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MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

JUNE

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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- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Phra Wongsā Pala | - Chairman |
| 2. Nai Chann Ai | - Vice-Chairman |
| 3. Nai Kasauh Mon | - General Secretary |
| 4. Nai Dung Htaw | - Member |
| 5. Nai Aung Mon | - Member |
| 6. Nai Glae | - Member |
| 7. Nai Chit Nyunt | - Member |
| 8. Nai Tay Jae | - Member |
| 9. Phra Jon Dae | - Member |

Monthly Report of Mon Relief and Development Committee

(June, 2000)

MRDC's Development Program in Kya Inn Seikyi Township Area

After MNRC (Mon National Relief Committee) changed its name to MRDC (Mon Relief and Development Committee), it also formed some of its members to be a development sub-committee (or MRDC Development Group). The members in this group also have learnt how to get access into the grassroots community, and collect information what are the strong desires of the community people to do development for themselves or their communities.

Differently from the government's development project procedures "top to down" policy, these development workers try to listen from community people and cooperate with community to do implement some development projects that make profit for all community members. These development projects must be implemented accordingly to "down to top" approach.

Since 1999, after these development workers learnt the method of "down to top" approach and they also went some part of Ye Township area, met some village community members, listen their strongest desires of development work for their communities and helped them implementing the works. The trip was helpful and development workers also received people participation to develop their own communities.

So, in second week of this month (June), the workers also made another trip to most stable Mon villages in Kya Inn Seikyi township area. These villages are under the semi-control of NMSP and it also closes to KNU-SPDC conflict area. This area is also the most undeveloped one because it has been in the conflict area of different armed groups for about 5 decades. After NMSP-SLORC/SPDC ceasefire in 1995, some area in west side of Zami river became a little safe. Although NMSP could provide protection for them, it could not stop government troops when they came in, because there was no clear agreement in defining the areas between NMSP and government troops.

The development workers went into the most stable 10 villages in this area, while there are over 24 Mon villages totally in west side of Zami river. The group spent about 10 days time, including travels. During their trip, they could also arrange meetings with every community villagers and learnt their communities' conditions. In the communities, they also met the problems of the higher of illiteracy rate, poor school conditions, lack of proper communication, deficient of community meeting places, inadequate of pure water and others.

Although the group have met a lot of problems, which the communities themselves have strong desires and would like to solve, in the current situation, both development group and the villagers have no enough budgets and they could implement only three small projects in three different villages. In these three villages, the group agreed to build a boat station in one village, which is an intersection point for many villages to get passage to river way of Zami river and travel to Three Pagoda Pass area of the border or to Kya Inn Seikyi town to do various business including to bring patients for emergency medical treatments in town. Many villagers used this river and this boat station to travel to many other villages. It supports for better communication also.

And, the group also builds a meeting place in one village by coordinating with villagers. That village had no meeting place and the villagers prefer to build a meeting places, where the villagers could meet each other for all village affairs. The building is built in monastery compound and it can be used for both village affairs and religious purposes.

In one village, there are more students to put in limited school space of a small school and the villagers proposed to enlarge that school. Then the group decided to enlarge the school and build more rooms for students. Because of the small school, the students have limited space to study and this environment brought the students to face worst health problems.

Although the villagers in two villages had strong desires to build water pools and bring water to the villages by plastic water pipe, both development workers and the villagers themselves have no enough budget for these costly projects and these plans will be delayed until the group could get fund from some source. Then, the group also plans to provide literacy training in some villages, where the population has high illiteracy rate.

To implement many different development projects, that could benefit the communities directly or which came from the ideas of the communities, the group requires encouragement and assistance from the international organizations, which interested to empower the grassroots people.

The military operations, human rights violations and related population displacement in Kya Inn Seikyi Township area

As armed conflict between one main rebel group, KNU and SPDC military government, is on-going situation, the Burmese Army has operated military operations against KNU every year in all seasons, depending on how KNU and its troops have military activities. Before the end of 1999 and in the half year of 2000, Burmese Army has sent many military battalions under the command of LID No. 88, LID No. 99 and Operational Administrated Command No. 5, into the rural areas of Kya Inn Seikyi Township to attack KNU and clear its roots.

The military operations have taken place in many parts of this township, along Zami river, around many ethnic Mon, Karen and Lao Shan villages and along some parts of Three Pagoda Pass-Thanbyuzayat motor road. From November 1999 until January 2000, the Burmese Army's military battalions, LIB No. 120 led by Lt. Col. Maung Maung Oo, under the command of LID No. 88, operated military offensives against KNU's 6th Brigade area of eastern part of Zami river areas. Following this offensive, the villagers who were under suspicions of KNU supporters were killed, inhumanely torture and some women were raped and killed. Thus, many hundreds of villagers from Kyaikdon and Kyone-sein village tracts have fled to Hteewadoe of Halockhani resettlement site and Nu Po refugee camp in Thailand.

