods and storms occur yearly and cause a lot of casualties and property damages.

According to the official census 2004, the population of Vietnam is estimated at 82,689,518 (Vietnam, 2005; The World Factbook, 2005). The ethnic origin of Vietnam is 87% Vietnamese. Among other ethnic minority groups living in Vietnam include Meo, Thai, Khmer, and Muong. The Chinese only make up 2% of the ethnic make-up of Vietnam, however, the Chinese play an important part in the economy. Most Vietnamese live on the plains and seashore regions.

Table 2.1

Ethnic groups

Ethnic group	Population	%
Kinh (Vietnamese)	71,939,883	87
Chinese	1,653,880	2
Meo	1,653,790	2
Thai	1,653,700	2
Khmer	826,900	1
Muong	826,895	1
Nung	826,890	1
Man, Cham, Tay, Khome, & others	3,307,580	4
Total	82,689,518	100

History. Vietnamese ancestors united together and formed their country 4,902 years ago (Tran, 1968). Their unity was emotionally expressed in the legend of "The Fairy and The Dragon Origin of the Vietnamese." A very long time ago, there was a king named Lac Long Quan. He was related to a type of dragon in the East Sea. One day, he went for a walk in the forest and met a very beautiful young woman. Her name was Au Co who came from fairyland. The king fell in love with Au Co and married her. In a time, Au Co gave birth to a package which was covered with one hundred eggs. These eggs hatched out into one hundred boys. When their children grew up, Lac Long Quan said to his wife: "I'm from the dragon kind, and you belong to the fairyland. We may not live together forever. Now, I will lead fifty sons to come to the seashores, and you will lead other fifty sons to come to the mountains." Then they said good-bye. The men who went to the seashores supported themselves by fishing and farming. The men who went to the mountains lived by hunting. They were the ancestors of the present Vietnamese.

King Lac Long Quan's first son became the King Hung I of the country named Van Lang. Then there were dozens of such Kings of Hung ruled Van Lang, the early national name of Vietnam, for 2768 years! The Vietnamese call each other "Dong Bao" that means kinfolk, but its direct sense is "in a package." In the prehistory, there were about one hundred groups of people who lived in the area of ancient Vietnam. Step by step, they gathered around one united nation. Gathering was symbolized by the moving legend of having one hundred sons in a package. In literature, there is another term "Bach Viet" that means one hundred Vietnamese groups. Throughout Vietnamese history, there were the periods when Vietnam was divided by wars; however, those divisions were temporary, and the unity has always been in their hearts. Although Vietnam has people from different socioeconomic status, the Vietnamese usually proudly say that they are lineally descended from the Dragon and Fairy.

Because of conquerors' threats, especially Chinese invaders, the Vietnamese early built and stood for a nation to fight against foreign enemies and protected their independence. Fighting against foreign enemies was the responsibility of everybody. They did not distinguish from adults, the elderly, children, male, or female. For example, Trung Trac and her sister Trung Nhi led her people to defeat To Dinh, a Chinese ruler, and became the only female King in the Vietnamese history from 41 to 43 A.C. After the Chinese invaded Vietnam in 43 A.C., Ma Vien reported to his Chinese King: "There were twenty articles of Viet Code that distinguished from Chinese Code" (Le, 1999, p. 36).

In the thirteenth century, the Mongol empire became the most powerful force over the world and never failed on any warfield. However, its force was defeated three times in Vietnam. One of the strong factors to win those wars was the unity of the king, officials, generals, soldiers, and greater population. While coping with the Mongolian forced attacks in 1284, King Tran Nhan Tong organized a Conference of the Elderly nationwide, known as the Dien Hong Conference. After presenting difficulties and dangers of Mongolian invaders, the king asked the representatives if they should fight or negotiate peacefully with the enemies. All the elderly participants who represented the whole population's will stated: "to fight." This conference indicated the responsibility of all the Vietnamese in challenges of the nation. It also showed the important role of the older people in the Vietnamese community (Ngo, 2004).

Tran (1968) divided the history of Vietnam into five periods:

1. The Period of Ancient (2879- 111 B.C.): Established the nation during the reign of dozens of generations of Kings Hung until the country was invaded by the Chinese.

2. The Period of Chinese Control (111 B.C – 939 A.C.): The country was invaded and cruelly governed by the Chinese. During this time, the Vietnamese always raised to fight

against the conquerors. Dozens of rebellions won for a time, and then they were defeated again.

3. The Period of Independence (939 – 1528): The Vietnamese won many wars against Chinese enemies and developed the country. The dynasties during this time were Ngo, Dinh, Le, Ly, Tran, Ho, and Le. The two Ly and Tran dynasties contributed greatly to the whole development of Vietnam, which was called the civilization of Dai Viet for four centuries.

4. The Period of Opposition between the North and South (1528- 1802): Many civil wars occurred between the national leaders. At the same time, the country quickly enlarged a long march to the south.

5. The Period of Early Modern (1802-1945): The Nguyen dynasty reunited the county. Then the country was invaded by French colonization. Wars against French colonists happened throughout the country.

Current historians add the Period of Modern from 1945 to present. This is the period of the Vietnam War and its effects.

Culture. Le (1999) points out that the Vietnamese language was not only a spoken language but also a relative complete writing system since the sixth or fifth century B.C. He argues,

> In order to have a code as the Viet Code, Vietnamese language in the Hung King Era must be so exactly developed that it could express legal regulars under the documents of law. Also, to record those documents of law, Vietnamese language must have a particular writing system whose characters could be determined throughout the "Viet song" in Thuyet Uyen 11, page 6a11 – 7a4 (p. 38).

This writing system borrowed symbols from the Chinese writing system but changed their combinations by adding to the characters so the Chinese could not read and understand the language. In the nineteenth century, missionary Alexandre de Rhodes pioneered an alphabetic writing system that made Vietnamese easy to learn and speak.

Because destructions from storms, floods, wars, time, and poor conditions of reservation, a lot of important documents of Vietnamese literature were lost. The most severe, Vietnam invasion happened when the Chinese invaded during the 1410s burning almost all Vietnamese publishers. The records still maintain many excellent poems, articles, and books as well as important documents. A lot of documents of literature were engraved on steles in pagodas, temples, monuments, tombs, and communal houses. They are precious resources to discover the literature and history of Vietnam. Some of the famous literature is the Declaration of Defeating Chinese Conquerors, a Kieu tale, or a Luc Van Tien tale. Folksong, folk poems, proverbs, and humor stories are abundant resources of the Vietnamese literatures.

The Vietnamese pay attention to education because it can secure a high-ranking place in the government bureaucracy, military, or in professions. There were four major kinds of careers in the Vietnamese society before the nineteenth century. Those careers were students, farmers, workers, and businessmen. Being a student was number one. Traditionally, males focused on studying, and females paid attention to working. Being respectful to teachers and ethics is a good behavior because it fosters good education.

The Vietnamese tradition highlights the harmony between human beings and nature and the sympathy among individuals. In speaking, Vietnamese usually use the first person in plural. "We," instead of "I", is often indicated although only one person speaks the singular.

The harmony helps Vietnamese care for others' feelings. The harmonious relationship disapproved violence and confrontation. However, tradition implies that people can sacrifice themselves for the others when necessary.

Most Vietnamese believe in the law of causality and the recycle of natural movements where everything is impermanent. Like the weather changes from spring, summer, fall, and winter, the Vietnamese believe that they experience successes and failures. The country's strength or weakness changes in the same way. However, the good will win the evil, and a good thing will occur at the end of a bad thing. The individuals, therefore, are expected to live in harmony with the natural order. This is considered a highly delicate art of living (Tran, 2000).

The Vietnamese have an ability to synthesize various religions and philosophies to apply to their practical lives. Three religions that had a lasting tradition in Vietnam were Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, and they were intermingled as one under the Dynasty of Tran (Ngo, Le, Phan, Pham, Le, and Nguyen, 2004). This harmony multiplied the strength of the nation and contributed greatly to the war against the Mongol empire. In the late sixteenth century, Christianity was introduced into Vietnam by the Spanish, Portuguese, and French missionaries. In addition to, Cao Dai and Hoa Hao were founded in South Vietnam in the early twentieth century.

The basic unit of Vietnamese society is family. Family is the first environment of individuals' lives where they have interdependence and belonging to. Households are able to find support, security, joys, happiness; and mutual obligation to family as well as sharing their sadness and sufferings of life. Therefore, the worst thing is to embarrass or lose one's family (Bui and Stimpfl, 2000), and not having a family is unthinkable (Kibria, 1993).

The traditional family type is patrilineal with a patriarchal structure. It is the extended family, which includes the parents, all children, their in-laws, and the grandparents. Three or four generations living together in one house is considered to bring much happiness and luck. Relationships in families are so close that activities, feelings, thinking, and success or failure of an individual affects others. The Vietnamese find themselves in the context of family and relatives, not individual ideals, goals, and achievements. Individual achievements bring pride and credit to the family as a whole and not to an individual member. Instead of autonomy and independence, Vietnamese emphasize subordination to and solidarity with the group. Because group and family needs are more important than those of individuals, self-serving behavior is discouraged (Nimmagadda and Balgopol, 2000).

The family is also the foundation of the Vietnamese culture. It functions as a small image of the larger society in which the father is a head, the mother is a supporter, the elders are respected, and the children are expected to obey their parents and elders. Each family has its rules and norms in which honor of the family and clan kin is always emphasized. Parents have a responsibility to raise, educate, and train children to become good people. Morrow (1989) discusses shame, ridicule, and loss of face as child-rearing patterns in order to produce acceptable behavior.

Among the Vietnamese's good reputations such as loyalty, politeness, modesty, and humility, the filial piety to parents, grandparents, and clan is highlighted (Tran, 2000). Allegiance to the family dictates their well being for the sake of their family's welfare and harmony. A Vietnamese who lacks filial piety is blamed and despised not only by his family but also by his community. Because of filial piety, sometimes young people sacrifice their happiness of marriage, business, and opportunities of careers.

Gender plays a major part in the Vietnamese family. Male and female adults are expected to marry, and the parents' responsibility is not accomplished if they cannot help their children get married during their lifetime. It is shameful for parents and family if a daughter becomes pregnant without a wedding ceremony. Because males keep the last name of a family, a son's role is more important than a daughter's. This point of view was influenced by Confucius's teachings that no heir to keep the last name of the family was the greatest unluckiness to the married couple.

A half century ago, polygamy was a common practice in Vietnam. This practice is currently prohibited, but still affects the extended family. Vietnamese Americans view sexual issues as a private and secret behavior between partners and seldom discuss it in public.

Another environment that greatly affects the Vietnamese is their village. Vietnamese villages have existed for thousands of years in the history. A Village is made up of many families for safety, economic development, and mutual help (Toan, 1968). A Vietnamese village is a social community that has special traditions so particular that sometimes the king's rules are less respected than the village's rules.

In the fifteenth century, King Le Thanh Ton stated an important writing statement that has affected organization of villages up until the present. His statement consisted of twenty-four rules that determined the responsibly of parents, individuals, relationships, functions of local officials, and how to keep documents as well as public services. Some of those rules are:

> (1) Parents teach their children to behave well. All males and females should have a career, not drink, gamble, and perform songs hurt the good customs. (2) The

> household head [father] keeps himself regulars and good behaviors in order to give the other households an example. (3) If children behave badly, their household head must be punished. (4) Couples of marriage must try to work hard together, live and respect together forever, not practice bad ways that hurt cultural traditions. (5) Children and young people should love their siblings and harmonize to villagers. They must integrate to others based on good behaviors and regulars. If violated, they will be taught and beaten by respectful elders. If they violated crime, they will be brought to the local officials to punish (Toan, 1968, p. 226).

