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MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

# MONTHLY REPORT

JANUARY

1997

## **The Five Points of the Aim of The Mon National Relief Committee**

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- 1. Resettlement of the refugees who become homeless due to the oppression of Rangoon military regime.**
- 2. To help the welfare of the refugees who become jobless due to the oppression of Rangoon military regime.**
- 3. To take care and look after the health of the refugees.**
- 4. To fight against illiteracy for the children in the refugee camps.**
- 5. To struggle for human right.**

## **The Organization of Mon National Relief Committee**

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1. Phra Wongsā Pala</b> | <b>- Chairman</b>         |
| <b>2. Nai Shwe Thein</b>   | <b>- Vice Chairman</b>    |
| <b>3. Nai Kasauh Mon</b>   | <b>- Acting Secretary</b> |
| <b>4. Nai Dung Htaw</b>    | <b>- Member</b>           |
| <b>5. Nai Chit Nyunt</b>   | <b>- Member</b>           |
| <b>6. Phra Tay Jae</b>     | <b>- Member</b>           |

# **Monthly Report of Mon National Relief Committee**

**(January, 1997)**

## **Mon Refugees and 1997 Assistance**

Even the ceasefire agreement which reached between the NMSP and the military regime SLORC has lasted for more than one year, the situation inside Burma is not improve enough for refugees to return back to their native places. Thus, all refugees are still remaining in the same areas and they have faced the same difficulties since they have been relocated in very unsuitable places.

With objectives to help refugees and clear on the rapid assessment of the refugees, the MNRC, BBC and MSF conducted a survey in which we have collected the most facts from the refugees concerning their agriculture and livelihood. Since the beginning of 1997, we encouraged the refugees to start conducting more rice plantation and creation of self-sufficiency. BBC also provided seed paddy and tools to the refugees who were registered to grow rice.

Because of no enough land in the surrounding areas and security reason, only some little percentage of refugees could grow rice and it could not provide more products up to the situation that the refugees could create self-sufficiency without depending on aids. Besides, the rice crops were also damaged by rain, wind, pests, insects, diseases and etc., and that was another reason which reduced the rice products after the farmers met the poor harvest in November.

In the rainy season, because of lack work opportunity for refugees to get income to provide supplementary foods besides the distributed supplies of rice, prawn-paste and salt, they have to borrow money to buy palm oil, chili, onion and etc.,. They could get vegetables in their gardens or in the forest nearby. After the harvest and the farmers received rice crops they have to sell it and repay back for their borrowing money.

Since the crop products were in poor conditions and the farmers have to sell some amount of it, the rice products in each area could not provide to whole refugee population. Thus, the refugees are still remain to depend on the assistance of aid agencies and we have requested that the Mon refugees should receive the same levels of humanitarian assistance in 1997 as they did in 1996. The refugees were also expecting they will receive full amount of supplies in 1997.

According to decision of aid agency, it will not provide the full amount of needed supplies for refugees in 1997. It will provide 70% of the needed supplies to Halockhani refugees, while Bee Ree and Tavoy District refugees will receive 80% and 90% of needed supplies respectively. After the decision from the aid agency, we also explained to refugees about the reduction of the supplies.

Among the refugees in the three camps which are lied opposite to the Kanchanaburi Province, the Halockhani camp's refugees may face more difficulties after the supply rations were reduced down. The Halockhani which is the one situated on the border area and close to Thai territory, is roughly considered that refugees could have more work opportunities than

other camps. Actually, the refugees in the camp could have work opportunity only in some short time, but not all refugees in the camp could have. For example, when the Thai logging company cut hard woods in the area nearby, the company could provide works to only over 100 refugees within two or three months. And when the Thai forestry department implemented the reforestation program, only 50 refugees from the camp could have work in the plantation just only for nearly three months. In the other time, the refugees have to work as porters to carry materials for traders from deep inside Burma up to border area or day labourers for Thais to send cattles from border into some places in Sangkhlaburi District. The most jobs are not existed permanently.

In coming 1997, we will encourage the refugees again to grow rice. In late date of January, we also called a meeting with refugees and explained them the reason of assistance reduction and encouraged them that every family must grow rice. However, according to Halockhani refugees, they will face some difficulty at the moment, because of lack of work opportunity and reduction of assistance.

