

# Fruition of Love and Perseverance

~ History of Building up the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel ~

By Mr. Phuoc Thang Tran

Vice Chairman of Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel Project Inc. Trust Fund

Wherever the Chinese people go, the traditional virtue of the nation will be brought there.

Chinese people in Australia are under the same spell. The long history story aside, I only mention about what had happened in 1970's of 20th century: Many people of Indo-Chinese peninsula were forced to leave their homes because of the war. They risked their lives by the way of violent sea, experienced all kinds of hardships and difficulties. Some of them were accepted by Australian Government for humanity and migrated to the southern hemisphere as refugees. After suffering the hardships of life, they realized even more the value of peaceful life.

People of Chinese origin in the world are considered as members of one big family. To consolidate friendly relations and to help the Chinese migrants overcoming the difficulties and integrating into the Australian main stream, they established various associations, organized social activities and community support programs, such as: job searching, Chinese and English language school, kindergarten, and etc. All those activities and programs are for the benefits of the Chinese community. However, for many elderly Chinese it is particularly difficult to integrate into Australian society because of their language barrier and cultural difference. They are isolated at home while their children are out at work. Since the ancient time the Chinese has had the fine tradition "Foster kids of other's as our own kids; care elders of other's as our own elders". To solve the problem, they think of building an Elderly Hostel to place the elderly with Chinese culture background. A good government always discerns the needs of its people. The Australian Government responded this problem and promised its contribution to establish the Elderly Hostel.

What a cheerful matter it is, the same idea has come into our minds.

In 1988, the Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao Communities all voted Mr. Phuoc Thang Tran the president of NSW Indo China Chinese Association as their representative to sign the agreement with the Government to establish the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel. Mr. Van Thao Chung as the director of the Project Preparation Committee. Hereafter, the Project Preparation Committee held two big fund raising activities, raised over \$290,000, which was used for purchasing the land and other expenses. The land with an area of 4,293 m<sup>2</sup> is at 680 Cabramatta Road Bonnyrigg, exactly the place where Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel sits. A Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony was held in October 1996. Mr. Phillip Ruddock, Minister of Immigration Department of Australia Federal Government presented at the ceremony.

We deeply regretted that for a long period of time, because of insufficient self-raising funds, and the participated parties reorganized and leaders changed, and further more some communities withdrew from the project committee, the project was postponed again and again, and could not put into action.

In 2001, the authority of Australian Government instructed that we had to provide a certificate of one million dollars of self raised fund in the bank within a short period of time, then the financial grant from the Australian Government could be available, otherwise this project might be cancelled. And the Government would never approve the same type of financial grant to the communities.

Hearing this instruction, a group of enthusiastic persons were burning with anxiety. Among them there were Phuoc Thang Tran, Harry Tang, Van Thao Chung, Som Sok Ma, Henry Tang, Peter Wong, Oai Trieu and Pinhkham. They thought if the project was cancelled, not only the Chinese in Australia would lose face, but also would feel shame before the elders who were expecting to stay in the Elderly Hostel, and all philanthropist elders who supported the project. They were determined to reorganize the Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel Project Inc. Trust Fund, and undertake the heavy task of preparation as well as construction of the project. These decisions were actively responded and supported by all enthusiastic persons of various circles. The following 31 persons each of whom committed \$10,000 became the trustee of the Trust Fund. They are: Phuoc Thang Tran, Peter Wong, Oai Trieu, Som Sok Ma, Harry Tang, Wai Kau Chan, Kean Hao Tea, Van Thao Chung, Pinhkham, Sean Ng, Henry Ngai, Kian Seng Lee, Ngin Sour Lim, Huong Tan, Anna Nguy, David Nguy, Henry Tang, Eric Pang, Son Ha Long, Ng Yu Hei, Hunan P/L, Ker Rui Tang, Paul Cheong, Chen Zhang Ming, B T Vongmany, David Tran, Thai Lim, Vincent Kong, Zhang Wen Guang, Chou Ma, Wing Huor.

At the same time, generous offers and powerful support were given by many earnest persons of the community such as: President of ABC Tissue Products Mr. Henry Ngai, The famous movie, TV and music star Bai Jia Li and her mother Mrs Wu Rong, The founder of BKK Mr & Mrs. Som Sok Ma, Senator Peter Wong, The General Manager of Galaxy Import & Export Co. P/L Mr & Mrs David Nguy, Son Ha Long, Ng Yu Hei, President of Australian Lao-Chinese association Inc. Mr Zhuang Lin Han, Owner of Golden Star Restaurant Mr Lim Deh Yi, Australian Chinese Buddhist Society Inc. (Temple), NSW Chinese Hakka Friendship Association Australia, Australian Hokien Huay Kuan, Australian Chin Lien Association, The Tue Thanh Alumni Association Australia Inc., Australian Chinese Charity Foundation, Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission.

In addition, the Trust Fund developed some permanent members (each of them committed \$1,000) and launched an activity of buying "Gold and Silver Blocks". (\$100, \$20). Finally the Trust Fund raised enough money and the Government approved the project into construction.

On 20th July 2001, The Preparation and Construction Committee of Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel Project was formally set up under the auspices of Love the Elderly and Children Foundation. The Honorable Teacher Oai Trieu took up the post of Chairman of the Committee. Dr Peter Wong Senator of NSW was elected as Chairman for Fund Raising. After delayed for more than a decade, the construction of Indo Chinese Elderly Hostel finally started on 27th September 2002. It took nearly one year to build the project and was completed on 16th August 2003. Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel welcomed its first batch of elder residents on 23rd October 2003.

Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel consists of a group of high-quality buildings with water feature and beautifully landscaped garden. The generously appointed rooms provide comfort and privacy for residents. It is highly appraised by the residents and communities due to its environment and quality of services.

Grand Opening Ceremony for Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel was held on 1st May 2004. The dream that had been expected for more than ten years finally came true.

My happiness can be concluded in this short poem:

**Love and perseverance bear fruit,  
The Elderly Hostel came to completion,  
Benefaction and charity go for communities,  
Compile this essay to narrate good deeds.**