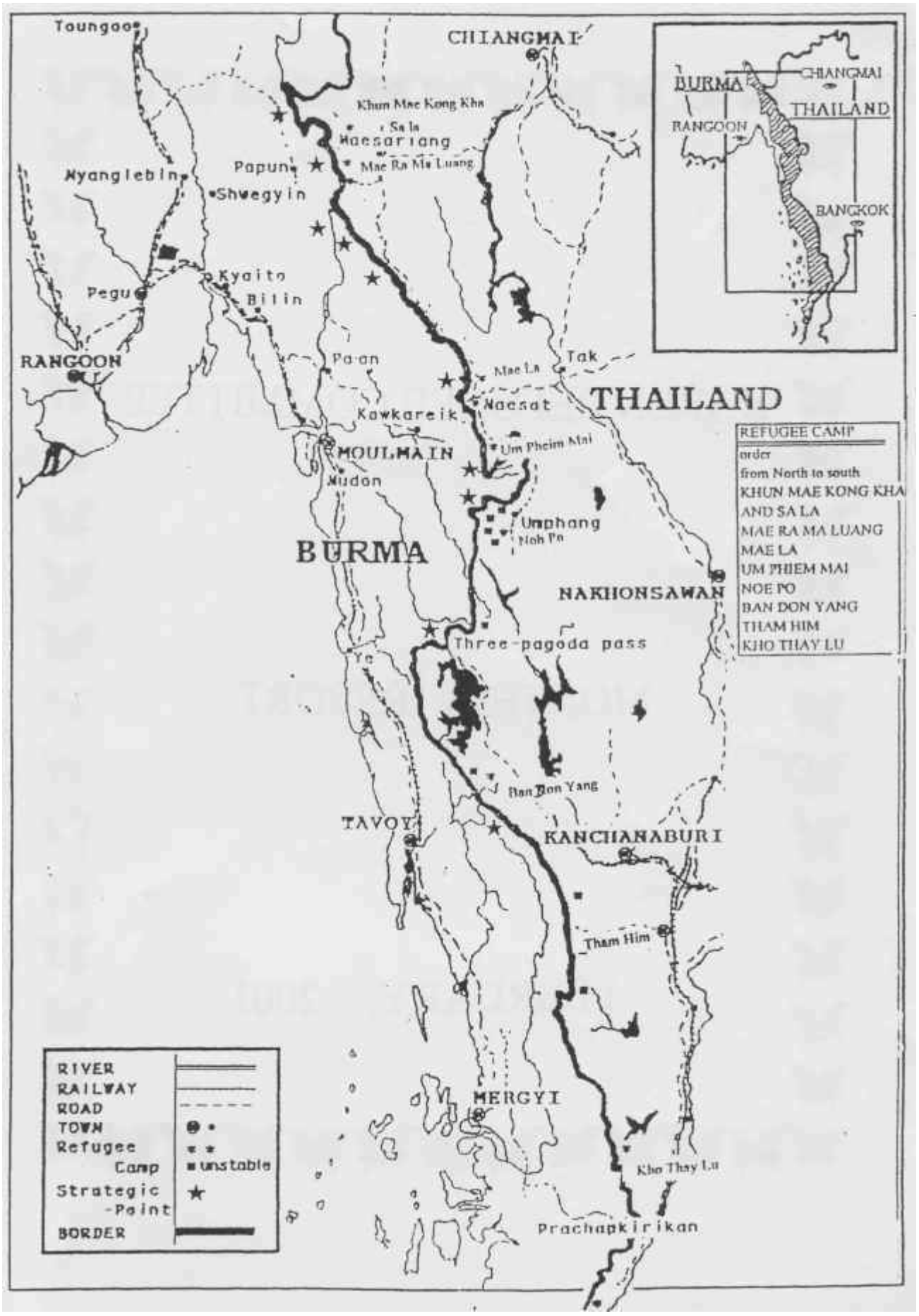
KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2001


Toungoo
CHIANGMAI
Khun Mae Kong Kha
Sa la
Maesariang
Mae Ra Ma Luang
Papun
Nyanglebin
Shwegyin
Kyaito
Bilin
Pegu
RANGOON
Pa-an
Mae La
Tak
THAILAND
Naesat
Kawkareik
MOULMAIN
Um Phiem Mai
Mudon
Umphang
Noh Po
BURMA
NAKHONSAWAN
Three-pagoda pass
Ye
Ban Don Yang
TAVOY
KANCHANABURI
Tham Him
MERGYI
Kho Thay Lu
Prachapkirikan
BURMA
CHIANGMAI
THAILAND
RANGOON
BANGKOK
REFUGEE CAMP
order
from North to south
KHUN MAE KONG KHA
AND SA LA
MAE RA MA LUANG
MAE LA
UM PHIEM MAI
NOE PO
BAN DON YANG
THAM HIM
KHO THAY LU
RIVER
RAILWAY
ROAD
TOWN
Refugee Camp
unstable
Strategic -Point
BORDER

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February 12th is UNION DAY in Burma.