After we learned their real situation, we approved that they will face difficulty because of assistance reduction, 70% of the needed supply. It is expected that they could be survived and passed from difficulty if the aid agency provided them more supply. On behalf of refugees, we, MNRC, would like to request the aid agency to provide about 80% of the needed supply.

## **Human Rights Situation and New Arrivals**

Even the conscription of forced labour in the Ye-Tavoy railway construction is reduced down comparing with situation in 1996, the usages of villagers as forced labourers in other part of the area have been existed. Because of conscription of forced labour, some families from Kya-Inn-Seik-Kyi township also arrived to the refugee camp, Halockhani.

After the Three Pagoda Pass was occupied by the Burmese Army, the SLORC has officially opened border checkpoint with Thai government and tried to control the area more than before. After the SLORC reached ceasefire agreement with NMSP, it has tried to construct motor road from Three Pagoda Pass to Thanbyuzayat. The SLORC also would like to offer to the Thai company to construct the road since 1996. But the SLORC would like to receive the agreement from NMSP to build that road or would like to give concession through NMSP because the road construction is not so safe from the attack of KNU. As they knew, the NMSP and KNU have good relationship. But the NMSP leaders disagreed on concession of the SLORC and refused to build that road. In the Central Committee meeting of NMSP in November, it decided it will not take any responsibility or guarantee to construct, but will not make any disturbance in constructing that road. But the Thai companies are reluctant to construct that road.

Anyhow, the SLORC did not wait the agreement from NMSP, it has constructed some part of the road by forcing the villagers nearby. The construction part which used the most villagers as forced labourers is lied in area between Thaung Sone and Anan Gwin. The most Karen ethnic population is inhabiting in the area, the most Karen villagers have been conscripted to work in the motor road.

The SLORC military battalion, Infantry Battalion No. 31, which bases in Anan Gwin have been taking responsibility to conscript the villagers and build the motor road. The most Karen villages are situated along the motor road and the villagers were conscripted since November. The method of the conscription is the military commander from the Anan Gwin

gave order to the respective leaders of village tracts and the leaders will take responsibility to conscript their villagers to work in the construction site.

According to escapees, the motor road has been also built by prisoners on the other part between Anan Gwin and Tha Nyin. The part from Tha Nyin to Thanbyuzayat was already built roughly by prisoners. Besides using forced labourers, at the moment, the military also used the villagers to work in this motor road.

About 30 villagers from each tract have to work in the construction site for one week or two weeks without payment. The villagers have to bring their own foods and tools from their homes. There are about 6 village tracts which consist about 30 small villages around the area and the villagers in whole area has been ordered to work in the construction. Because of the Burmese Army's activities in the area to launch offensives to Karen guerrillas. Besides the conscription of forced labour, when the Burmese troops came into villages, the villagers were arrested to be porters along the troops, and sometime they were severely tortured with accusation of rebel-supporters.

Because of the Burmese troops' activities, the most villagers were displaced in the area or some villagers also left to another areas or to Thailand as illegal immigrants. So the most villages consist with very little houses and the population became lessen, but the left villagers have to work in the construction to complete for the part which the military defined.

For the villages which close to route have to work in the construction continuously for more than one month according to villagers who escaped to the border camp. He said, he and other his two family members worked in the construction in the early morning and at mid day, they returned their homes took foods and after lunch, they have to go to construction again and could return home about 6 p.m. He said he had continuously worked for more than one month every day.

Because of such human rights abuses by the Burmese troops, the Karen ethnic villagers has arrived to Halockhani since December while the others also left to Karen refugee camps or displaced inside the area. Since the SLORC planned to construct Three Pagoda Pass-Thanbyuzayat motor road, the situation of the villagers became worse and worse.