Challenges in the American Society

Vietnamese Americans. Like other immigrant groups, there were two forces that caused the Vietnamese to arrive in the U.S. They were "push forces" and "pull forces" (Fong, 2000). On the one hand, "push forces" are the bad conditions that cause residents to leave their homeland in order to survive. For the Vietnamese, the "push forces" included the collapse of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam); the fear of repression or imprisonment in re-education camps; the past associations with the former regime and ideological opposition to communism; the fear of Communist killing and persecution; the cruelty of Communist government; as well as economic difficulties (Nguyen and Luong, 2004). According to United Nations nutrition specialists, in 1984, daily average food consumption among Vietnamese was only 1,850 calories per day, nearly 20% less than the generally accepted minimum daily standard of 2,300 calories. At the same time, income per capita was closer to 200 dollars (Vietnam, 1987).

On the other hand, "pull forces" are the attractive living conditions in another country. For example, the desires for family reunification, better education for their children, and an

improved standard of living. Indeed, the U.S. is a land of opportunity for immigrants and refugees because of its economic, political, social, and scientific achievements.

Rumbaut (1995) distinguishes between the two terms, refugee and immigrant: "Refugees are said to be motivated to flee by fear of persecution (political motives), whereas immigrants are defined by their aspirations for better material opportunities and self-advancement (economic motives)" (p. 257). Based on this definition, most Vietnamese Americans are refugees.

Historians divide the Vietnamese arrivals in the U.S. into three periods (Fong, 2000). The first period started after the collapse of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975. More than 40,000 people were evacuated from Vietnam in April of 1975 alone. After a few months, approximately 150,000 people went to the U. S. and 50,000 to other countries (Rutledge, 1987). Most of them were the top officials and army officers and their families. They were well educated and financially secure. As a result, they have succeeded in adjusting relatively well to the new society.

Those who arrived in the second period (1978-1980) were known as the "boat people." They left on small boats to cross the ocean. Boat people experienced a terrible and dangerous journey, facing death and other risks. "Threatened by the unsafe ship and by terrible storms on the South China Sea, the boat people also faced danger from Thai pirates and Vietnamese coast patrols. Pirates would attack and board the ships carrying refugees and take what few possessions the people had left. They often took all the food and water aboard, beat and killed the men, assaulted the women, and then left the helpless refugees adrift, sometimes on a sinking ship… Estimates for the number of boat people lost at sea and presumed dead are as low as 40,000 and as high as 200,000" (Rutledge, 1987, p. 24). According to Fong (2000), 750,000 boat people arrived in the U.S., in which there were 225,000 Vietnamese and 525,000 Chinese Vietnamese.

The third period was called ODP (the Orderly Departure Program). Since 1980, Vietnamese nationals who wish to settle in the U.S. may apply for permission to leave Vietnam under one of three categories established by the ODP and approved by the U.S. Department of State. These categories include family reunification, Amerasians, former workers for the U.S. government in Vietnam, and former political prisoners. A large part of these immigrants and refugees were former army officers and officials who were held in Communist prisons at a minimum of three years. ODP is responsible for the significant increases in the number of Vietnamese Americans.

Acculturation. The ecological perspectives in the original country affect the ways of life and adaptation process of the Vietnamese in the American society. West (1993) argues that every culture is based on elements of antecedent cultures, creatively appropriated, responding to new circumstances. For most Vietnamese American parents, the journey to America and their adjustment to the American society has been extremely difficult (Skinner, 1980). They also suffered from the trauma of war, leaving Vietnam, and from the severe emotional distress that they experienced at refugee camps (Zhou, 2000). Consequently, they have many troubles in life and dealing with the activities of individual, family, and the community in American society.

Most male Vietnamese refugees held a high status in the former society in Vietnam. They had a good educational background, career, and were financially secure; however, they lost everything after the collapse of the Republic of Vietnam. They were imprisoned by the Communists for a long time. When they arrived in the U.S., most of them were old. Due to their age, many have not been able to learn English very well; therefore, they cannot find good jobs. Because many people rely upon social assistance, they developed an inferiority

complex and become depressed. They reminisce about their previous successful lives in Vietnam while they face the present difficulties and challenges in the U.S.

Their most difficult cultural challenge is with their children and young people. Affected by the American way of life, those in the second generation of immigrants find difficulty in speaking Vietnamese as well as practicing the old ways of their parents or grandparents. The children became "Americanized" very fast and they tend to stress individualism and freedom as opposed to the Vietnamese way which is communal based. They have early sexual relations and prefer the outside world to their traditional family.

Conflicts not only happen between the different generations but also between married couples. In response to the needs of family, wives usually work outside the home. Sometimes, they earn more money than their husbands. Female roles have fundamentally changed the Vietnamese family relationship. Many Vietnamese men once held important positions in the bureaucracy of South Vietnam, at the same time they were the masters of their families. Today, they have not found good jobs because of their limitations in communicating in their English, their poor career skills, or elderly status. When their conditions changed, their roles also changed. Consequently, many marriages have failed and ended in divorce.

In the Vietnamese culture, the older a person is, the more he or she is respected. On the contrary, in American society, Vietnamese elderly often depend totally on their children. Many elderly want to go to the pagoda or church, but their children are reluctant to take them. This makes the elderly Vietnamese population unhappy. An old woman suffers because she stays home all day long, so she has no means of communication with the outside world. She is isolated, a recluse, as are most of the older women and men. A Buddhist nun quoted from Freeman (1989) comments, "A lot of people complain that they

are suffering and that they do not want to live. In one month, for example, ten people told me that they were considering suicide, and three people attempted it" (p. 400). While a nursing home is a solution, at the same time it is a threat for many elderly when their children cannot take care of them.

Like other Asian people, Vietnamese family conflicts as mentioned above cannot be completedly explained by the generation gap or the intergenerational conflict hypothesis that is often used to understand parent- child conflicts within the Western culture (Lerner, Karson, Meisels, & Knapp, 1975). On the contrary, Sluziki (1979) argues that an acculturation gap or the different rates of acculturation between immigrant parents and their U.S. raised children are better able to explain these conflicts.

Recent media reports have described Vietnamese Americans as a "model minority," a group whose cultural orientation have enabled them to overcome disadvantages and achieve success (Gold and Kibria, 1993). After 30 years settling in America, the land of opportunity, their high rates of education, income, employment, business, and community activities, particular in young people, still surprise Americans and other ethnic groups. The U.S. 2000 Census (Vietnamese Studies Internet Resource , 2000).

Table 2.2

Vietnamese Americans' socioeconomics

Items	Census 2000	Census 1990
Median family income	$46,929	$29,800
Vietnamese with public assistance	10.2%	24%
Families below the poverty level	14.3%	24%
Owner occupied housing	59.6%	43%

shows that the percentage of Vietnamese Americans 25 years and older who graduated with a high school diploma or higher is 62% and a bachelor's degree or higher is 19.5%, compared to 80.4% and 24.4% of the total American population. The Census also presents good improvements for the Vietnamese in socioeconomics (Table 2.2).

Among interpretations of the Vietnamese American's success, Sowell (1981) pays attention to the cultural traits. Sowell suggests that the Vietnamese Americans have a powerful work ethic, a love of education, the ability to defer gratification, an entrepreneurial outlook, the respect for authority, an abhorrence of government aid, and a high degree of ethnic loyalty. They continue to maintain and develop their cultural traditions. They enjoy the customs in the same way they practiced them in their native country, such as Tet fair for Vietnamese New Year, the Celebration of the National Ancestor of Hung King, Moon Cake Festival, artistic performances, introducing new novels or collections of poems, and fundraising for charities. Their parties for wedding ceremonies have 700 participants usually. They usually organize funeral ceremonies formally. They also built many churches and temples and have developed their activities effectively. There are dozens of Vietnamese magazines in the U.S.

Buddhism

When preparing the research on this thesis, the researcher assumed that mindfulness practices are the heart of Buddhism. Buddhism is the Teaching of the Buddha. The Pali term "Buddha" is derived from verbal the root *budh*, to awaken and to understand (Nyanatiloka, 1970). A Buddha is One Who Is Awakened. The Buddha is not a god. He is a human being who has suffering and happiness like any anybody else, but he became a Buddha by his own efforts of searching and experiencing the truth and teaching that truth to

others. The founder of current Buddhism was Siddhatha Gautama, one of a long series of Buddhas that appeared in the past and will appear in the future (Narada, 1988).

Siddhartha Gautama was born as a prince in Kapilavathu, on the border of current Nepal, in 624 B.C. The Prince's father was King Suddhodana, and his mother was Queen Maha Maya. He married Princess Yasodhara and had a son named Rahula. The Prince Siddhartha Gautama received a perfect education and lived happily. However, his King father tried to prevent him from experiencing suffering in order to stop his will to leave the family. One day, he was permitted to travel beyond his royal citadel and saw, for the first time, a decrepit old man, a diseased person, a corpse, and a dignified hermit. As a thoughtful person, he understood that life was full of suffering while happiness is only a short time. He made a decision to leave his family to search for a way to end his and others' suffering at 29 years old.

After six years of searching and practicing different ways, particularly in prolonged painful austerities until he was a living skeleton and almost on the verge of death, the ascetic Siddhattha discovered his own method of a middle path that gave up extremes of severe austerity and worldly pleasures. He ate a little again to heal his health and focused on the meditation that he had experienced as an infant. He remembered that when he was a minor, his father brought him to a traditional sloughing festival. He was placed on a screened and canopied couch under the cool shade of a solitary rose-apple tree to be watched by nurses. While the King was participating in the ceremony, the nurses were distracted from the prince and more concentrated on watching the festival. While not paying attention to Siddhartha, an incident happened.

> A very remarkable incident took place in his childhood. It was an unprecedented spiritual experience which, later, during his search after truth, served as a key to his Enlightenment. In striking contrast to the mirth and merriment of the festival it was all calm and quiet under the rose-apple tree. All the conditions conducive to quiet meditation being there, the pensive-child, young in year but old in wisdom, sat cross-legged and seized the opportunity to commence that all-important practice of intent concentration on the breath – on exhalations and inhalations – which gained for him then and there that one pointedness of mind known as Samadhi and he thus developed the First Jhana (Narada, 1988, p. 5).

Throughout the deep meditation, in the final night, the ascetic Siddhattha realized the three Knownledges. The First Knowledge, he recalled the mode and details of his former lives. In the Second Knowledge, he understood the disappearing and the reappearing of beings. By the Third Knowledge, he "realized, 'Rebirth is ended; fulfilled the Holy Life; done what was to be done; there is no more of this state again.' Ignorance was dispelled, and wisdom arose; darkness vanished, and light arose" (Narada, 1988, p. 34). He awakened enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, which today is Buddha Gaya, at 35 years of age. He was well-known as Buddha Gautama at that time.

During teachings, the Buddha always emphasized that he taught only suffering and the transformation of suffering: "The Tathagata has only spoken and taught in relation to one thing: suffering and the end of suffering" (Thich, 2000, p. 240). His basic teachings consisted of the Four Noble Truths, in which the threefold of precepts, concentration, and insight was the most important practice. The First Noble Truth was recognizing suffering. The Second Noble Truth was the origin, roots, nature, creation, or arising of that suffering.

The Third Noble Truth was the cessation of creating suffering. And the Fourth Noble Truth was the path that leads to refraining from doing the things that caused us to suffer. This path was called the Eight Right Practices: Right views, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration (Buddhism, 1996).

The methodology of the Four Noble Truths consists of a 4-step process to solve a problem: (1) Statement of problem; (2) Causes of the problem; (3) Solution of the problem; (4) Implementation of the solution. This process has two parts: the first part which includes steps (1) and (2) helps practitioners see, accept, and understand the reality. The second part which includes steps (3) and (4) helps practitioners gain transformation for that reality. For example, (1) Problem: a father is angry at his son; (2) Cause of the father's anger: he returns home from working hard, but his son does not greet him; (3) Solution: the father recognizes that he should be happy with his son; (4) Transformation: he smiles and calms his mind, then talks lovingly to his son. The relationship of this process is a cause and effect relationship in which bad actions lead to bad outcomes while good actions lead to good results.

