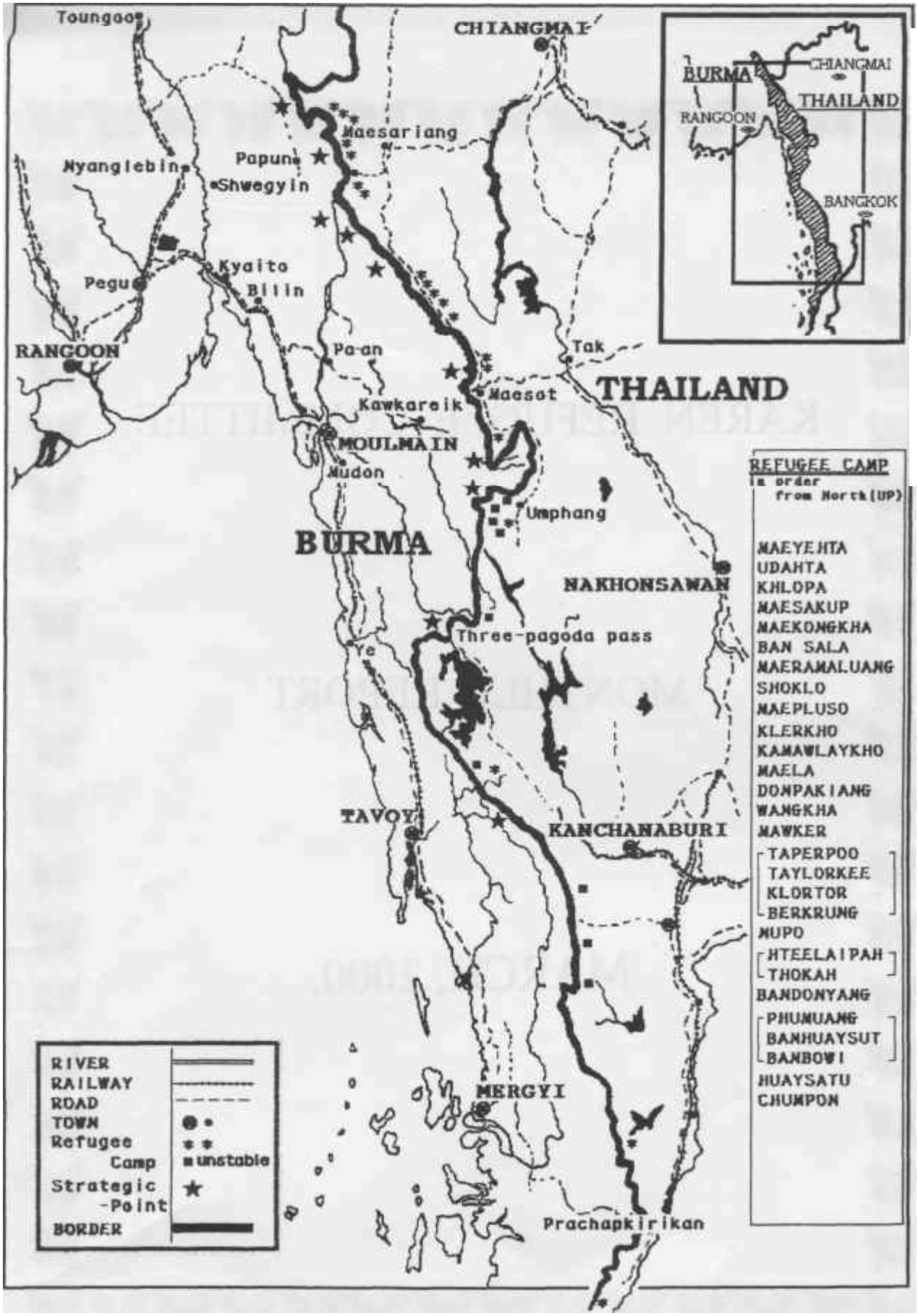
KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH, 2000


Toungoo
CHIANGMAI
BURMA
CHIANGMAI
THAILAND
RANGOON
BANGKOK
Maesariang
Papun
Nyanglebin
Shwegyin
Kyaito
Pegu
Bilin
RANGOON
Pa-an
Tak
THAILAND
Maesot
Kawkareik
MOULMAIN
Mudon
Umphang
BURMA
NAKHONSAWAN
Three-pagoda pass
Ye
TAVOY
KANCHANABURI
MERGYI
Prachapkirikan
RIVER
RAILWAY
ROAD
TOWN
Refugee Camp
unstable
Strategic -Point
BORDER
REFUGEE CAMP
in order from North(UP)
MAEYEHTA
UDAHTA
KHLOPA
MAESAKUP
MAEKONGKHA
BAN SALA
MAERAMALUANG
SHOKLO
MAEPLUSO
KLERKHO
KAMAWLAYKHO
MAELA
DONPAKIANG
WANGKHA
MAWKER
TAPERPOO
TAYLORKEE
KLORTOR
BERKRUNG
MUPO
HTEELAIPAH
THOKAH
BANDONYANG
PHUMUANG
BANHUAYSUT
BANBOWI
HUAYSATU
CHUMPON

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On March 2nd 1962, the Military, led by General Ne Win took over power in Burma with the express intention of preventing deterioration and disintegration of the Union. Burma, at that time was one of the most productive and developed Nations in South East Asia, being dubbed the "Rice Bowl" of Asia. One measure of the failure of the Military is that, Burma, from being one of the most prosperous nations is now being classified as one of the least developed countries in the World.

