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Vietnamese refugee children playing at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., after arrival yesterday

## NYTimes MAY 5 1975 Refugee Sighs, 'I Am Happy, I Am Sad'

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EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla., May 4—Less than two weeks ago Hong Van Hoanh was one of South Vietnam's elite, a dapper man of prominence, prestige and privilege.

With a thriving business, a young wife, a dozen children, two large houses, four cars and seven servants, he was the envy of his neighbors and a prince among his peers.

Now, Hong Van Hoanh is a refugee, impoverished, dazed and bewildered by the sudden rush of history that has swept him in only 13 days from a life of luxury in Saigon to a sweltering little tent here in the American South.

"I am happy, I am sad," he intoned again and again today, and the paradox of

his plaintive words was a common theme among many of the 343 other Vietnamese who arrived here early this morning, the first of their number to be brought to this military installation for processing and resettlement.

At least 600 more are expected tomorrow in two flights, leaving room in the Eglin compound prepared for them for about 1,500 others.

### Left Status and Wealth

Many of those who arrived today, like Mr. Hong, had left members of their family behind. Many of them, like him, had also left behind the status they had achieved or wealth they had amassed. And like Mr. Hong's their first day in their adopted country was a bittersweet blend of memories and hope.

Shortly before noon, the

44-year-old Mr. Hong stood gaunt and haggard in his tent beneath two naked light bulbs, glancing silently around at his wife, the seven children he was able to bring along and, crammed into suitcases and shopping bags, the meager remnants of their former life.

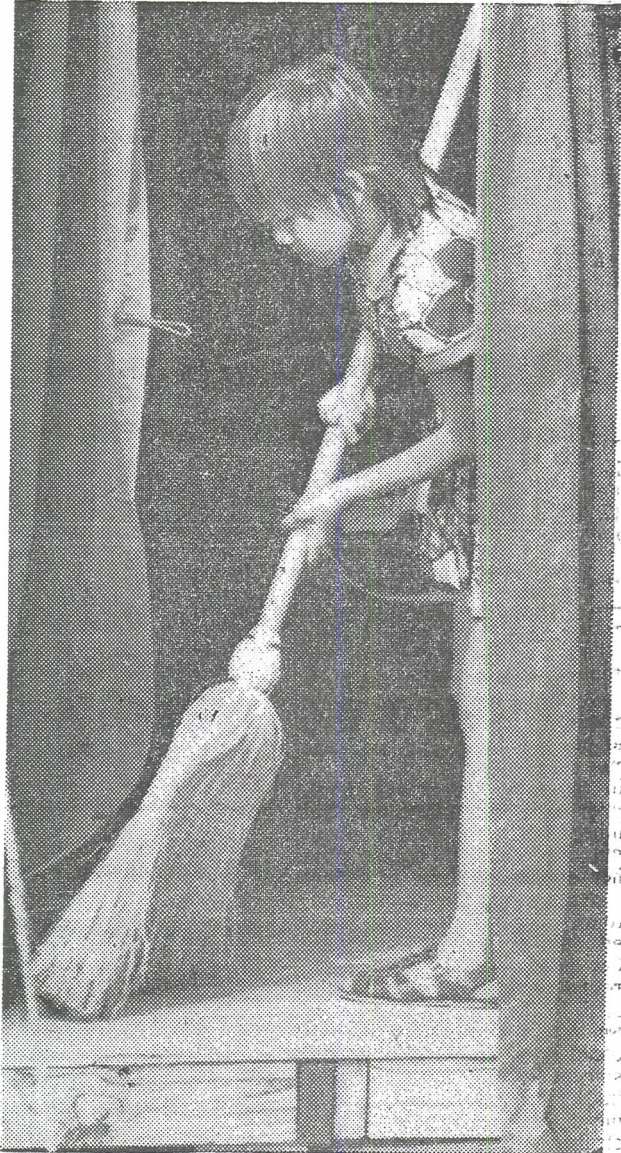
For the first time since he left Saigon, Hong Van Hoanh wept.

Still, Mr. Hong and his family are considered to be among the more fortunate of the more than 120,000 refugees the United States Government managed to airlift out of South Vietnam before the Saigon Government's collapse last week.

His wife, Le Thi Tam, speaks English and has a cousin who lives in Yonkers,

Continued on Page 12, Column 7

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7



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A Vietnamese refugee child sweeping out new quarters—a tent—at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida yesterday.

a relationship that will probably allow them to leave the tent city to which they were brought today and relocate there in a few days.

Many of the others who arrived on a chartered Northwest Orient 747 this morning are without sponsors and therefore are likely to remain here for quite some time. But with or without contacts in this country, there was a striking uniformity to the refugees who walked into the Florida sun today after a 27-hour flight from Guam.