For forty-five years, the Buddha applied his flexible teachings according to disciples' positions in life. Each of his teachings was called a dharma door, and he offered a great number of (or 84,000) such dharma doors. He honored the ability to liberate each person and other beings. He said that he was a Buddha, and everybody could also become a Buddha (Scripture of the Lotus Blossom, 1976).

The Buddha's doctrine of equality was against the injustice of social class in contemporary India. When accepting a person from the lowest social class to his Shanga,

he stated, “There is no rank of class among those whose blood is red, and tear is salty” (Minh, Thien, Chon, & Duc, 1997). His disciples have been arranged in four subgroups: monk, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. Among 1,253 Arahans who awakened during the Buddha’s lifetime, there were many females. His disciples consisted of a large range of social groups such as brahmen who were at the highest social class in India, kings, officials, scholars, farmers, businessmen, workers, and others.

During 26 centuries, Buddhism has offered “help to a world undergoing rapid and sometimes destructive changes in its fragile ecosystem” (Lancaster, 1997, p. 3). To congratulate the Buddha’s Birthday as a holiday of the United Nations, the Secretary General of the United Nations emphasized that Buddhism never caused any war during its history, so it has been a valuable example for the current global peace.

> The Buddha’s message was one of peace and compassion, but also one of mindfulness -- of being fully aware of oneself, one’s actions and the world in which one lives. That message is one that should be taken seriously by all concerned about the direction and fate of humankind (United Nations, 2003).

Many researchers, for example, Suzuki (1998), agree that the spine of Buddhism is meditation. Accordingly, meditation is a progression, and concentration is its goal. In other words, concentration is a state of mind as a result of the meditative process. Nyanatiloka (1946) points out that the English term “meditation” is called generally but rather vaguely of the Pali term “bhavana.” Bhavana describes two types of mental development. These two kinds are the development of tranquility and the development of insight. Tranquility (samatha) is one-pointedness of mind or an unperturbed, peaceful, and lucid state of mind attained by strong mental concentration, while insight (vipassana) is the

intuitive insight into the impermanency, misery, and impersonality of all material and mental phenomena of existence. It is insight that leads to entrance into the supermundane states of Holiness and to final liberation. The evidence for meditation is described below:

> Tranquility bestows a threefold blessing: favorable rebirth, a present happy life, and purity of mind which is the condition of Insight. Concentration is the indispensable foundation and precondition of Insight by purifying the mind from the 5 mental defilements or hindrances whilst Insight produces the 4 supermundane stages of Holiness and deliverance of mind. The Buddha therefore says: 'May you develop mental concentration, O monks; for whoso is mentally concentrated, sees things according to reality.' .. 'Just as when a lighted lamp is brought into a dark chamber, the lamp-light will destroy the darkness and produce and spread the light, just so will Insight, once arisen, destroy the darkness of Ignorance and produce the light of knowledge' (Nyanatiloka, 1946, p. 31).

Goleman (1977) notes diverse systems of meditation such as Hindu Bhakti, Jewish Kabbalah, Christian Hesychasm, Sufism, Transcentental Meditation, Indian Tantra and Kundalini Yoga, Gurdjieff's Fourth Way, and Theravadan Buddhism. They are different from the techniques and the awakened states, but they have common grounds, for example, the preparatory groundwork, the meditator's requirements, attention, and transforming the meditator's consciousness. The fundamental difference from the meditation based on the Buddha's teachings and other traditions focused on the fact that the Buddhist meditation faces suffering in order to solve it while almost others escape from this reality (Thich, 1998).

However, the Buddha taught many different types of meditation, each designed to overcome a particular problem or to develop a particular psychological state (Dhammika, 1998). The two most common and useful types of meditation are: mindfulness of breathing and loving kindness meditation. The followings are their basic skills (Goldstein, 2002; Dhammika, 1998; Thich, 1993).

Practicing the mindfulness of breathing. There are 4 Ps – place, posture, practice, and problems. First, practitioners should find a suitable place. Second, they sit in a comfortable posture (Sitting is one of the most common forms of meditation, but there are many other forms such as walking, lying down, standing, working, drinking, and eating). Third, they sit quietly with their eyes closed and focus their attention on the in and out movement of the breathing process: not controlling or forcing breathing in any way; merely staying attentive to the rising and falling movement of the abdomen; not imagining or visualizing anything but just *experiencing the sensation* of the movement. Fourth, certain problems and difficulties will arise. Practitioners might experience irritating itches on the body or discomfort in the knees. If this happens, they try to keep the body relaxed without moving and keep focused on their breathing. They will probably have many intruding thoughts coming into their mind which distracts their attention from their breathing. The only way they can deal with this problem is to patiently keep returning their attention to the breathing process. If they keep doing this, eventually thoughts will weaken, and concentration will become stronger, moments of deep mental calmness and inner peace will arise.

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather – our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions – our breathing is always

with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried way, or sunken in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our mind.

We may like to recite:

"Breathing in I know that I am breathing in.

Breathing out I know that I am breathing out."

We do not need to control our breath. Feel the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. With our awareness it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness into each moment of our life (How to enjoy your stay in Plum Village, 2005, p. 1).

Practicing loving kindness meditation. First, practitioners turn their attention to themselves and say to themselves words like: "May I be well and happy. May I be peaceful and calm? May I be protected from dangers? May my mind be free from hatred? May my heart be filled with love" (Dhammika, 1998, p. 46)? Then gradually, they think of a loved person, a neutral person, who is someone they neither like nor dislike, and finally a disliked person, wishing each of them well as they do so. This way, practitioners will find very positive changes taking place within themselves. They will find that they are able to be more accepting and forgiving toward themselves. They will find that the feelings they have towards their loved ones will increase. They will find themselves making friends with people they used to be indifferent with and uncaring towards, and they will find that the ill-will or resentment they have towards some people will lessen and eventually be dissolved. Sometimes if they know of someone who is sick, unhappy or encountering

difficulties, they can include them in their meditation. Very often those patients will find their situation better.

Buddhism in Vietnam. Buddhism was taught by Indian monks in Vietnam in the second century BC and by Chinese monks later (Le, 1998). The well-known monks who came from India were Khau Ni Danh, Ma Ha Ky Vuc, and Chi Cuong Luong. Khuong Tang Hoi, whose father was in North India, was born and studied Buddhism in Vietnam. He was the first meditation master and the author of several Buddhist books in Vietnam. After that he moved to China and taught Buddhism in South China (Thich, 1998). Besides, Mau Bac was a famous Buddhist layman who came from China. Throughout the long history, Buddhism mixed into the Vietnamese culture so close that it is unable to distinguish Buddhist influences in the culture (Nguyen, 1994).

Meditation based on the Buddha's teachings was taught and practiced in Vietnam very early. Besides Khuong Tang Hoi, there were four other sources of meditation taught and practiced throughout many generations. The first master was Ty Ni Da Luu Chi, an Indian who arrived in China before teaching in Vietnam in the year of 580 A.C. The second was Vo Ngon Thong, a Chinese meditation master who arrived in Vietnam in 820. The third was Thao Duong, another Chinese master monk, in 1069. The fourth was Tran Nhan Tong, a Vietnamese meditation master who was a former king.

Many well-known meditation masters contributed greatly to the development of Vietnam not only in Buddhism but also education, culture, society, politics, and diplomacy, for example, Khuong Viet, Do Phap Thuan, and Van Hanh contributed much to the country. Many Buddhist kings such as Ly Thai To, Ly Thanh Tong, Tran Thai Tong, Tran Nhan Tong and officials such as Ly Thuong Kiet, Tran Hung Dao, and Tue Trung applied

Buddhist teachings to the national laws, society regulations, and family relationships. These contributions played an important part in constructing and developing Vietnam into a powerful independent nation since the tenth century (Nguyen, 1994).

King Tran Thai Tong and his grandson Tran Nhan Tong were especially recognized as the great meditation masters (Thich, 2002). When he was a prince, Tran Nhan Tong studied with Tue Trung Thuong Si, a layman who solidly practiced meditation. He often consulted religious matters with Tue Trung. One day, he asked, "What is the duty and objective of a Buddhist practitioner?" Tue Trung replied: "Return to yourself for self-observation is your duty. Can't attain from anywhere else" (p. 36). The answer awakened the prince to find his own way of practicing. When Tran Nhan Tong became a King, he led the country to fight against the enemy invaders of the Mongol empire and won these two wars in 1284-1285 and 1287-1288. After constructing the peace and prosperity for the country, he abdicated his kingship for his son and became a monk. He founded the Practicing Method of Vietnamese Buddhist Meditation. Today, this meditation method is being restored by the meditation master Thich Thanh Tu in Vietnam.

Mindfulness Practices

While meditation is essential to the Buddha's teachings, practice of mindfulness is the heart of meditation. The Buddha taught about mindfulness in basic teachings such as The Five Spiritual Faculties and Powers, The Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and The Eight Right Practices. In the brochure of "How to enjoy your stay in Plum Village" (2005), mindfulness states:

> Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be

> mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car or take our morning shower (p.1).

Thich (1998) explains that mindfulness lights up the recesses of the practitioners' mind or helps them look into the heart of things in order to see their true nature. Mindfulness is the energy that can embrace and transform all mental formations. Thich points out seven miracles of mindfulness and emphasizes that practicing them "helps us lead a happy and healthy life, transforming suffering and bringing forth peace, joy, and freedom" (p. 67).

The first miracle of mindfulness is to be present and able to witness miracles like a sunrise, a child's smile, or preparing a family meal. People usually spend a lot of time imprisoned in anger, worried, and wondering about the past and future; therefore, they miss their appointment with life. The art of dwelling happily in the present moment is the following:

> Aware that life is available only in the present moment and that it is possible to live happily in the here and now, we are committed to training ourselves to live deeply each moment of daily life. We will try not to lose ourselves in dispersion or be carried away by regrets about the past, worries about the future, or craving, anger, or jealousy in the present. We will practice mindful breathing to come back to what is happening in the present moment. We are determined to learn the art of mindful living by touching the wondrous, refreshing, and healing elements that are inside and around us, and by nourishing seeds of joy, peace, love, and understanding in ourselves, thus facilitating the work of transformation and healing in our consciousness (Plum Thich, 2000. p. 77).

The second miracle of mindfulness is to make the other present. When a man is present, he also makes the others- a sunrise, a child's smile, or preparing a family meal- come

alive. An important question in philosophy is 'to be or not to be," and philosophers have hardly researched an answer. The more they research, however, the more they forget about life because they only think of life and not experience life. Life has suffering. On the opposite side, it has miracles too. If a female only feels suffering, she will be ill-being. On the contrary, if she knows how to enact miracles, reflections, and joyfulness, she will be nourished by those components of life.

The third miracle of mindfulness is to nourish the object of a practitioner's attention. With attention, practitioners can discover many new and wonderful qualities of objects; therefore, they can enjoy and nourish the objects. If an object is a river, then mindfulness helps nourish and protect the river. If an object is a baby, mindfulness helps nourish and protect the baby. So, mindfulness is the origin of compassion

The fourth miracle of mindfulness is to relieve other's suffering. Those who endure suffering alone will feel much headache. However, if a friend can stay with them and listen deeply to their suffering, then they will feel their suffering decrease. In difficult moments, if you have a friend who can be truly present with you, you know that you are blessed.

The fifth miracle of mindfulness is to look deeply. When practitioners are calm and concentrated, they are really there for deep looking. They shine the light of mindfulness on the object of their attention and on themselves. Looking deeply is the second aspect of meditation while the first aspect of meditation is stopping, calming, resting, and healing included in the four miracles of mindfulness above.