The Military's experimentation with the "Burmese way to socialism" and the stepped up effort to contain Ethnic dissent by force had led to large scale disruptions, resulting in the sorry mess that can be seen throughout the country. Production and the economy plummeted and a new class of people, the "Displaced" emerged, which problem still cannot be resolved unto this day. Burma was once a country where job opportunities were plentiful, attracting many foreign workers from India, Bangladesh and China. To day, the reverse can be seen, with hundreds of thousands of Burma's Citizens trying to find work elsewhere.

This March 13th is the 12th Anniversary of the death of R.I.T. student, Phone Maw, at the hands of the Military people. The incident sparked off the confrontation that led to the Four Eights Movement, which historic event people will long remember.

On the 27th of March, the Burma Military Celebrated the "55th Army Day" to commemorate the Day in 1945, when the Burmese Army turned then guns on their Japanese Allies and initiating the Resistance Movement. The Day was at first Celebrate as " Resistance Day" but later changed to "Army Day" by the Military to emphasize the decisive role played by the Burmese Army in routing the Japanese Army. Note worthy was the Address made by Senior General Than Shwe exhorting stepped up effort to eliminate the opposition on this " Army Day".

With the end of this March, there is report that salaries of workers in Burma will be increased Five fold which would be quite unique. The minimum wage will be Kyats 3000 with the maximum being Kyats 15,000 beginning April 2000. This must be one way to sooth the long suffering work people who are surviving on a starvation salary. But then, this may only be a mirage. Printing more bank notes will not solve the scarcity in produce commodities, which is the root cause of the country's sorry condition. In feet another round of spiraling inflation can be expected.

This month, the UN is focussing on Women's Rights, citing discrimination and violence against women still in practice in many countries. Seems, many believe women were just things to be exploited.

For the Refugees, though, the Talk of the day is Repatriation. Talk is that Repatriation may take place tomorrow, or in three years time for that matter. But, all indications are that it depends very much on whether the situation in Burma is conducive to "safe" return. Most comforting is the Prime Minister's speech, which openly stated, that Repatriation of Refugees, if it were to come, must be voluntary.

Of incidence of note elsewhere, on the 17th of this month, there was report of mass suicide (or Massacre?) of over three hundred people at a Church in Kanungu, Uganda. They were followers of the cult, "Restoration of the Ten commandments of God". Still more deaths of followers were found at other places bringing the total to over Nine hundred and Twenty. It is most sorrowful to see that, in this world of ours, there are still many people, who can cast their Evil Spell on others, making them do things that can only be called horrendous.

K.R.C.
Mae Sot.

P.O Box 5, Mae Sot, Tak 63110, Thailand
E-mail win3@loxinfo.co.th
Tel : (055) Intl : + 66 55 532 947.
Fax : (055) Intl : + 66 55 546 869.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS MARCH 2000.

	CAMP	No.of families	Over 12 YRS		9-12 YRS		Under 8 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
MAE SOT AREA	Um Phiem (Zone -A)	1,682	2,946	2,796	996	899	466	655	8,758
	UmPheim (Zone-B)	1,402	2,235	2,134	399	379	874	825	6,846
	Mae La	5,835	10,775	10,320	1,885	1,824	4,090	3,774	33,186
		8,937	15,956	15,250	3,280	3,102	5,430	5,254	48,790
NORTH	Mae Ra Ma Luang	1,331	2,721	2,365	553	505	974	943	8,061
	Mae Kong Kha and Sa La	1,983	3,801	3,529	857	731	1,420	1,414	11,752
		3,314	6,522	5,894	1,410	1,236	2,394	2,357	19,813
S O U T H	Noh Po	1,656	2,708	2,534	1.121	1,044	570	601	8,578
	Ban Don Yang	417	558	605	142	129	306	271	2,011
	Tham Him	1,654	2,339	2,381	1,037	1,017	680	745	8,199
	Kho Thay Lu	66	62	82	8	5	54	63	274
		3,793	5,667	5,602	2,308	2,195	1,610	1,680	19,062
	Grand Total	16,044	28,145	26,746	6,998	6,533	9,434	9,291	87,665

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.

FROM	Rice 100kg sacks	Salt Kilos	Fish- paste 16kg tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	Chiiies Kilos	Cooking Oil 13.75 liter tins	Cooking Fuel Kg.
B.B.C	7,597	19,522	3,254	48,858	6,102	45,406	336,147
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.
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 rehabilitaion and also year-end sporting events for Handicaps.
NCA (Norwegian Church Aid) has been providing KRC with adrninistrative & Organizational Support. It has also made commitment to support with remuneration for KRC members and workers.