On this day in 1947, the PANG LONG AGREEMENT was signed between the AFPFL Party, led by General Aung San and the Shan Saw Bwas together with the Kachin and Chin Chiefs. This paved the way for Burma achieving Independence from British Colonial Rule. But it still is a mystery why other Ethnic Groups were not signatory to the Agreement. One outstanding provision of the Agreement was for any Ethnic State to have the choice of separation from the Union after (10) years as a member State. General Aung San was believed to have remarked that it would be inefficiency on the part of the Burmese, if any Ethnic Group find it necessary to ask for separation.

The Shans, with 52 States and Saw Bwas, were a force to be reckoned with and participation by the Shans was a most important factor for the achievement of Independence. General Aung San, as Leader of the AFPFL, was acutely aware of that and the Shan demands, including choice of Separation after ten years was agreed to.

Independence from Britain was achieved on January 4th 1948. But the Shans felt betrayed and after ten years, there were calls for separation. By that time there were dissents and calls for autonomy from other Ethnic Groups as well. Contentions and repression followed. The Saw Bwas simply disappeared one by one and calls for separation was muted altogether.

Fifty three years have gone by since Burma achieved Independence and for the country, it was Retrograde all the time. This was due mainly to misrule and mismanagement by the Military which had taken over power in March of 1962, with the avowed intention of preventing UNION breakup. In a matter of two decades, Burma, from being one of the richest in South-East Asia has become one of the least developed countries in the world. The Kyat which was once six to the Dollar, now stands at Five-hundred-plus to the Dollar, reflecting the miserable situation of the country. People are going through a period of great hardship. Dissents and internal strife are increasing, rather than decreasing. Many people
have gone out to seek jobs in foreign countries. Many people sought refuge in neighboring countries. Still many are displaced internally.

Also, around the World, the number of refugees is increasing due to increased fighting and Ethnic killings in many countries. And there is report that weapons purchases are increasing in many countries, which show that more and more people are ready and willing to kill each other.

But on the brighter side, we see some subtle changes inside Burma. The SPDC is having talks with NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi. The SPDC is curbing media attacks on Aung San Suu Kyi. The SPDCIs admitting that HIV/AIDS is becoming a problem in Burma.

On looking at the overall situation though, we Refugees in this Thai Border Region are a fortunate lot, compared to many refugees around the world. When we look at refugee problems in Timor, in Indonesia, in East, Central and West Africa, in Yugoslavia in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, we seeA lot of untoward incidents, misdeeds and sufferings, which luckily, we refugees in this region are Spared.

We owe this to the sympathy, goodwill, concern and efforts by the Government of Thailand, Humanitarian and Donor countries and Organizations, Sympathetic Groups, Individuals and Support NGOs to whom we shall always be indebted.

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NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS FEBRUARY, 2001.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No. of families	Over 12 YRS		9-12 YRS		Under 8 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La	6,299	11,289	10,948	4,218	3,925	2,742	2,515	36,673
	Um Phiem Mai	3,284	5,338	5,050	1,967	1,843	911	1,084	16,193
		9,583	**16,627**	**15,998**	**6,185**	**5,768**	**3,653**	**3,599**	**52,866**
	Mae Ra Ma Luang	1,509	2,927	2,553	555	507	1,174	1,140	8.856
NORTH	Khun Mae Kong Kha and Sa La	2,183	4,384	4,073	815	759	1,648	1,579	13,258
		3,692	**7311**	**6,626**	**1,370**	**1,266**	**2,822**	**2,719**	**22,114**
S	Noh Po	1,688	2,713	2,514	1,205	1,115	575	657	8,779
O	Ban Don Yang	741	962	1,075	241	223	514	489	3,504
U	Tham Him	1,664	2,057	2,053	1,403	1,381	668	636	8,198
T H	Kho Thay Lu	66	62	82	8	5	54	63	274
		4,159	**5,794**	**5,724**	**2,931**	**2,724**	**1,811**	**1,845**	**20,829**
		17,414	**29,732**	**28,348**	**10,486**	**9,758**	**8,286**	**8,163**	**95,809**

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS REDCEIVED DURING THE MONTH.

FROM	Rice 100kg sacks	Salt Kilos	Fish-paste 16kg tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	Chilies Kilos	Cooking Oil 13.75 liter tins	Cooking Fuel Kg.
B.B.C	8,238	21,214	3,531	49,980	6,630	50,200	416,902
COERR	350						

We shall always be grateful to the Thai People and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

BBC- Support in Food and Shelter Material. Beginning this year BBC is to provide two more vehicles for KRC.

MSF-Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI-

ARC-

MHD-

ZOA (ABWAid)- Support in Educational facilities.

ICS (Asia)- Support in Educational facilities.

TOPS- Support in Educational facilities.

COERR-Rice and Educational Support.

H.I - Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year-end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA(Norwegian Church Aid) has been providing KRC with administrative & Organizational Support. It has also made commitment to support with remuneration for KRC members and workers.

UNHCR - For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.

BCEL - British commonwealth Ex-services League provide Grants to old WW(II) soldiers in refugee camp.

This month (COERR) is sending Quilts for refugees in camps.