The sixth miracle of mindfulness is to understand. By concentrating and looking deeply, practitioners can understand clearly an object by seeing it. To see and understand, practitioners not only observe and sympathize with objects but also become participants, interbeings, and interpenetrable to those objects. Understanding is the base of love. Without understanding, love easily becomes mistaken and breaks down. Understanding and love are

necessary to re-establish communication between individuals, siblings, husbands and wives, parents and children, and among group members.

The seventh miracle of mindfulness is to transform. When practicing mindfulness, practitioners touch the healing and refreshing elements of life and begin to transform their own suffering of the world. Practitioners do not carry out suffering but face and accept it as a reality in order to solve it completely. Practicing mindfulness strengthens practitioners' ability to embrace suffering as a mother embraces her crying baby and knows how to help the baby.

According to meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh (1998), parents loose their children because they cannot communicate with them anymore, or share with them the beauty of life. Some Vietnamese have received so many precious jewels from the Vietnamese culture and from the teachings of the Buddha, but they cannot pass on those traditions to their children because of difficulties in communication. If parents want to pass on those precious traditions, they need to re-establish communication by listening deeply and speaking lovingly.

> I have organized retreats in Europe and the United States for young children, and when they have practiced for seven or five days, they go home and make peace with their father and mother, and they bring their father and mother to the practice center. Even a child of twelve or thirteen years can play the role of kalyanamitra [a friend in the practice, a spiritual friend] for their father and mother, and many children have been successful. This gives me much faith and happiness. If my child is going on the dark path, a dangerous path, and I am father or mother and I am worried about my child, and I cannot communicate with that child, the method is still the method of deep listening, speaking lovingly, and keeping the mindfulness trainings. We can practice, we can talk with all our love, and we can say, 'My dear

> child, I know you have difficulties, I know you suffer and you have not been able to talk about it. Before I did not have the capacity to listen to you, but now I have begun a practice and I can listen to you. So please tell me, have I made some mistakes which I have made you suffer?' If the child can say what it is, the child will suffer much less. And if you feel shy, if you cannot yet say this to your child, you can write a letter to them (p. 12).

Retreats help many parents and children re-establish their relationship and increase their family harmony. A thirteen-year old girl was sent by her parents to attend a retreat for youth in Plum Village, France. In the first talk with her nun helper, the girl disclosed that she had violent conflicts with her father and became a gang member when she was nine years old. She preferred the way of freedom from her parents with no discipline. She especially hated her father because he drank and smoked. Many times he promised to change those bad habits, but he always violated his promises. In the village, she learned to talk lovingly. Instead of speaking "I hate …," she would say, "It does not please me that …" Or she said, "He waters the seed of anger in me" instead of "He pisses me off." Thanks to the nuns' care, she practiced the mindfulness of breathing, relaxation, meditation, and touching the ground in order to come back to her ancestors.

Gradually, she could calm down her mind and slow down her body movements. For example, she went up and down the stairs more lightly, put her shoes and clothes orderly in her drawers, automatically cleaned her room, and voluntarily participated in activities in the village. When she heard that her father was coming to see her, she protested powerfully by saying, "I will leave if he gets here. I'll kill myself. You'll see the ugliest side of me." After one month, she became more calm. She no longer was opposed to her father when he visited her and agreed to go along with him back to their home. On the coming day, she was like a twenty-year old girl who applied lipstick and face power as well as fashion clothing. On the

going day, she was fresh and nice like a growing flower. From her home in Germany, she phoned and talked about how happy she was to the Village in France. She informed the village that her father was doing well and practicing the mindfulness of breathing and did not smoke in the home or before herself anymore. Her father also emailed the Deer Park Monastery, a branch of Plum Village in California, and promised that he and his daughter and the whole family will go to the Deer Park Monastery to practice together (Nhat, 2005).

The same effectiveness was found in The Children's Home of Ma Niketan in Mumbai, India. Nhan Thua (2004) notes that this home had 170 children and young people from 13 to 23 years old. They were divided into small groups and participated in short retreats. The mission of the children's home consisted of (1) practicing to breathe mindfully, (2) group discussions, (3) explanation and guides of meditation skills, and (4) applying them to games, creating activities, videos, reading stories, and relaxing. To help students practicing such mindfulness, the teachers and godmothers attended and experienced retreats in Buddhist centers and knew how to manage and coordinate groups with over one hundred participants

As a result, many children developed closer relationships to their peers and decreased their negative attitudes like fear, anger, hate, and conflicts with others. A girl disclosed that she was haunted by dark images in the past and worried about her future. Currently, she stopped worrying because she understood that her life was doing well presently. She knew how to smile and say compliments to everybody before going to bed and after getting up in the morning. A boy said that when he paid attention to his breathing, he realized that his mind always wandered. He never knew about that situation before. Throughout practices, he became less angry as well as nicer and friendlier with other people.

In the spring of 2001, meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh made a speech for prisoners at the Maryland Correction Institution based on the manager's request from this prison. After the speech at the prison, Thich wrote a booklet titled "Be Free Where You Are." Parallax Press voluntarily printed the booklet and sent it to Maryland Correction Institution as a gift to the prisoners. The booklet offered mindfulness practices applied to people's physical and psychological conditions so that they can transform their traumas. On April 4, 2002, Chanter Kyo, manager of the Correction Institution prison, sent a letter to thank Parallax Publisher and the meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh, whom they called "Thay," on behalf of the prisoners. The letter confirmed that the prisoner practitioners transformed their general ways of treating patients into practicing mindfulness practices. Davis, Director of Parallax Publisher, sent to the author of "Be Free Where You Are" the following copy of a letter and permitted it to be widely read.

Maryland, April 4, 2002

From: Chanter Kyo

To Travis, Paralla Press

Subject: Donation for Prison Project

Dear Travis,

Thank you so much on behalf of BIS inmates who will be receiving the latest 500 "Be Free Where You Are." The Buddhist Inmates that I sent them to previously are so happy to have them and are reporting back wonderful changes and experiences with their practice and understanding. The booklet is making its

way into super max, death row and general population prisons now in over 21 State and about 70 prisons at this time, a great gift. Please thank Thay and let him know, he is much loved and appreciated, lives are being transformed! Thought you might want to know, deep bows, gassho, Namaste. Thank you for all you do at the Parallax Press prison project volunteer team.

Chanter Kyo (Ton, 2002, p.70).

On August 24, 2003, a five-day retreat based on mindfulness practices for police officers and others in the public service sector to help them handle job-related stress was organized in the City of Madison, Wisconsin. A topic of the retreat was "Protecting and Serving without stress and fear." The organizer was captain Cheri Maples of the Madison Police Department. She was the director of training and recruiting. She attended many retreats led by the meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh in Plum Village in the south of France and gained much insight. Under the authorization of the Madison Police Department, she invited him to teach at this retreat.

The retreat faced many challenges in the beginning. Howlett (2003) shows constitutional questions around the retreat. For example, Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State stated in a letter to the City of Madison encouraging officers to attend a religious retreat did not pass constitutional muster. Maples also received hundreds of similar letters and e-mails. In response to Barry's letter, however, the chief of the Madison Police Department wrote that the goal of this retreat did not introduce Buddhism. Although being a Buddhist monk, meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh only offered mindfulness practices as a coping tool to help participants look deeply into the challenging situations they face in serving their

communities, in their work places, as well as in their families and their personal lives. Howlett's article also disclosed that the number of policemen who were killed doing their jobs was about 100, while those who committed suicide were up to 300 yearly.

Thanks to the oppositions in the beginning, Thay's speech became more specific and fundamental. He said that in dangerous situations, if we were calm and awaken, we could say words so right that an opponent could stop his or her action without using a gun. He taught about food and drinking, from limiting smoking and alcohol, to breathing mindfully, and walking mediation. He offered the way to recognize formations of sadness, suffering, fear, and anger, and how to touch and nourish refreshments daily. He asked policemen to organize their unit in a family structure to re-establish communication, and build the back-up person to take care of their partner and to help each other in difficult situations. The policemen must practice breathing each time they stop a car, talking in a loving and calm manner, and having the back-up person behind them for support. Police stations should have open public meetings to share their difficulties and listen to the public's ideas. When they come back home, they should be nice and soft with their spouses and children. Particularly, they should never use a policeman's power in their households. Among the 715 participants, there were 2 chief judges from Wisconsin, more than 60 prosecuting lawyers nationwide, 3 managers of prisons in Canada, 45 policemen, and many probation officers from more than 20 states that attended the retreat. The remainders were their families, local teachers, lawyers, and other workers. All participants expressed their satisfaction and wonderful changes in themselves after the retreat. They found that mindfulness practices healed their harm and gave them the actual transformations, not an abstract dream (Retreats in the U.S., 2004).

In *Anger*, a current best selling book in America, and one million books sold in six months in Korea, Thich (2001) comments:

> We live in a time of many sophisticated means of communication. Information can travel to the other side of the planet very quickly. But it is exactly at this time that communication between people, father and son, husband and wife, mother and daughter, has become extremely difficult. If we cannot restore communication, happiness will never be possible. In the Buddhist teaching, the practice of compassionate listening, the practice of loving speech, and the practice of taking care of our anger are presented very clearly. We have to put into practice the teaching of the Buddha, concerning deep listening and loving speech in order to restore communication and bring happiness to our family, our school, and our community. Then we can help other people in the world (p. 11).

The particular ecological environment in Vietnam influenced greatly the way of life of the Vietnamese who resettled in the America. First generation Vietnamese tend to reserve their own Vietnamese cultural traditions while their children who make up the second generation aculturalize quickly to American society. This makes the intergenerational gap between their children and themselves deeper and deeper. To bridge this gap, mindfulness practices might apply as an available intervention. Although being a Buddhist monk, meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh effectively applied mindfulness practices to heal troubles in the life and activities of individuals, families, and communities worldwide. Most of his participants come from different religious traditions, but they feel comfortable studying and practicing mindfulness without converting their religious beliefs. This is evidence that mindfulness practices as an intervention with three

components (1) calm mind, (2) listening deeply, and (3) talking lovingly, are able to increase family harmony not only for Vietnamese but also for other ethnic groups in the U.S.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As the literature review showed, Vietnamese American parents expected their children to respect them and keep the values of their cultural traditions; however, their children became Americanized very quickly and responded differently to their expectations. As a result, there have been cultural conflicts in Vietnamese families.

To decrease conflicts and increase in family harmony, mindfulness practices were used as an intervention. This intervention was a threefold: (1) breathing mindfully to calm mind, (2) listening deeply, and (3) talking lovingly.

Mindfulness practices played an important role in re-establishing communication between parents and their children. Through daily practice, each participant had an opportunity to relax oneself and to return to oneself for self-observation, as well as to look deeply into one's problems and examine other family members. In addition, they had a lot of happy time to recognize and accept each other. As a result of daily practices, they had a common ground to listen to and share their problems, ideas, ways of life, and many other things related to acculturation differences. In addition, they developed communication, love, and responsibility.

Hypothesis

There is a relationship between mindfulness practices and decreasing family conflicts between Vietnamese American parents and their children.

Study questions. .

- Can mindfulness practices decrease family conflicts between Vietnamese American parents and their children?

- How does the intervention work?

- Do the data that have been gathered to create the companion guide support or reject the hypothesis?

The objective of the study's intervention was to build a bridge over the gaps between two Vietnamese generations in the U.S. It consisted of two main variables: the independent variable was the mindfulness practices intervention, and the dependent variable was a reduction in intergenerational conflict and an increase in family harmony.

Implement. It was lucky that the researcher's friends and their families paid attention to the same family problems. They voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and supported each other in the process. The study lasted for four weeks and consisted of three steps.

