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ကော်မတီ

မကရင်မဟာအိမ်ပြင်ညှေးသူ မိမိ

MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY

2000

# **The Five Points of the Aim of Mon Relief and Development Committee**

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- 1. To provide temporary settlement to the refugees in Thailand-Burma border areas who become homeless and helpless situation due to the oppression of Rangoon military regimes.
- 2. To help the welfares of the refugees in border areas and IDPs who are displaced inside the country, with foods, shelter and possible protection.
- 3. To coordinate with local Mon people in developing the grassroots community in the fields of health, education, literacy, agriculture and other rural development projects.
- 4. To empower the local community for the participation of decision making processes for their own lives and communities.
- 4. To struggle for the human rights.

**The Organization of  
Mon Relief and Development Committee**

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>1. Phra Wongsā Pala</b> | <b>- Chairman</b>          |
| <b>2. Nai Kasauh Mon</b>   | <b>- General Secretary</b> |
| <b>3. Nai Dung Htaw</b>    | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>4. Nai Aung Mon</b>     | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>5. Nai Chit Nyunt</b>   | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>6. Nai Tay Jae</b>      | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>7. Nai Glae</b>         | <b>- Member</b>            |

## **Monthly Report of Mon Relief and Development Committee** (February, 2000)

### **Land Rights, Population Displacement Situation in Southern Part of Burma**

Since SLORC seized power in 1988, many thousands of urban civilians and the rural villagers forcibly moved by the government authorities and Burmese Army, with reasons for establishment of new satellite town, development projects and cut the contact between the rebels and the rural civilians. As a result, these civilians have similarly suffered from the shortage of foods, lack of shelter and unemployment. Among the displaced villagers due to the war and offensives have been suffered more than other.

After 1988, with a plan to establish the new satellite towns beside many towns of Mon State, the SLORC also confiscated some lands from the local civilians without compensated payment. As an example, many rice-fields and rubber plantations near Ye and Thanbyuzayat towns were confiscated by the SLORC and the authorities created small land plots and then distribute to the government servants and army officers. Then, those government servants and army officers sold these land plots to the civilians again for their own profit. Or, sometimes, the civilians' rice-fields or plantations were confiscated without compensations and these lands were used to build the army camps. For the villagers who lost the lands have to find new types of work and changed their occupations. For the traditional farmers, it made them quite difficult to do other kind of work. Some families also moved from their native places and tried to get another type of work. Normally, those traditional farmers became as day-labourers for other farmers who did not lose the lands, because those farmers were hard to change their work. Some family members or the whole family also moved to other place where they could have works and income, or into Thailand to seek jobs.

After 1990, to get recognition from the Burmese people that they were legitimate government, SLORC has implemented many development projects especially for the better communication in many parts of Burma. In these projects, the government has used many hundreds of thousands of civilians as unpaid labourers in almost construction and many thousands acres of lands were also confiscated by authorities and army without compensation and no program has been conducted to resettle the civilians who lost lands, gardens and houses.

Among many development projects, the Ye-Tavoy railway construction was a well-known one in southern part of Burma, in which the SLORC had used many hundreds of thousands of villagers to be unpaid labourers to contribute free labour in the construction. When the authorities found the railway route and built the embankment, it passed some house compounds, rice farmlands, and fruit plantations. However, the authorities have not given any compensation costs to those civilians, who lost the lands or they did not manage a program to give another space of lands and gardens for houses.

The more land confiscation has happened since 1997 by the army and SLORC/SPDC authorities to produce crops for themselves or to build the military barracks. In 1997, because of less paddy crops produced by farmers in the whole country, the military government could not get the set amount of paddy from farmers to feed their servants, army, officials and police in the whole country. With a purpose to relieve for long-term reliance on the paddy growing farmers, the government set an order to the regional military divisions and battalions to explore rice growing farmlands as much as they could and ordered to grow paddy for their own foods. Then, the government also cut some food supplies that

it had provided for many years. Because of this instruction, Southeast Region Military Command, Coastal Region Military Command and the local battalions have confiscated many hundreds of land from the local ethnic farmers without compensation. Similarly to other situation, the farmers who lost the lands have not received any assistance from the government, such as providing new lands for farming or a land space for creating of new life. Due to this condition, some farmers have to change new work or became as day labourers while many families moved into Thailand to seek the jobs.