Like Mr. Hong and his family they seemed well-dressed and well-educated. Their attire was basically Western in style, as were their haircuts and coiffures. Many of the teen-agers stepped to the tarmac of Eglin's main field in modish, thick-heeled shoes, wearing wide-bottomed, broad-cuffed trousers or slacks.

They were, explained Robert R. Jones, a 33-year-old United States diplomat who served nine years in Saigon, an "accidentally representative cross-section of the Vietnamese middle-class who, because of their links to us, had reason to run."

There were a noted neurosurgeon, several university professors, a lawyer, a pharmacist, a few civil engineers, and a sprinkling of secretaries, and, still wearing his military fatigues, Col. Tran Thu, the last commander of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam installation at Da Nang.

He said he had been evacuated from Saigon two hours before the old Government fell. Soon after he arrived here, the thin, little colonel was making telephone calls to United States officers with whom he had served or under whom he had studied on a previous visit to this country.

Pham Huu Phuoc, a 46-year-old physician and member of the faculty of the University of Saigon's medical school said that when he left early last week, he lost everything he owned, bringing only his wife, his 18-year-old son and 16-year-old daughter.

He had, he said, two hours notice and was unable to manage the rescue of his aging parents.

"But I am a doctor, not a political man, and I hope to be a doctor here just as I always was," he said.

Nguyen Van Minh, a lawyer from Saigon, tried to comfort Dr. Pham by predicting that his parents and other old people left behind would not be targets for re-priminations by the new Government. Mr. Minh brought his wife, his 28-year-old daughter, who in Saigon was an employe of Pan American Airlines, and his 7-year-old granddaughter.

"But," he said, "that's about all."

Mr. Hong remained behind, attempting to reach his five oldest children, all from a previous marriage, but he failed because of the confusion and lack of communications in the country. Finally, with five of his youngsters in hand, he left Saigon on April 24, the same day his wife flew from Clark Air Force Base to Guam.

Most of the refugees were extremely tired after their long flights from Saigon and Guam. By midafternoon, 19 of them had been treated at the tent hospital operated by the Air Force in the middle of their new compound.

A 2-year-old boy was kept for observation, a doctor said. The others were treated

for upset stomachs and released.

Mr. Hong's wife, a nurse who worked in a dispensary at the Defense Department attaché's office in Saigon, volunteered her services to the hospital soon after she had arrived, but officials said that for the time being she should look after her family and get some rest.

"That is, perhaps, the right decision," she said. "I did not know anyone could be so tired as I am and still stay on their feet."

Lee Thi Tam, a small woman with a soft voice, strong arms and a ready smile, began her journey to her new country on April 21 when she and the youngest children—Duyan, a year-old daughter, and Quoc Khanh, a 4-year-old son—flew from Saigon to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

Unlike many of those who were getting out of the country in those last days, neither Mr. Hong nor his wife were forced to pay bribes to local officials.

That was not the story others told here today. One man, who asked not to be named, said he had paid several thousand dollars to a Vietnamese official and then several hundred more to an American. He refused to identify either person.

"But I got out," he said. "Whatever it cost, it was worth it. I'm alive and so is my family."

Survival was the primary motivation for Mr. Hong as he shepherded his children through the maze of processing details in the Philippines and then flew north to Guam on April 27. His wife, who had been anxious about whether he had made it out or not, found his name on a list of new arrivals and they were reunited that day.

Then came days and days of waiting, of watching others leave for the United States, days of being moved from one encampment to another on Guam and finally, on the day they were originally scheduled to leave, a long delay because of mechanical troubles with the aircraft.

"When our turn came," said Le Thi Tam, "we ran up the stairs and into the plane."

That was yesterday morning. After brief refueling stops at Hickam Field in Hawaii and Travis Air Force Base in California, the airliner arrived at 7:40 A.M.

The Niceville High School band played patriotic songs. Three missionaries who had worked in Vietnam unfurled a 10-foot banner with Vietnamese characters spelling out a welcome for the refugees.

Among the first to descend the stairs were Mr. Hong and his family, with little Quoc Khanh ferociously clutching a dirty, stuffed panda.

At the compound, a 20-acre site where Air Force construction crews had spent the week raising "hooches"—military tents with wooden floors, wooden sides and canvas tops—they mingled with their fellow refugees and then, in single file approached the desk of Sgt. David C. Jones, a Vietnam war veteran.

"D Three," said the sergeant, smiling down at the wide-eyed Quoc Khanh as he assigned the family its quarters.

"Dee-twee," echoed the boy.

"That's right, old man," said Sergeant Davis, and the family moved away, all but the little boys dragging their feet in the sandy soil of Florida's panhandle.