Step one: Orientation. The intervention offered to the participants a three-hour training workshop on February 27, 2005, in which they were trained in the skills of mindfulness practices and skills of listening deeply and talking lovingly. A friend of meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh, Venerable Thich M.D., who is well-known in Sacramento and has many experiences working with parents and children, instructed the workshop. During the workshop, a meal and snack was provided at no cost by donators. Before the training, a pretest was administered and collected.

The following is the agenda of the workshop:

- Welcoming participants 5 minutes
- Participants self-introduction 10 "
- Taking pretest 10 "
- Learning & practicing basic skills of mindfulness practices: 50 "

- Break time: 10 “
- Game: 15 “
- How to listen deeply and speak lovingly 50 “
- Dinner: 30 “

Step two: In-home practicing. The participants practiced 30 minutes at home every night (except Saturday night: break time). They spent 10 minutes practicing the mindfulness of breathing that brought them to the current moment. Therefore, they could enjoy co-existing and being present with their father, mother, son, daughter, home, car, fresh air, friendly environment, and many more. They could realize that they had everything full of love, thanks, and understanding.

Then the participants spent 20 minutes talking lovingly about their problems or pleasures in school, work, housework, and other issues in daily life such as news of basketball games, films, and drugs on television or in the newspaper. The ground rules were: only one person talks at a time; no insults, cursing, or putdowns; disagreements and arguments are not to be continued outside the practice; children deserve the same respect as do adults (Webb, 2003), smiling, not being angry, and accepting the way a person speaks. Practicing together provides the opportunity for the parents and children to spend some peaceful time together apart from their harried schedule. It also enables families to share their experience and support each other.

Step three: Terminal stage. A meeting was organized on April 17, 2005 for the participants to share their experience during mindfulness practices and make an evaluation. A posttest was administered and collected.

Study Design

This was a descriptive study. The researcher tried to apply both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach was major in order to get a better result.

This study was a one-group pretest-posttest design. The study needed data to measure, count, analyze, and prove the effectiveness of the intervention; therefore, it used the quantitative approach to collect data. Quantitative data were pieces of information that fit into certain categories, which in most cases have been previously defined. The categories in this project were determined in the instrument.

Backgrounds of the participants were different. Each case had its unique problems that was hard to operationalize completely. For example, ways for parents to greet their children in the morning were diverse. To better understand those situations, the researcher also approached all cases by using a qualitative approach that included observation, personal interview, and participant-observation (Royse, 2004). The respondents were asked four open-ended questions, which were coded using qualitative techniques:

- How do you greet your children in the morning?
- Are there times during the day when you regularly talk to your children?
- Do you like to talk to your parents?
- What do you talk with your parents about? Where? When?

Sampling procedures. Study subjects of this research were Vietnamese immigrants and their children in Sacramento. The sample consisted of twenty-one Buddhist parents and their twenty children, totaling 41 (N = 41). To guarantee confidentiality, the parents' names were symbolized from A01 to A21 while the children's from B01 to B20.

The parent participants were this researcher's friends. They were members of the Dear Park Group of Studying and Practicing Buddhism who studied together monthly. The

child participants were students. This was a convenience sample (Kennedy, 2005) in which the study subjects were the researcher's close friends and their children who have the same Vietnamese language and culture as well as Buddhist values and beliefs.

Data collection techniques. Before subjects participated in the intervention, their behavior was measured with a pretest. The same procedure was used after intervention to measure the posttest. In addition, interviews face by face or by phones were used.

Instruments. The research used the Asian American Family Conflict Scales (FCS) by Lee, Choe, Kim, and Ngo (2000) (Appendix A) and the Asian American Family Conflicts Scale – Parent Version (Appendix B). The researcher was given permission by Professor Richard M. Lee, Ph. D. to use the both scales (Appendix C). The instrument consisted of two 10-item subscales of likelihood and seriousness. The likelihood subscale measures the likelihood that these ten conflicts happen between the person and his or her parents using a 5 – point rating system whose values are:

1 = *almost never; 2 = once in a while; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; and* 5 = *almost always.*

The seriousness subscale calculates how serious a problem the conflicts are for a person's family using a 5-point rating system that means 1 = *not at all; 2 = slightly; 3 = moderately; 4 = very much; and* 5 = *extremely*. Because the number of parent and child participants is different, their means will be used to compare to each other. "The higher score indicating greater likelihood or seriousness of conflict" (Lee, Choe, Kim, and Ngo, 2000, p. 213).

Data analysis approaches. The researcher used the univariate analysis to look closely at one variable at a time and focus on the mean score of participants to address the following parts:

(a) Rank of scores

(b) Analysis of which issue of 10 subscales was the greatest.

(c) Comparing the mean scores of pretest (P1) to posttest (P2) to see whether they were reduced, increased or remained unchanged. "Reduced" meant the intervention was effective; "Unchanged" meant intervention was ineffective; and "Increased" meant the intervention had a negative impact.

Unit of analysis. Individuals made up the unit of analysis.

Limits. Because the sample was small (N = 41), research results cannot be generalized.

Reducing the minimal risk. For the convenience of the participants, particularly children, snacks and dinners were donated to the workshops. Funny songs and games were also applied. Also, the time of the workshop and in-home practicing was shortened to fit the participants' conditions. Because of voluntary participation by both parents and their children, the risk would be considered minimal. Although mindfulness practices could seem tedious or boring at times, they were not considered to put anybody at risk of harm. During practicing, the participants could sit on a small sitting stool or a chair. The important thing was that practitioners felt comfortable during practicing.

The researcher discussed informed consent (Appendix D) with study subjects, and all of them agreed to the stipulations. More than three-fourths of "practicing time" was to take place between parents and their child/children at home. When children attended the training workshop, they were accompanied by their parents. Although their names were encouraged to be used and remember during the workshop, the parents' and children's names never appeared in the report. When parents and children were asked to complete a scale, they were given identification numbers so their names were not used.

The Protocol for the Protection of Human Subjects

The Human Subjects Review was submitted on 12/09/2004 and approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects from the CSUS Division of Social Work as minimal risk on 12/14/2004. The human subjects' approval number was 04-05-260.

The researcher had many conveniences during this study. First, he knew all the study subjects. Second, the author and the participants had the same ethnic origin, language, culture, and religion. Third, all the participants expected to improve their family situations. Fourth, his family also participated in and gained fruits from the intervention. Fifth, the researcher attended three similar retreats before and had many experiences of the mindfulness practices. And sixth, he received many sources of support from his Vietnamese community and the Deer Park Group of Studying and Practicing Buddhism. For these reasons, he felt self-confident throughout the study.

Chapter 4

Findings

This researcher studied the effectiveness of mindfulness practices as an intervention to improve the communication between the Vietnamese parents and their children. At first glace, all study subjects stated that they made progress in their interpersonal and family relationships. The extent of the improvement will be discussed further.

This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data. An analysis of data included two approaches: descriptive statistics and "dimensions of qualitative analysis" (Marlow, 2001, p.209). The analysis began by identifying characteristics in the demographic profile, pretest, and posttest. Finally, the study subjects' narratives would be constructed into themes and connected to test results.

Demographic Profile

Gender. Table 4.1 showed that the difference of gender among the total participants was small. There were twenty-one males, a little more than half, and twenty females (48.8%). The rate of female parents was a little more than male parents. In contrast, there were more male child participants than female child participants.

One child participant was married and divorced; the other nineteen children were single. Four-fifths of married parents attended the study as couples. Only one parent was widowed.

Table 4.1

Gender

N = 41

	Parents		Children		Total	
Characteristic	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	10	24.4	11	26.8	21	51.2
Female	11	26.8	9	22.0	20	48.8
Total	21	51.2	20	48.8	41	100.0

Age. The average age of the parents was 55.5 with a range from 42 to 67. Most parents' ages ranked from 51 to 60 years of age. The average age of the children was 16 with a range from 8 to 36 years of age. As shown in table 4.2, the children from 11 to 17 years of age made up the largest age group, 26.8%, among the total participants.

Table 4.2

Age

	Parents		Children	
Characteristic	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Under 10			2	4.9
11-17			11	26.8
18-36			7	17.0
40-50	4	9.8		
51-60	9	22.0		
More 60	8	19.5		

Length of residency. The origin of birth place and length of residency played the most important role in the participants' behavior and habits as well as family relationships. The more time living in Vietnam, the more participants tended to maintain the Vietnamese cultural traditions, in which values of family were honored. Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 indicated that all the parents were born and lived for a very long time in Vietnam before resettling in the U.S. Twelve children were also born in Vietnam, but ten of them arrived in the U.S before tens years of age. There were seven American-born

Table 4.3

Birth place

Characteristic	Parents	Children	Total	%
Vietnam	21	12	33	80.6
U.S.		7	7	17.0
Canada		1	1	2.4

children. One child and his father arrived in America almost two years ago. Those who resided in America for more than 16 years made up the highest rate: 46.4%.

Table 4.4

Length of residency

	In Vietnam				In the U.S.			
Characteristic	Parents	Children	Total	%	Parents	Children	Total	%
Never		8	8	19.5				
1-5 years		4	4	9.8	1	1	2	4.9
6-10 years		6	6	14.6	3	6	9	21.9
11-15 years		2	2	4.9	7	4	11	26.8
> 16 years	21		21	51.2	10	9	19	46.4

Level of education and English. Thirteen of twenty-one parents graduated with Associate degrees or higher in Vietnam (Table 4.5). Under limited conditions in

Table 4.5

Level of Education

	In Vietnam		In the U.S.			
	Parents	%	Parents	Children	Total	%
Elementary school				4	4	9.8
Middle school	2	9.5		2	2	4.9
High school	6	28.6		9	9	21.9
Vocational training			11		11	26.8
1-2 years of college	7	33.3	7	4	11	26.8
4-y college & over	6	28.6	3	1	4	9.8

Vietnam, their educational level was high. However, they had difficulty with English skills when they integrated into American society. Their proficient rate of English language was

low, only 9.8% compared to 34.1% of their children (Table 4.6). While only 14.7% the children were under the category of limited, fair, and good, this rate was 41.4% for the parents. The imbalance of English language was a main cause of their dysfunctional families.

Table 4.6

English skills

	Parents		Children	
Characteristic	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Limited	4	9.8	2	4.9
Fair	6	14.6	2	4.9
Good	7	17.0	2	4.9
Proficient	4	9.8	14	34.1

Besides the educational backgrounds and English skills, the parents' occupations and family incomes were other important factors to determine the reciprocal action in the family throughout acculturating to the American society. Except for the two parents who left Vietnam as children, all other parents had a good job in Vietnam. Seven of them

Table 4.7

Occupation

	In Vietnam				In the U.S.			
	Parents	Children	Total	%	Parents	Children	Total	%
None		13	13	31.8				
Unemployed					2	1	3	7.3
Soldier	4		4	9.8				
Teacher	7		7	17.0	2		2	4.9
Bureaucracy	4		4	9.8	11		11	26.8
Business	4	2	6	14.6	6	3	9	21.9
Student	2	5	7	17.0		16	16	39.1

were teachers, four worked in bureaucracy and services, and the four others served as officers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). When they arrived in the U.S., all of them went to school and worked. Currently, two of them were unemployed because of old age, all the rest found good jobs in the U.S. Most of them worked as employees of the local governments and agencies. For children, except for

Table 4.8.

Financial source

	Parents	Children	Total	%
Working	19	3	22	53.6
Social assistance	2	2	2	9.8
Family support		15	15	36.6

one child who was disabled and three others who worked in business, the rest of the children were students (Table 4.7). As shown in table 4.8, only four participants or 9.8% received social security supplements for disability. The major earning source came from working, and the earners could support their dependents.

Identification of Findings

Findings based on individuals' score results. The study used the Asian American Family Conflict Scale, which consisted of the following ten situations of conflicts between parents and their children.

1: Parents try to make the best decisions for their children's life, but their children want to make their own decisions.

2: Parents tell their children that a social life is not important at their age, but their children think it is.