As an instance, during 1997 when the authorities confiscated some lands in building a water canal and plan to grow paddy along that canal, SLORC's Kyaikmayaw township authorities have confiscated about 1, 000 acres of paddy growing farmlands from the 60 farmers in Kyaikmayaw township without compensation. Those farmers also have not received any new lands and other assistance to reconstruct their life. Most farmers were Mons and some were Indians, those farmers have worked growing paddy since over 50 years ago.

Similar to Kyaikmayaw township area, the land confiscation for new farmlands for army and government authorities has been widespread in Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division. In anywhere, the authorities had not paid any compensation costs to the farmers whenever they confiscated farmlands from the local farmers.

However, some military battalions in Yebyu township area have not confiscated lands from the local farmers but explored new lands by conscripting forced labour from the local villagers again. In 1998/1999, when the local military battalions in Yebyu township explored new lands in the coastal area of the township, the battalion commanders have requested the local village headmen to send many villagers to clear the small wild forests or to build water dike to be possible to get the farmlands. In this land exploration process, some thousands of villagers in Yebyu township areas have been conscripted as unpaid labourers in construction of dike, building water embankment and clearing the lands for several months. When those villagers went to the work places, they have to bring their own foods and tools to work for army. In this conditions the villagers have less time to work their own works in farms or plantations.

The civilians' loss of land rights also related to displacement. Those villagers have to find new works and moved to new places. Another widespread situation of displacement is also related to regular military operations and offensives operated by the Burmese Army. The ethnic civilians who inhabited near the border area have been effected such type of displacement. Whenever the Burmese Army's troops arrived into a village in the rural area, they arrested all men and interrogated them to know the activities of the rebel. Some villagers were also suspected as rebel-supporters while some were killed because of this suspicion. On the other hand, the soldiers also arrested all men in the villages to use them as front-line porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies that the troops require in the battle-fields. Sometimes, those porters were also used mine-sweepers or human-shields by Burmese Army in the front-lines.

Because of terrible treatment to local ethnic villagers, whenever the government troops went into the villages, all men in the villages fled outside of the villages to escape from the arrest of the Burmese troops. At the same time, with accusation the villages were used as rebel bases, the government troops looted villagers' belongings as they could and asked for cash also. Sometimes, the soldiers took all foods in the village and distributed a small amount to the villagers. The torture, sexual abuses and other types of mis-treatments were common abuses committed in the villages.

Therefore, whenever the Burmese Army launched the military offensives against the rebels, the local villagers are always afraid of being tortured and killed. Some villagers in the whole always fled whenever the Burmese Army went into their villages to escape from some mis-treatments. Then, those villagers have to hide in the forests, farms or plantations.

Their communication to the villages were also cut off and otherwise, their villages were firmly controlled by the Burmese Army for several months during offensives. The villagers also lose chance to do their works to get crops or to have income to support themselves. As a result, many villagers faced food-shortage problems in the forests or where they are displaced.

Other mis-treatment, forced relocation of the local villages by grouping them near Burmese Army's bases also created population displacement to the villagers in the rural areas. In 1997, when the Burmese Army launched the military offensives against KNU and other rebels, the army tried many rural villagers and this operation made many thousands of villagers to be displaced or flee to the border areas.

Similarly in 1999 military offensives launched by the Burmese Army, the army tried to relocate about 20 villages along Zami river and along Three Pagoda Pass-Thanbyuzayat motor road. In this condition, many thousands of villagers have hid in the forest for several months until the Burmese Army left from their native areas. Some villagers also fled into NMSP control area where is more safer than fighting areas and many of them entered into Thailand to take refuge in there as refugees.

Since 1997, there have been more and more displaced persons in NMSP control area and areas nearby. MRDC (recently Mon National Relief Committee – MNRC) also established some new villages in NMSP area and received those displaced persons. Now, there have been about 10 new villages established since 1995 ceasefire and it helped only for sometimes while those displaced people really faced food-shortage problems. While the offensives by the Burmese Army were intensive, those villagers could not move from these temporary villages to have works or to go to the farms. So, they are similarly faced hardship and food-shortage problems like the villagers in the offensive operated areas.

**THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE CAMPS**  
(January, 2000)

No.	Camp	Number of Family	Over 12 years		5-12 years		Under 5 years		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	538	995	1100	283	313	171	178	3040
2	Tavoy	542	980	956	295	288	174	204	2897
3	Halockhani	1573	2354	2358	888	902	532	558	7592
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2640</b>	<b>4329</b>	<b>4414</b>	<b>1466</b>	<b>1503</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>13529</b>

**Note:** There are 84 new arrivals totally who arrived to Halockhanki during Febrauary.

**THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE**  
(January, 2000)

No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Sadine (tins)	Remark
1	COERR	120	360	240	3000	
2	BBC	2000	-	-	-	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>3000</b>	

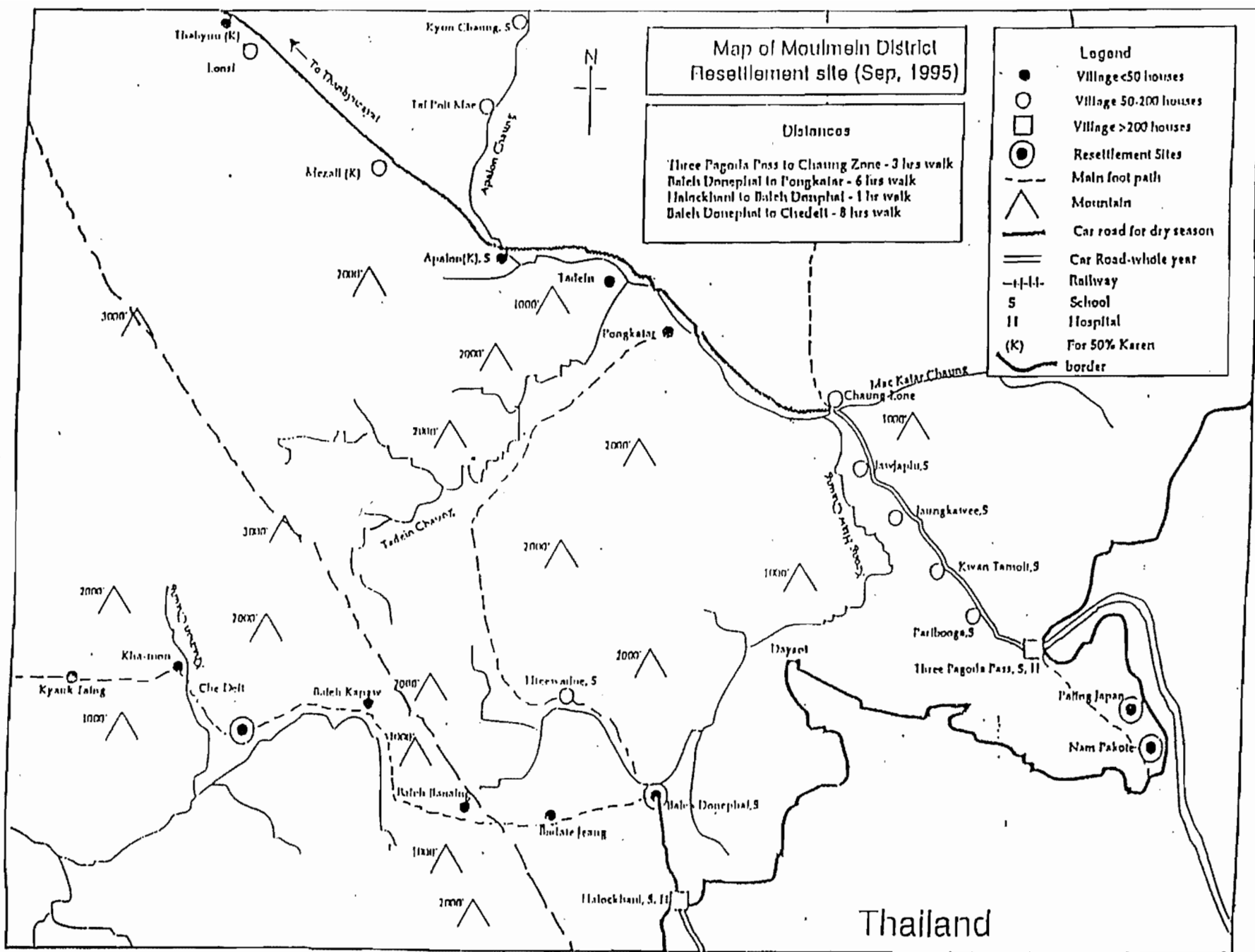
# Map of Moulemein District Resettlement site (Sep, 1995)