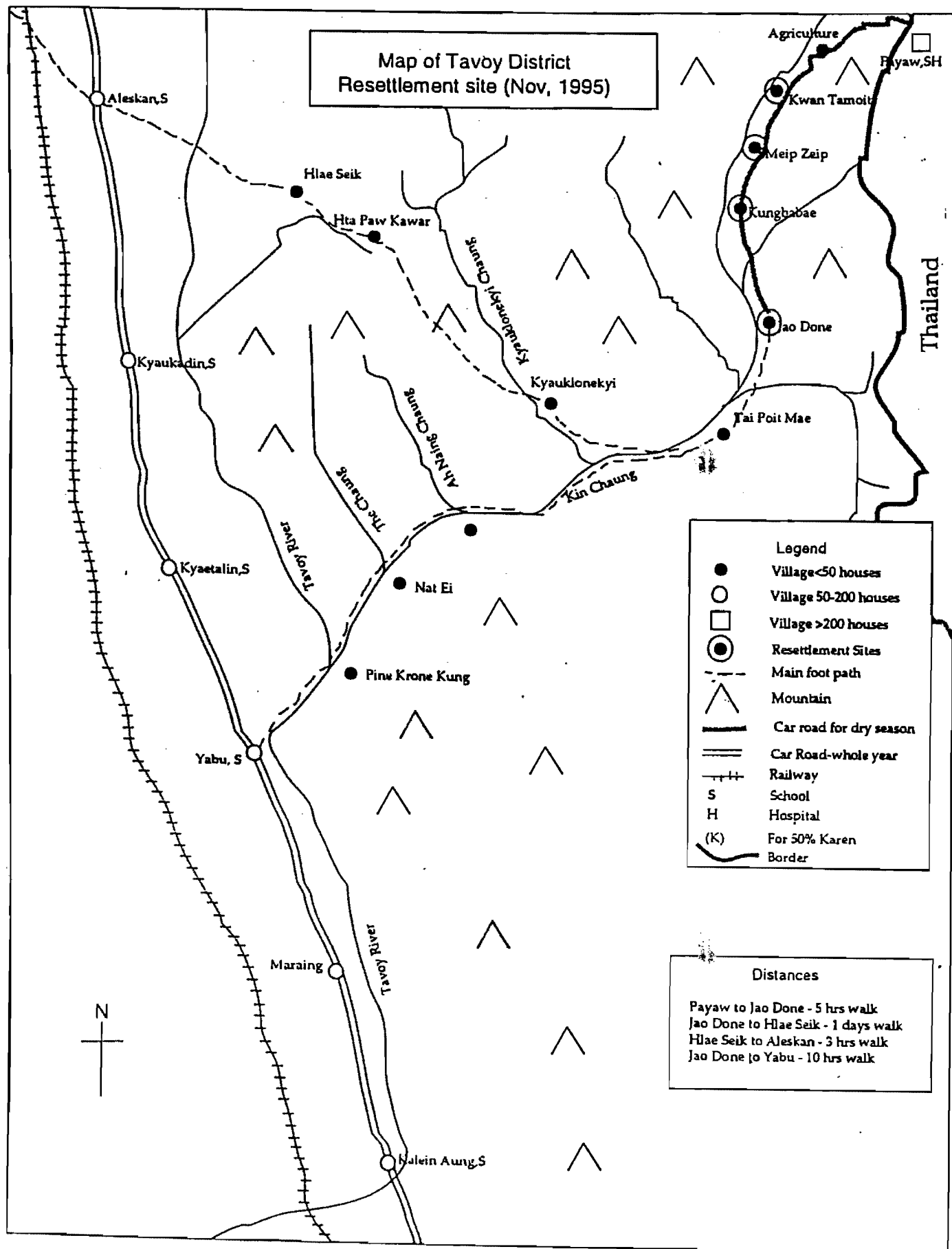
**THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CAMP ARE FOLLOW  
(January, 1997)**

No	Camp	Family	Adult		Children		Total
			M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	415	486	543	688	772	2489
2	Tavoy	685	878	1087	989	1144	4098
3	Prachuab	491	452	558	702	771	2483
4	Halockhani	1011	1324	1376	1686	1733	6119
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2602</b>	<b>3140</b>	<b>3564</b>	<b>4065</b>	<b>4420</b>	<b>15189</b>

**THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE  
(January, 1997)**

No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (Kg)	Salt (Kg)	Bean (Kg)	Remark
1	COERR	250	1688	1125	1588	
2	Consortium	1090	3350	2370	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>5038</b>	<b>3495</b>	<b>1588</b>	

# Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



Map of Ye River  
Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



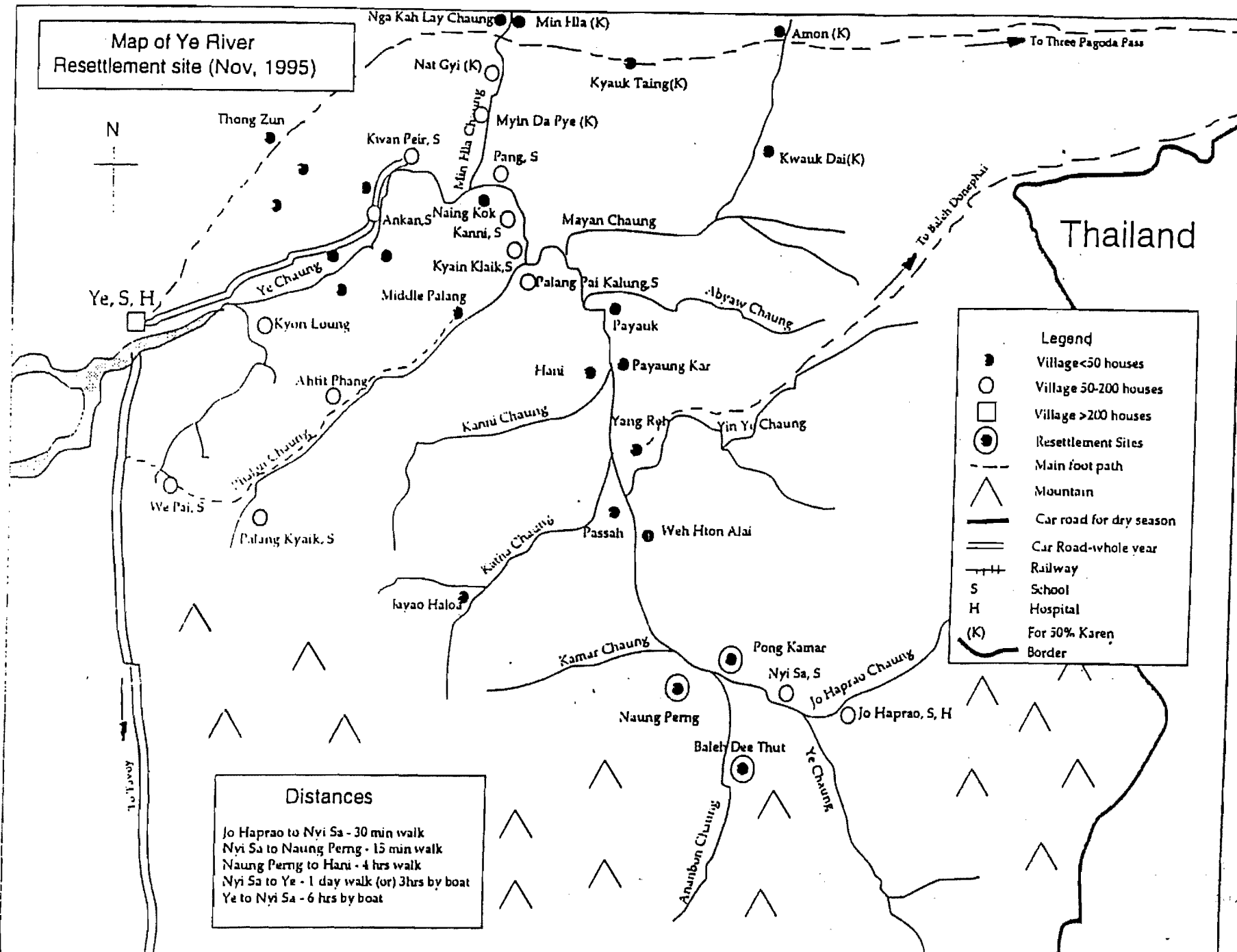
Thailand

**Legend**

- Village < 50 houses
- Village 50-200 houses
- Village > 200 houses
- (in circle) Resettlement Sites
- - - Main foot path
- △ Mountain
- Car road for dry season
- == Car Road - whole year
- +— Railway
- S School
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen
- Border