3: Children have done well in school, but their parents have higher academic expectations for them.

4: Parents want their children to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but their children feel this is unfair.

5: Parents always compare their children to others, but children want their parents accept them as they are.

6: Parents state that they show their children love by housing, feeding, and educating them, but children wish their parents would show more physical and verbal signs of affection.

7: Parents do not want their children to bring shame upon the family, but children feel that their parents are too concerned with saving face.

8: Parents expect their children to behave as a proper Vietnamese, but children feel their parents being too traditional.

9: Children want to state their opinions, but their parents consider it to be disrespectful to talk back

10: Parents demand their children always to show respect for elders, but children believe in showing respect only if they deserve it.

Based on the ten situations, conflicts between the parents and their children were studied in two categories: likelihood and seriousness. As stated in Chapter 3, the 5-point rating system had two subscales with different meaning. In the likelihood subscale, 1 = almost never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = almost always. In the seriousness subscale, 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very much, 5 = extremely.

Table 4.11 described a combination between the situations, categories, and study subjects that created six areas. The six areas were parent likelihood, child likelihood,

parent and children likelihood, parent seriousness, child seriousness, and parent and child seriousness. Each area contained ten results, so there were a total of sixty results.

A summary of raw data from forty-one study subjects whose average point or mean of pretest (Pre) and posttest (Post) in the both likelihood subscale and seriousness subscale was showed in the Table 4.9. These points distributed differently from the minimum 1 to maximum 5 throughout the display. There were two cases at the extreme borderlines. The child B03, who determined the mean point 5 in both categories, meant that his or her family conflicts happened almost always and were extremely serious. Conversely, the child B18, who indicated the point 1 in seriousness, had no family conflict at all.

Table 4.9 also showed that before the intervention, the mean of twenty-one parents in likelihood subscale was 2.46 and in seriousness subscale was 2.06.

Table 4.9

Participants' average point of pretest and posttest

	Likelihood			Seriousness		
Name	Pre*	Post	-	Pre	Post	-
Parents						
A01	1.7	1.5	.2	1.5	1.3	.2
A02	1.7	1.4	.3	2.1	1.7	.4

A03	2.0	1.8	.2	2.4	2.0	.4
A04	3.3	2.9	.4	2.4	2.1	.3
A05	3.9	3.6	.3	3.6	3.4	.2
A06	4.0	3.8	.2	3.3	2.9	.4
A07	1.6	1.4	.2	1.2	1.0	.2
A08	3.0	2.9	.1	1.7	1.4	.3
A09	2.1	1.9	.2	1.9	1.8	.1
A10	2.8	2.5	.3	2.6	2.1	.5
A11	2.3	2.2	.1	2.8	2.7	.1
A12	2.4	2.3	.1	1.5	1.3	.2
A13	4.6	4.2	.4	3.8	3.3	.5
A14	2.5	2.4	.1	1.8	1.7	.1
A15	1.7	1.6	.1	1.3	1.0	.3
A16	1.6	1.4	.2	1.4	1.2	.2
A17	2.5	2.1	.4	1.9	1.4	.5
A18	1.4	1.3	.1	1.4	1.3	.1
A19	2.3	2.1	.2	1.6	1.4	.2
A20	2.7	2.6	.1	1.6	1.5	.1
A21	1.6	1.2	.4	1.4	1.0	.4
Total	51.7	47.1		43.2	37.5	
Mean	**2.46**	**2.24**		**2.06**	**1.79**	

Children

B01	2.6	2.3	.3	1.9	1.7	.2
B02	3.5	3.0	.5	1.8	1.2	.6
B03	5.0	4.5	.5	5.0	4.8	.2
B04	3.5	3.4	.1	2.3	2.1	.2
B05	2.0	1.9	.1	2.7	2.4	.3
B06	3.7	3.6	.1	3.8	3.7	.1
B07	1.9	1.7	.2	1.5	1.3	.2
B08	2.0	1.9	.1	1.4	1.3	.1
B09	2.6	2.1	.5	2.7	2.0	.7
B10	2.1	2.0	.1	1.8	1.7	.1
B11	4.0	3.9	.1	3.5	3.4	.1
B12	2.3	2.2	.1	2.1	2.0	.1
B13	1.8	1.7	.1	1.4	1.2	.2
B14	1.8	1.3	.5	1.2	1.0	.2
B15	1.2	1.1	.1	1.2	1.0	.2
B16	1.2	1.1	.1	1.2	1.1	.1
B17	1.6	1.0	.6	1.1	1.0	.1
B18	1.5	1.2	.3	1.0	1.0	.0
B19	2.6	1.9	.7	2.1	1.5	.6
B20	2.1	1.8	.3	1.8	1.3	.5
Total	49.0	43.6		41.5	36.7	
Mean	**2.45**	**2.18**		**2.08**	**1.84**	

**Pre: pretest; Post: posttest*.

Meanwhile, the mean of twenty children in likelihood subscale was 2.45 and in seriousness subscale was 2.08. After the intervention, the mean displayed orderly 2.24,1.79, 2.18, and 1.84. These scores slightly moved around the point 2 that meant "once in a while" in likelihood and "slightly" in seriousness.

Generally, the points in the seriousness scale were usually smaller than those of the likelihood scale. This meant that in any way the family conflicts occurred, the extent in seriousness was less in likelihood.

Except for the one case B18 above, all the other cases decreased in conflicts between the parents and their children when compared pretest to posttest results. The extent of positive change ranked from maximum .7 to minimum .0 (Table 4.10).

In the area of parent likelihood, the highest decrease was .4 with a frequency of 19.1% while the lowest change was .1 with 33.3%.

In the area of parent seriousness, 14.3% of parents had the highest change .5 and 23.8% at the lowest change .1.

In the area of child likelihood, out of twenty children, one had a maximum change at .7, and ten others or 50% had a minimum change at .1.

In the child seriousness subscale, one child was at .7 and another at .0.

Table 4.10

Extents of change (Decrease)

	Parents				Children				Parents & Children			
	Likely		Serious		Likely		Serious		Likely		Serious	
	F*	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
.7					1	5	1	5	1	2.4	1	2.4
.6					1	5	2	10	1	2.4	2	4.8
.5			3	14.3	4	20	1	5	4	9.8	4	9.8
.4	4	19.1	4	19.1					4	9.8	4	9.8
.3	3	14.3	3	14.3	3	15	1	5	6	14.6	4	9.8
.2	7	33.3	6	28.5	1	5	7	35	8	19.5	13	31.7
.1	7	33.3	5	23.8	10	50	7	35	17	41.5	12	29.3
.0							1	5			1	2.4

**F: Frequency.*

Finally, in the area of combining parents and children, seventeen participants or 41.5% indicated a change at .1 in likeliness, and 31.7% showed a change at .2 in seriousness.

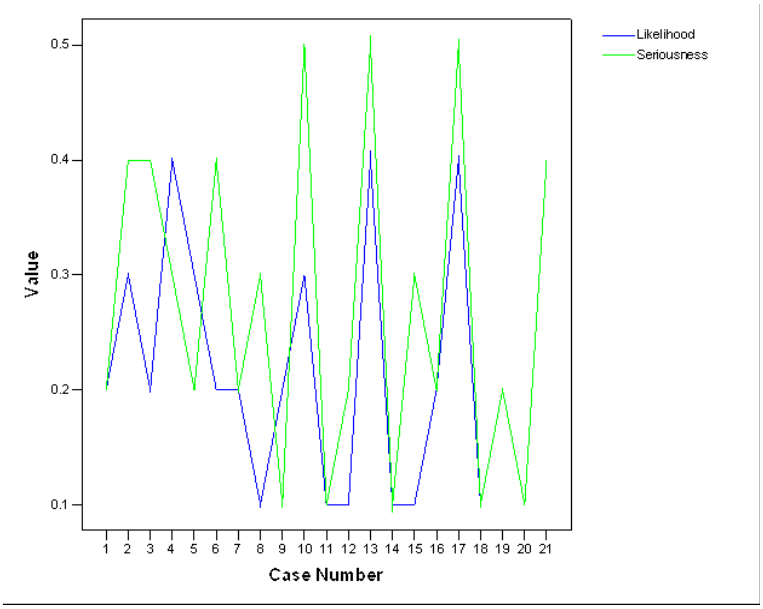

Figure 4.1

Parents' extent of decrease

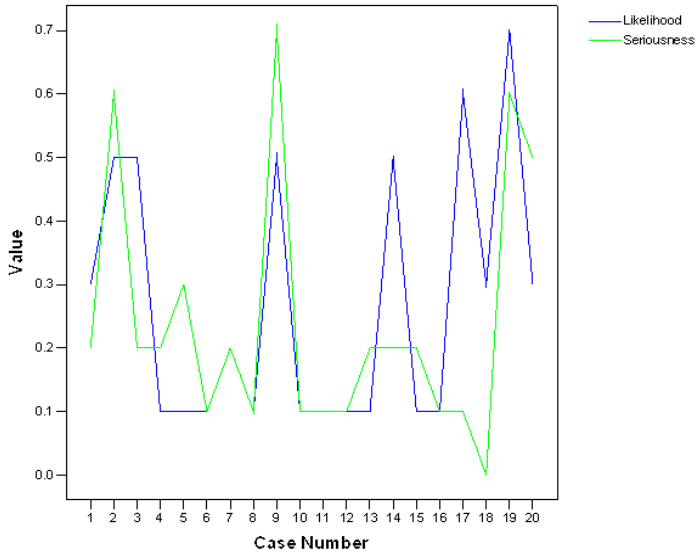

Figure 4.2

Children's extent of decrease

Those calculations illuminated and emphasized that there were improvements in parent-child relationships. Their extent of change was slight in most of cases. Also, the findings suggested that the extent of change on the serious subscale was larger than on the likelihood subscale. In other words, the extent of decrease in conflicts was more significant than frequency of situations as a result of the intervention (Figure 4.1; Figure 4.2).

Findings based on ten situations of conflicts. Overall, calculations based on the ten situations of family conflicts led to the results that the mean point of all areas (Table 4.11) were exactly the same as those of calculations based on individuals' display (Table 4.9). These mean points were 2.46, 2.24, 2.06, 1.79 (parents), 2.45, 2.18, 2.08, and 1.84 (children).

As found in Table 4.11, the highest point 2.95 in the likelihood pretest was found in two situations. One was situation (#) 3, in which children claim that they have done well in school, but their parents have higher academic expectations for them. Another was in #8, parents expect their children to behave as "proper Vietnamese," but their children think that their parents are "too traditional."

The lowest point 2.0 in the likelihood related to #10, parents demand their children always to show respect for elders, but children believe in showing respect only if they deserve it.

In the likelihood posttest, #3 above received the highest point 2.67. Meanwhile, #10 above had the lowest point 1.8.