## Distances

Three Pagoda Pass to Chaung Zone - 3 hrs walk  
 Buleh Donsaphal to Pongkalar - 6 hrs walk  
 Halockhand to Buleh Donsaphal - 1 hr walk  
 Buleh Donsaphal to Chedell - 8 hrs walk

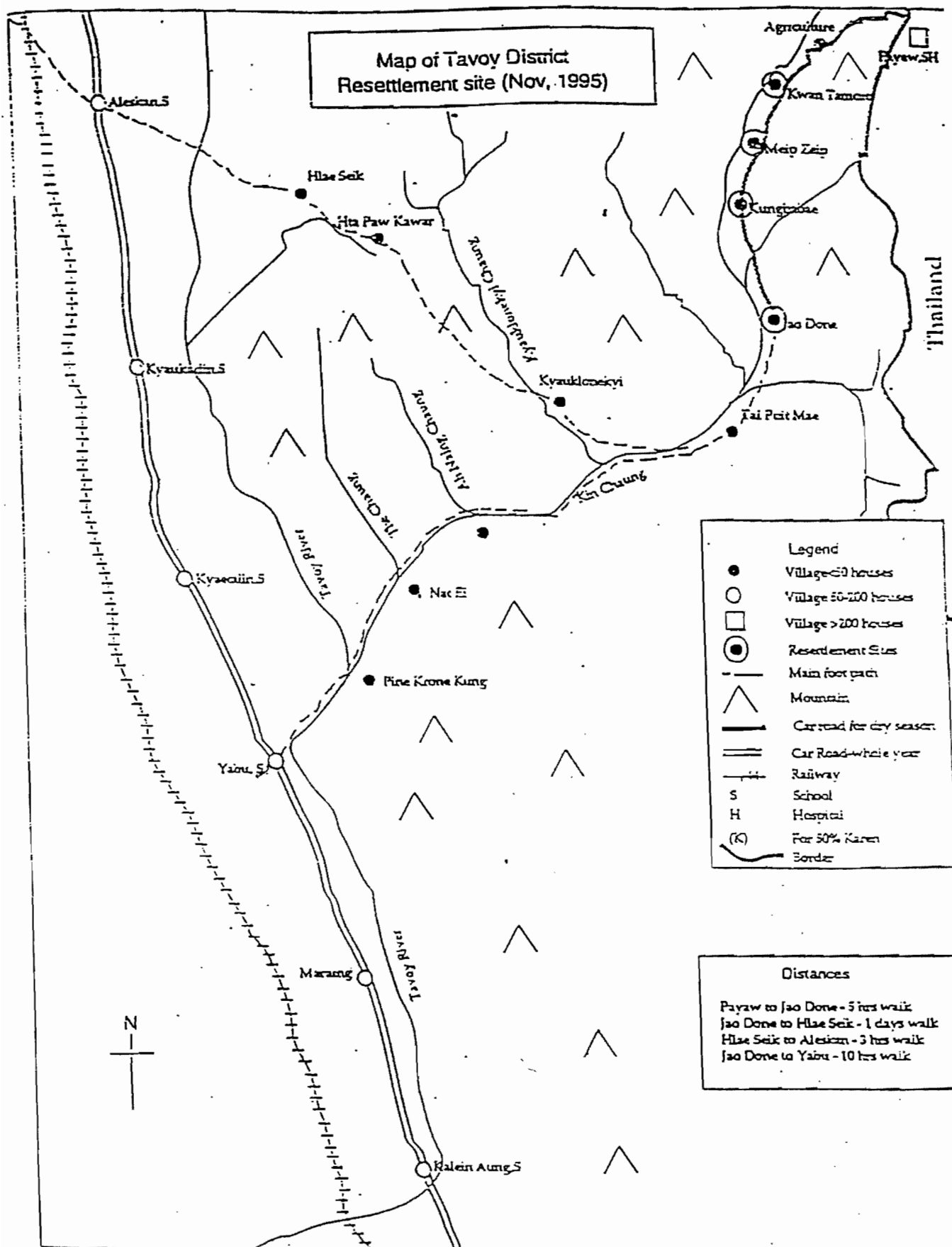
## Legend

- 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
- II Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen border