**Distances**

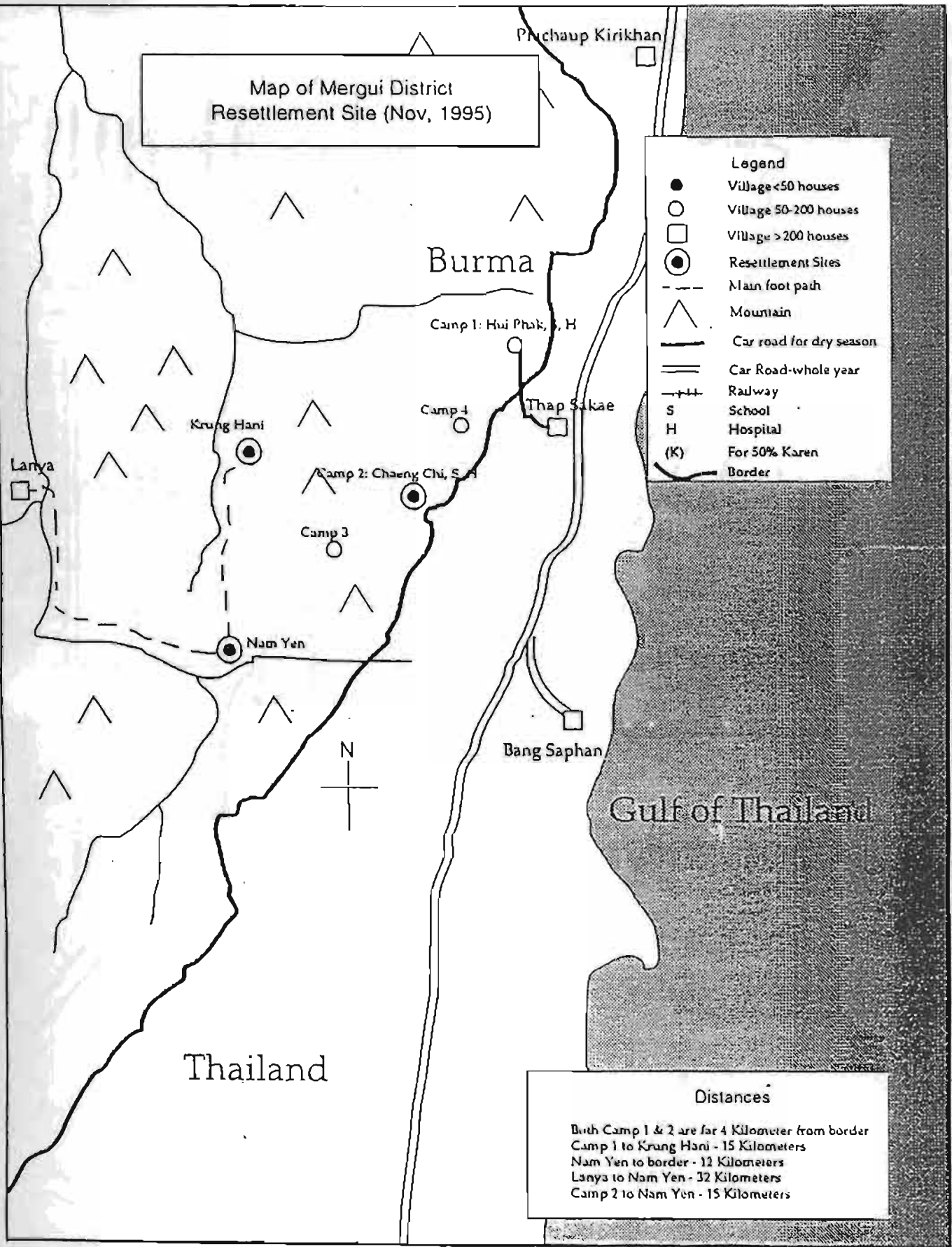
Jo Haprao to Nyi Sa - 30 min walk  
 Nyi Sa to Naung Perng - 15 min walk  
 Naung Perng to Hani - 4 hrs walk  
 Nyi Sa to Ye - 1 day walk (or) 3 hrs by boat  
 Ye to Nyi Sa - 6 hrs by boat



Map of Mergui District  
Resettlement Site (Nov, 1995)

**Legend**

- Village <50 houses
- Village 50-200 houses
- Village >200 houses
- ⊙ Resettlement Sites
- - - Main foot path
- △ Mountain
- Car road for dry season
- == Car Road-whole year
- + + + Railway
- S School
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen
- Border



**Distances**

Both Camp 1 & 2 are far 4 Kilometer from border  
 Camp 1 to Krung Hani - 15 Kilometers  
 Nam Yen to border - 12 Kilometers  
 Lanya to Nam Yen - 32 Kilometers  
 Camp 2 to Nam Yen - 15 Kilometers