Table 4.11

Participants' average point based on ten situations

	Parents			Children			Parents & Children		
S*	Pre	Post	-	Pre	Post	-	Pre	Post	-
				A. Likelihood					
1	2.81	2.48	.33	2.60	2.35	.25	2.71	2.42	.29
2	2.05	1.86	.19	2.35	2.30	.05	2.20	2.08	.12
3	2.95	2.67	.28	2.60	2.30	.30	2.78	2.49	.29
4	2.10	2.05	.05	2.15	1.85	.30	2.13	1.95	.18
5	2.57	2.19	.38	2.65	2.35	.30	2.61	2.27	.34
6	2.67	2.24	.43	2.15	1.95	.20	2.41	2.10	.31
7	2.14	2.05	.09	2.40	2.30	.10	2.27	2.18	.09
8	2.67	2.43	.24	2.95	2.30	.65	2.56	2.37	.19
9	2.14	2.00	.14	2.65	2.30	.35	2.37	2.15	.22

10	2.48	2.43	.05	2.00	1.80	.20	2.24	2.12	.12
+	**24.58**	**22.40**		**24.50**	**21.80**		**24.28**	**22.13**	
Mean	**2.46**	**2.24**		**2.45**	**2.18**	**2.43**	**2.21**		

B. Seriousness

1	2.38	2.00	.38	2.05	1.85	.20	2.22	1.93	.29
2	1.67	1.62	.05	1.95	1.85	.10	1.81	1.74	.07
3	2.14	1.86	.28	2.15	2.00	.15	2.15	1.93	.22
4	1.76	1.62	.14	1.70	1.55	.15	1.73	1.59	.14
5	2.19	1.76	.43	2.45	1.80	.65	2.32	1.78	.54
6	2.24	1.95	.29	2.00	1.85	.15	2.12	1.90	.22
7	2.05	1.86	.19	2.20	2.00	.20	2.13	1.93	.20
8	2.38	1.90	.48	2.15	2.05	.10	2.27	1.98	.29
9	1.90	1.57	.33	2.25	2.00	.25	2.08	1.79	.29
10	1.90	1.76	.14	1.90	1.45	.45	1.90	1.61	.29
+	**20.61**	**17.90**		**20.80**	**18.40**		**20.73**	**18.18**	
Mean	**2.06**	**1.79**		**2.08**	**1.84**	**2.07**	**1.82**		

In the seriousness pretest, the highest point 2.45 belonged to #5, parents always compare their children to others, but children want their parents accept them as they are. On the contrary, the lowest point 1.45 related to #10.

All results in the six areas confirmed changes of decrease between pretest and posttest. The highest extent of change .65 was found in children in both the likelihood

Table 4.12

Rank of extents of decrease based on ten situations

Parents				Children				Parents & Children			
S*	Pre	Post	-	S*	Pre	Post	-	S*	Pre	Post	-
A. Likelihood											
6	2.67	2.24	.43	8	2.95	2.30	.65	5	2.61	2.27	.34
5	2.57	2.19	.38	9	2.65	2.30	.35	6	2.41	2.10	.31
1	2.81	2.48	.33	3	2.60	2.30	.30	3	2.78	2.49	.29
3	2.95	2.67	.28	4	2.15	1.85	.30	1	2.71	2.42	.29
8	2.67	2.43	.24	5	2.65	2.35	.30	9	2.37	2.15	.22
2	2.05	1.86	.19	1	2.60	2.35	.25	8	2.56	2.37	.19
9	2.14	2.00	.14	6	2.15	1.95	.20	4	2.13	1.95	.18
7	2.14	2.05	.09	10	2.00	1.80	.20	10	2.24	2.12	.12
4	2.10	2.05	.05	7	2.40	2.30	.10	2	2.20	2.08	.12
10	2.48	2.43	.05	2	2.35	2.30	.05	7	2.27	2.18	.09

+	**24.58**	**22.40**		**24.50**	**21.80**		**24.28**	**22.13**			
Mean	**2.46**	**2.24**		**2.45**	**2.18**		**2.43**	**2.21**			

B. Seriousness

8	2.38	1.90	.48	5	2.45	1.80	.65	5	2.32	1.78	.54
5	2.19	1.76	.43	10	1.90	1.45	.45	1	2.22	1.93	.29
1	2.38	2.00	.38	9	2.25	2.00	.25	8	2.27	1.98	.29
9	1.90	1.57	.33	1	2.05	1.85	.20	10	1.90	1.61	.29
6	2.24	1.95	.29	7	2.20	2.00	.20	9	2.08	1.79	.29
3	2.14	1.86	.28	4	1.70	1.55	.15	6	2.12	1.90	.22
7	2.05	1.86	.19	6	2.00	1.85	.15	3	2.15	1.93	.22
4	1.76	1.62	.14	3	2.15	2.00	.15	7	2.13	1.93	.20
10	1.90	1.76	.14	8	2.15	2.05	.10	4	1.73	1.59	.14
2	1.67	1.62	.05	2	1.95	1.85	.10	2	1.81	1.74	.07
+	**20.61**	**17.90**		**20.80**	**18.40**		**20.73**	**18.18**			
Mean	**2.06**	**1.79**		**2.08**	**1.84**		**2.07**	**1.82**			

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and seriousness categories. For parents, this rate was .48 in seriousness and .43 in likelihood.

Table 4.12 ranked the extent of change and illuminated significant similarities based on the ten situations. For the parents, #5 was ranked at the same 2nd position in the

both likelihood and seriousness although its extents were different. In the same way, # 1 was found at the same 3rd position in the likelihood and seriousness.

For children, #6 was arranged at the same 7th position in child likelihood and seriousness. Situation 2 was at the 10th positions.

For combing parents and children, #5 and #9 were the same 1st and 5th positions in the two categories.

Findings based on qualitative analysis. During this study, the researcher had many opportunities to observe, communicate, and interview all the participants. Their behaviors and signs of feelings were observed. For the question, "How do you greet your children in the morning?" the parent participants' answers were divided into three themes.

Six parents said regular greetings to their children:

- Hi/Good morning.

- Hi! How are you?

- Did you have a deep sleep?

Twelve parents did not say "hi" to their children but expressed their greeting by different ways:

- Waking them up to go to school.

- Reminding them to have breakfast.

- Reminding them to prepare clothes and materials for school.

- Smiling and saying, "Please smile when you awake thanks to your twenty-four fresh hours ahead. Together, we vow to live in the present time and to look deeply at all beings with the compassionate eyes."

Three parents did not greet their children in the morning because of:

- Their habit from Vietnam, or

- Waking up late when their children went to school or for working.

For the question of time to regularly talk to children, the parents also answered diversely:

- During their meals, usually dinners (9 cases)

- Evening meetings (3)

- During driving children to school, supermarket, or travel (4)

- During working time together (3)

- Not sure a stable time (2)

For the question to the child participants if they liked to talk to their parents, sixteen of twenty or 80% of children stated that they did. Meanwhile four others confirmed that they felt confused talking to their parents. Regarding time and places of talking, most of their answers were similar to parents'. Topics of talking were diverse; such topics were individuals, family, schools, working, television shows, videos, violence, or news. The most frequent issues related to learning, housework, and entertainments.

As a result of the intervention process, many parent and child participants expressed that they were changing their behavior and increasing their family communication.

The findings throughout these participants' stories supported the test results and provided a better understanding of the study subjects. For example, there was a relationship between the children who felt confused talking to their parents and the very high points in the test scores, which the higher point, the more conflicts there were. Also,

many parents did not say hello to their children in the morning, but that did not mean they did not care for one another.

This analysis of findings is based on the quantitative and qualitative data from the study process. The test scores were calculated. However, the researcher understood that some mistakes may exist. The author expects to receive readers' helpful comments.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to use mindfulness practices as an intervention to re-establish the communication between Vietnamese parents and their children which have been gradually lost during adaptation to American culture. The three cores of the intervention were (1) practices of breathing mindfully to calm one's mind and (2) developing skills of listening deeply and (3) talking lovingly.

Major findings. The study subjects were the parents and their children who made up a relative balance of role and gender. Seventeen of twenty-one parents' age was over 50 years old, so they belonged to the generation of the Vietnam War. Most of the parent participants were traumatic survivors of the Vietnam War, re-education camps, boat people, and cruelty of the communist dictatorship. All of the parents had difficulties with the English language and faced overwhelming challenges when integrating into American culture and society. As newcomers, they both studied and worked hard. Two-thirds of them once received welfare assistance, but a majority of them left the assistance program and got a good job. Many succeeded in education and working in the U.S. Thanks to their efforts, most of the parents became financially independent.

Except for the two child participants who had problems with health conditions, all others adjusted quickly to American society. One child could not speak Vietnamese and two others had difficulty with communicating in Vietnamese. In contrast, the two children

who had lived for a long time in Vietnam preferred speaking Vietnamese and helping their parents.

All study subjects engaged voluntarily and completely in the study process. Their mean scores of pretest compared to posttest created a sizeable difference. All of them indicated a decrease in the likelihood subscale and seriousness subscale. The extent of decrease ranked from .0 to .7, in which twenty-five cases or 61% were ranked from .1 to .2. In other words, the mindfulness practices as an individual and family intervention was effective.

This result gives evidence to support the initial hypothesis: there is a relationship between mindfulness practices and decreasing family conflicts between Vietnamese American parents and their children. The two variables of the hypothesis, mindfulness practices as the independent variable and the reduction in intergenerational conflict and increase in family harmony as the dependent variable, showed evidence of causality.

Limitation. The parents engaged in this study were the researcher's friends. He was also familiar with the child participants. So, this was a convenient sample. When applying to more complex samples of population, the rate of effectiveness may be different. Furthermore, the extent of change was small for most participants. This extent means that changes in behavior are difficult and require patience, perseverance, and time. An Asian proverb said, "While features of rivers and mountains in a country may be easy to change, it is more difficult to change a person's inherent character" (Anonymous, n.d.). In addition, the sample of study was small (n = 41), so the generalizability is limited.

Comments. Feedback from the participants regarding the intervention provided useful comments for social work practice. In the stage of study evaluation, all the parent

participants agreed that parents should change and improve their behavior first before they require their children's response of improvements in family relationships. "During the childhood transitional period, children's psychological profiles are shaped by the ideas of their parents and of other people around them" (Zastrow, 2001, pg. 111). They had the same suggestion that this retreat and the activities in which parents and children work and play together should continue in the future. Specifically, many children cried when they shared their impressions. The child participants expressed their ideas in both Vietnamese and English. They said that they felt happy and grateful emotions when they thought of the love their parents offered to them without any condition. They stated that they had good opportunities to express courageously their ideas to their parents**,** and that their parents listened to them sympathetically.

Compared to literature. The intervention's cores, which include breathing mindfully to calm one's mind, listening deeply, and talking with love, met social workers' essential facilitative qualities: empathy, respect, and authenticity. Its threefold qualities can also be found in the National Association of Social Workers' twelve skills. For example, "Listen to others with understanding and purpose; observe and interpret verbal and nonverbal behavior and use knowledge of personality theory and diagnostic methods; or discuss sensitive emotional subjects supportively and without being threatening" (Cournoyer, 2000, p. 5).

Thirty years after the Vietnam War, the country of Vietnam is still poor, underdeveloped, and economically struggling. Particularly in politics, Vietnam is still a one-party state controlled by the Vietnamese Community Party. While human rights are an important standard of the United Nations and the U.S., they become a political

instrument which the Vietnamese Communists use to cover and polish their cruelty and dictatorship.

Since 1986, leaders of Vietnam have talked about the reforms called "Doi Moi;" however, what they meant is the reforms of economics, not politics. Why? Because political changes will lead to "the pluralist political systems of the industrialized democracies" (Economist, 1996). That will abolish the extreme power of the Party, or more exactly, destroy the benefits of top officials. Even in the reforms of economics, the top leaders are facing a dilemma because two categories of marketing economics and socialist orientation can not function together. Marketing economics means a freedom of competition that leads to freedom of thoughts and expression of opinions. In contrast, socialist orientation implies the central control that leads to limitation of freedom and of choice.

On April 30, 2005 recently, the Vietnamese communities in the U.S. and worldwide ebulliently organized the 30th Memory of the collapse of South Vietnam with its deep and great effects as well as to mark a 30-year event of the greatest oversea emigration during the Vietnamese history. Vietnamese immigrants always think of their native country and expect to see its achievements. They send relatives, friends, and non-government agencies of charity a total amount estimated of more than two billion dollars annually. These amounts are many times more than the U.S. promised, but never implemented, to pay for Vietnam as a condition of the 1973 Paris Agreement of Ceasing Fire and Restoration Peace in Vietnam.