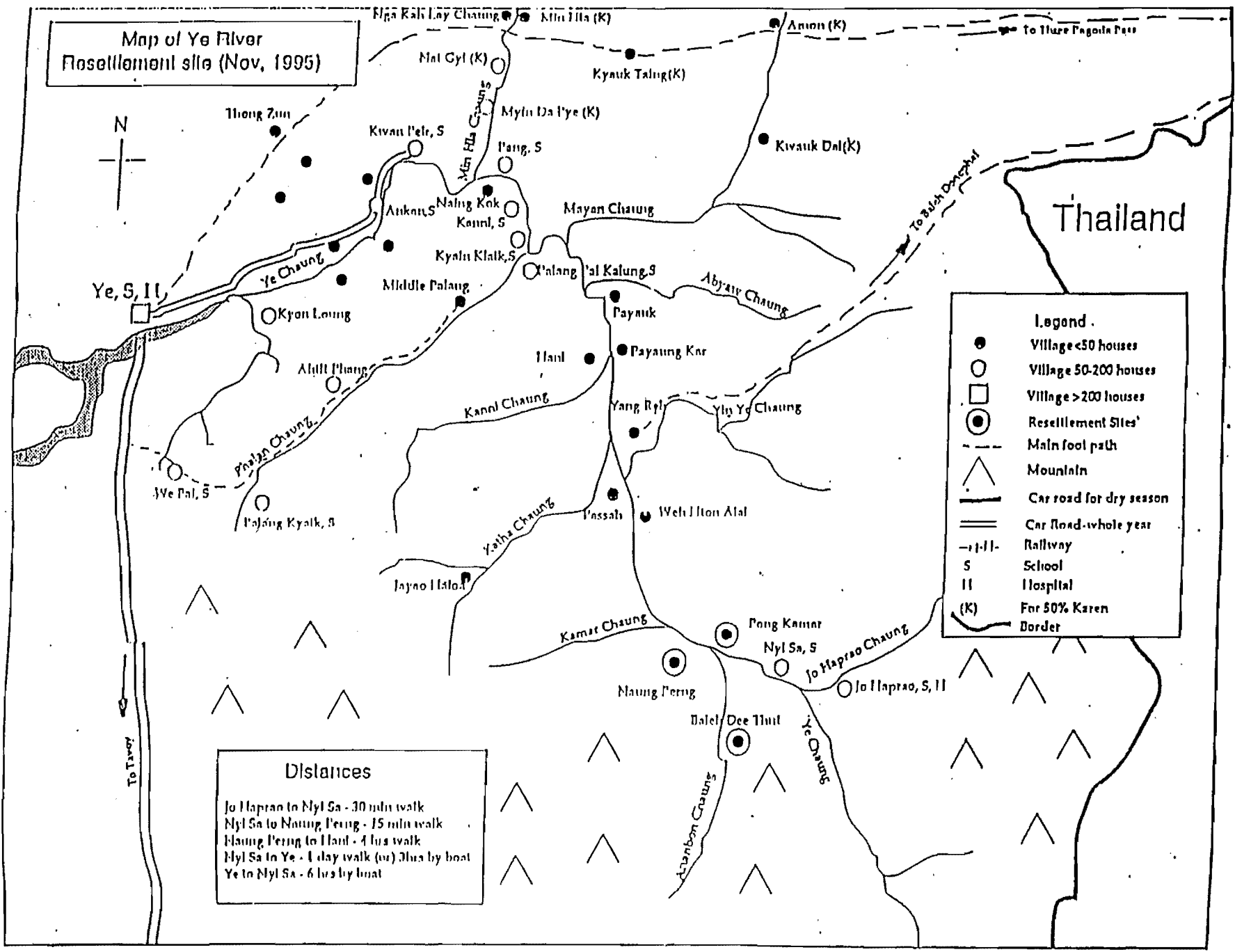


Thailand





# Map of Ye River Resettlement sites (Nov, 1995)



Thailand

**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
- II Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen Border

**Distances**

- Jo Haprao to Nyl Sa - 30 min walk
- Nyl Sa to Naung P'eng - 15 min walk
- Naung P'eng to Hant - 4 hrs walk
- Nyl Sa to Ye - 1 day walk (or) 3 hrs by boat
- Ye to Nyl Sa - 6 hrs by boat