Overall, most Vietnamese immigrants oppose the communist dictatorship in Vietnam, but they still disagree strategies, tactics, and means. As a consequence,

Vietnamese communities' strengths are undermined. Between and among Vietnamese Americans, miscommunication in religions, community organizations, generations, families, couples, and individuals are a reality that creates barriers and breaks their relationships. To change this problem, mindfulness practices might be considered as an intervention.

Phillips (2003) questions if mindfulness practices are religious or not. If no, they should be taught and practiced in schools, the Congress, and other public offices. Mindfulness practices based on the Buddha's teachings have been taught and practiced in Buddhist communities. However, meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh applied them to treat effectively modern people's problems regardless of religious beliefs worldwide, particularly in Europe and North America. The problems treated include, but are not limited to family violence, dysfunctional family relationships, trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder, psychological issues, and mental health.

Recommendations

Based on the positive outcomes of this study and other literature, the researcher strongly recommends following three applications of mindfulness practices.

Establishing outreach self-help groups to practice mindfulness as intervention. Individuals, employees, families, or their relatives who have problems of communication and relationships should sit together and build self-help groups. The number of group member is not important; it may be two participants or several dozens. Self-help groups can use mindfulness practices as a bridge to re-establish the communication between their group members. They can meet together weekly or biweekly, at their homes or any convenient site. The self-help group needs a leader who has experience in practicing

mindfulness. Throughout group activities, group members also have opportunities to develop their relationships and support each other.

Using mindfulness practices as professional trainings for those who work with Asian Americans. Asian Americans are usually familiar to spiritual and cultural traditions related to meditation and mindfulness practices. An important part of Asian immigrants come from the countries in which Buddhism is the national religion such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, and Lao, or from the countries whose a majority of population are Buddhists, for example, Vietnam, Japan, Mongolia, and China. The rate of Asian Americans is 10.9% of residents in California. Their need is high, and it is better for them to have treatments suitable to their spiritual and cultural traditions. For this reason, professional practitioners should be trained in mindfulness practices, so they can explore psychology and behavior of those who have a cultural background of Asia and Buddhism. This helps the practitioners serve their diverse clients better.

Applying mindfulness practices to community education as a supplement to the Western values. The U.S. is a multicultural nation, but its educational system is solely based on Western values and Christian beliefs. The mission of community education is "to preserve, communicate, and advance knowledge; cultivate wisdom; encourage creativity; promote the value of humankind; and improve the quality of life for its graduates and the people of the region" (California, 2000, p.10). This mission is ideal, but in application, it lacks the curriculum necessary to enrich inner life and harmonize individuals with their environment. Consequently, individualism seems to be breaking family values, and freedom is not connected to responsibility.

Crises of mental, spirit, ethics, culture, and violence with a high rate in all levels of micro, mezzo, and macro require a re-evaluation of the formal Western values. A tenderness to come back and study the Eastern values and apply them to daily life is increasing in Americans as well as Europeans. Clubs of tai chi, yoga, and meditation are blooming in California and nationwide. Particularly, meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings of mindfulness practices are being learned and applied to daily life in America and Europe. People can practice them in cooking, cleaning, eating, washing dishes, walking, driving, learning, working, playing, traveling, and all other activities. Not only Buddhists, but Jews, Catholics, Christians, Hindus, Muslins, and others can also practice them. While processing the study, this researcher surprisingly found that many professors and students in his school pay attention to meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh's books and teachings. The number of people who practice mindfulness practices is more than he expected.

In the retreat for artists, novelists, and Hollywood entertainers at the Deer Park Monastery, California, in 2004, Meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh implied that Americans should build a "Statue of Responsibility" in the West coast to balance the Statue of Liberty on the East coast. By adding mindfulness practices to the curriculum of community educational systems, students, teachers, and relatives have opportunities to completely develop "a sense of self-confidence and self-worth, respect for diverse cultures, awareness of important social and moral issues, and concern for others" (California, 2000, p.10).

Modern people are facing a paradox: means of communication are quickly developing, but communication between those who use those means are being severely

undermined and broken. People usually invest a lot of time in future, so they forget or have no time to nourish their relatives, surroundings, and themselves. In response to this paradox, mindfulness practices are an available solution. In practicing, practitioners breathe in and out softly and calmly, slow down or stop their machinery action, awaken their thoughts, their speech, and their activities in the present moment, and then look deeply without any prejudice to their problems. Problems may originate from mistakes by the practitioners themselves or from their relatives, from an ecological environment, or combination of interdependent factors. By this way, they can see their reality, either good or bad, here and now, understand better their situations, and know how to transform their effects.

This study hopes to give a good example of the mindfulness practices. The more practitioners practice, the more they find happiness and well-being.

APPENDIX A

ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CONFLICT SCALE

ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CONFLICTS SCALE

The following statements are parent-child situations that may occur in families. Consider how likely each situation occurs in your present relationship with your parents and how serious these conflicts are. Read each situation and answer the following questions using the following rating scales:

How likely is this type of situation to occur in your family?

1	2	3	4	5
almost never	once in a while	sometimes	often or frequently	almost always

How serious a problem is this situation in your family?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	slightly	moderately	very much	extremely

Family Situations	How likely is this type of situation to occur in your family? never ... always	How serious a problem is this situation in your family? not at all ... extremely
1. Your parents tell you what to do with your life, but you want to make your own decisions.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
2. Your parents tell you that a social life is not important at this age, but you think that it is.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
3. You have done well in school, but your parents academic expectations always exceed your performance.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
4. Your parents want you to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but you feel this is unfair.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
5. Your parents always compare you to others, but you want them to accept you for being yourself.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
6. Your parents argue that they show you love by housing, feeding, and educating you, but you wish they would show more physical and verbal signs of affection.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
7. Your parents don't want you to bring shame upon the family, but you feel that your parents are too concerned with saving face.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
8. Your parents expect you to behave like a proper Asian male or female, but you feel your parents are being too traditional.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
9. You want to state your opinion, but your parents consider it to be disrespectful to talk back.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5
10. Your parents demand that you always show respect for elders, but you believe in showing respect only if they deserve it.	1....2....3....4....5	1....2....3....4....5

APPENDIX B

ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CONFLICT SCALE – PARENT VERSION

Asian American Family Conflicts Scale – Parent Version

The following statements are parent-child situations that may occur in parent-child relationships. Consider how likely each situation occurs in your present relationship with your child and how serious these conflicts are. Read each situation and answer the following questions using the following rating scales:

How likely is this type of situation to occur in your relationship with your child?

1……2……3……4……5

Almost Never	Once In A While	Sometimes Frequently	Often or	Almost Always

How serious a problem is this situation in your relationship with your child?

1……2……3……4……5

Not At All	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much	Extremely

	Family Situations*	How likely is this type of situation to occur in your relationship with your child? *Never … Always*	How serious a problem is this situation in your relationship with your child? *Not at all … Extremely*
1	I try to make the best decisions for my child's life, but my child wants to make his or her own decisions.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
2	I tell my child that a social life is not important at his or her age, but my child disagrees with me.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
3	My child claims that he or she has done well in school, but I have higher academic expectations for him or her.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
4	I expect my child to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but my child feels this is unfair.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
5	I expect my child to do better than other children we know, but my child wants me to accept him or her as he or she is.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
6	I show my love for my child by housing, feeding and educating him or her, but my child wishes that I would show more physical and verbal signs of affection.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
7	I don't want my child to bring shame upon the family, but my child thinks that I am too concerned with saving face.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
8	I expect my child to behave like a proper Asian male or female, but my child thinks that I am too traditional.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
9	My child wants to state his or her opinions with me, but I think it is disrespectful to talk back to parents.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5
10	I expect my child to show respect for elders, but my child believes in showing respect only if they deserve it.	1…2…3…4…5	1…2…3…4…5

* *These situations may be modified slightly depending on the target population and translation equivalency*

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION TO USE THE SCALES

Permission to Use the Scales

From: Richard M. Lee, Ph.D. [richlee@umn.edu]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2004 1:23 PM
To: Tran. Pho Duy
Subject: RE: Copyright permission request

hi pho,
here is a sample parent version but you may want to modify items as necessary. if you choose to translate any scale into another english, i require that you conduct translation and backtranslations by two independent native speakers. also, i ask that you send me a copy of the translated scales
thanks, rich

At 10:43 AM 11/12/2004, you wrote:

> Dear Professor Richard,
> Thank you very much for giving me permission to use your measurement for family conflicts. You gave me a very nice gift. I knowlege your important contribution to my research. I am willing to abide by your terms:
> a. I only use your scale for stated research purposes;
> b. I will not distribute it to others without your permission;
> c. I do not make financial profit from its use;
> d. I will notify you of any publications or presentation related to its use; and
> e. I will provide you with access to the data for possible secondary data analysis.
> I also need a scale to measure the parent-child conflict from the parents' perspective. It will be another favor for me to receive and use it. Thank you so much.
> Sincerely,
> Pho Duy Tran
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Richard M. Lee, Ph.D. [mailto:richlee@umn.edu]
> Sent: Friday, November 12, 2004 7:04 AM
> To: Tran. Pho Duy
> Subject: RE: Copyright permission request
>
> thanks for your interest in my measures of family conflict. you have my permission to use the scales with the following terms of agreement. there is no cost to use the scales. however, i ask that the following terms be abided: (a) use only for stated research purposes; (b) do not distribute to others without permission; (c) do not make financial profit from its use; (d) notify me of any publications or presentations related to its use; and (e) provide me with access to the data for possible secondary data analysis. please let me know if these terms are acceptable.
> also, i've attached two versions of the scale. the original version assesses conflict with parents and the revised version one assesses conflict separately with mother and father. scoring for each is computed by simply summing the likelihood ratings for a likelihood score and summing the seriousness ratings for a seriousness score. you also can compute an "intensity score" by adding likelihood and seriousness together and dividing by two. others have altered the items to assess parent-child conflict from the parents' perspective and i have a couple of different versions for you, if you'd like them.
> best, rich

APPENDIX D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Consent to Participate in Research (Parent)

You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by Pho Duy Tran, a graduate student in Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of the study is to help parents and their children calm their minds and to help them re-establish communication which has been gradually lost during adaptation to American culture.

The study will last for four weeks. You will be asked to participate in a 3-hour training instruction by dharma masters who have experience in working with both parents and children. After that, you will practice at home with your child/children up to 30 minutes each night (except Saturday). Total time will be 15 hours. Before and after the study, you will be asked to complete a 5-minute scale to measure your progress.

Some of items in the scale may seem personal, but you don't have to answer any question if you don't want to.

You may gain well-being from calming your mind and develop love and understanding to each other. It is hoped that results of the study will be beneficial for programs designed to re-fresh family harmony among other immigrants.

All results obtained in this study will be confidential. Your individual performance will not be reported, only the results of all participants as a group.

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

If you have any question about this research, you may contact to Pho Duy Tran at (916) 681-6553 or by e-mail at tranp@saccounty.net.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research. If you decide to participate now - and change your mind later, you may stop participation in the study at any time.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Consent to Participate in Research (Child)

You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by Pho Duy Tran, a graduate student in Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of the study is to help parents and their children calm their minds and to help them re-establish communication which has been gradually lost during adaptation to American culture.

The study will last for four weeks. You will be asked to participate in a 3-hour training instruction by dharma masters who have experience in working with both parents and children. After that, you will practice at home with your parent/parents up to 30 minutes each night (except Saturday). Total time will be 15 hours. Before and after the study, you will be asked to complete a 5-minute scale to measure your progress.

Some of items in the scale may seem personal, but you don't have to answer any question if you don't want to.

You may gain well-being from calming your mind and develop love and understanding to each other. It is hoped that results of the study will be beneficial for programs designed to re-fresh family harmony among other immigrants.

All results obtained in this study will be confidential. Your individual performance will not be reported, only the results of all participants as a group.

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Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research. If you decide to participate now - and change your mind later, you may stop participation in the study at any time.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Parent if the participant under 18 yeas Date

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