From February until the end of April, Burmese Army turned the military head to take security along Three Pagoda Pass and Thanbyuzayat motor road. The purpose of this military operation was to uproot KNU activities collecting tax from passengers, traders and trucks, who have used the road. Thus, the villages along the motor road had suffered from constant conscription of civilian porters, torturing, forced relocation and paying various types of tax to Burmese Army's battalions. A few numbers of villagers also fled into Mon villages under the control of NMSP in Three Pagoda Pass in March.

From May until June, the Burmese Army sent four military regiments, LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705, LIB No. 284 and LIB No. 415, under the command of LID No. 99 and operational Administrated Command No. 5, to operate military offensives against KNU along Zami river and many other parts of rural area of Kya Inn Seikyi Township. Therefore, the fighting between KNU and the Burmese Army regularly happened in the area.

For example, when LIB No. 703 operated the military operation from the top of Zami river to down part of it, it faced continuous attacks by KNU forces. On June 15, LIB No. 703 faced fighting with KNU forces near Apalon village and on June 20 and 22, it also had fighting with KNU forces nearly Lay-mile and Pone-khaw villages respectively. In these continuous fightings, some Burmese soldiers hurt and got some injuries. As revenge to KNU forces, the villagers in the area are suffered from various types of abuses by that battalion.

As an instance, after fighting with KNU forces on June 22, LIB No. 703 also shot one villager with suspicion of rebel-supporter. After the Burmese soldiers left from the battlefield, when they met one farmer near Maetabwee village, the soldiers shot to that man. The man received serious wounds and had to take treatment in a hospital in Thailand.

Sometimes, when the fighting happened in the village, the villagers were also killed. On June 18, when LIB No. 284 went into Tawae-pauk village, they accused the KNU troops were in the monastery and the soldiers shot into monastery. After several rounds of

shooting into monastery, one novice and two other villagers got serious wounds and died on the spot. Actually, KNU forces already left from monastery and KNU troops again shot to them from a place outside of monastery. However, the innocent villagers were killed because of mistakes.

Besides shooting and killing of innocent villagers, other inhumane type of abuse is torturing. Whenever a fighting happened near a village, the village headmen and suspected villagers were always tortured by soldiers, such as kicking, beating, pouring water on faces and noses, and other inhumane torturing, with suspicion they have been keeping the rebel soldiers and providing them with foods.

The other types of abuses are the constant conscription of forced labour and arrest of frontline civilian porters in all rural villages. For the villages, in where the Burmese Army takes base and nearby, the villagers are constantly forced to work in the military battalion bases, such as to construct the military barrack, to make fence for compounds and to do basic daily works, cooking, carrying waters and finding fire-woods. Sometimes, the villagers are also forced to work in army plantations and rice-farms. For example, LIB No. 284, which bases near Kya Inn Seikyi town always instructed the Tawae-pauk villagers to go and work in their military bases everyday, and the village headmen managed to send 5 villagers everyday to the military base. Later, when the serious arrest of porters happened, the men could not dare to stay on in villages. Then, the soldiers also ordered the headmen to send 5 women everyday instead of men to the military base.

As most parts of Kya Inn Seikyi township is in Black Area, the army also has opportunity to arrest every man whom they met in villages and in the work-places, to use those civilians to carry ammunitions and food supplies for the military battalions, which launched operations for many days. The arrested villagers are always taken by soldiers permanently, and if they could escape from the halfway, they freed from the army. But in the attempt to escape, it is quite difficult. Some porters were killed, when they attempted to escape. During the porter service, porters are fed with a few amount of food every day, and when they are weak and could not carry heavy loads of the army's ammunitions and supplies, they can be killed or left behind with sickness.

Whenever the government soldiers entered into a village, the looting of villagers' belongings and properties, was the common behaviour of the soldiers, as they thought all villages were supporting KNU forces. Sometimes, the soldiers confiscated all food supplies from villagers with objectives to stop these supplies to not flow to rebel soldiers, while some rice kept by villagers in their hilly farms were also burnt into ashes.

Because of various types of human rights abuses, the local villagers in many rural areas of Kya Inn Seikyi township could not tolerate these conditions longer and all villagers felt they are not safe in their home villages. Whenever one villager is killed or the headman or one villager is severely tortured by the soldiers the villagers feel more fear and the families of victims tried to move from their villages to another.

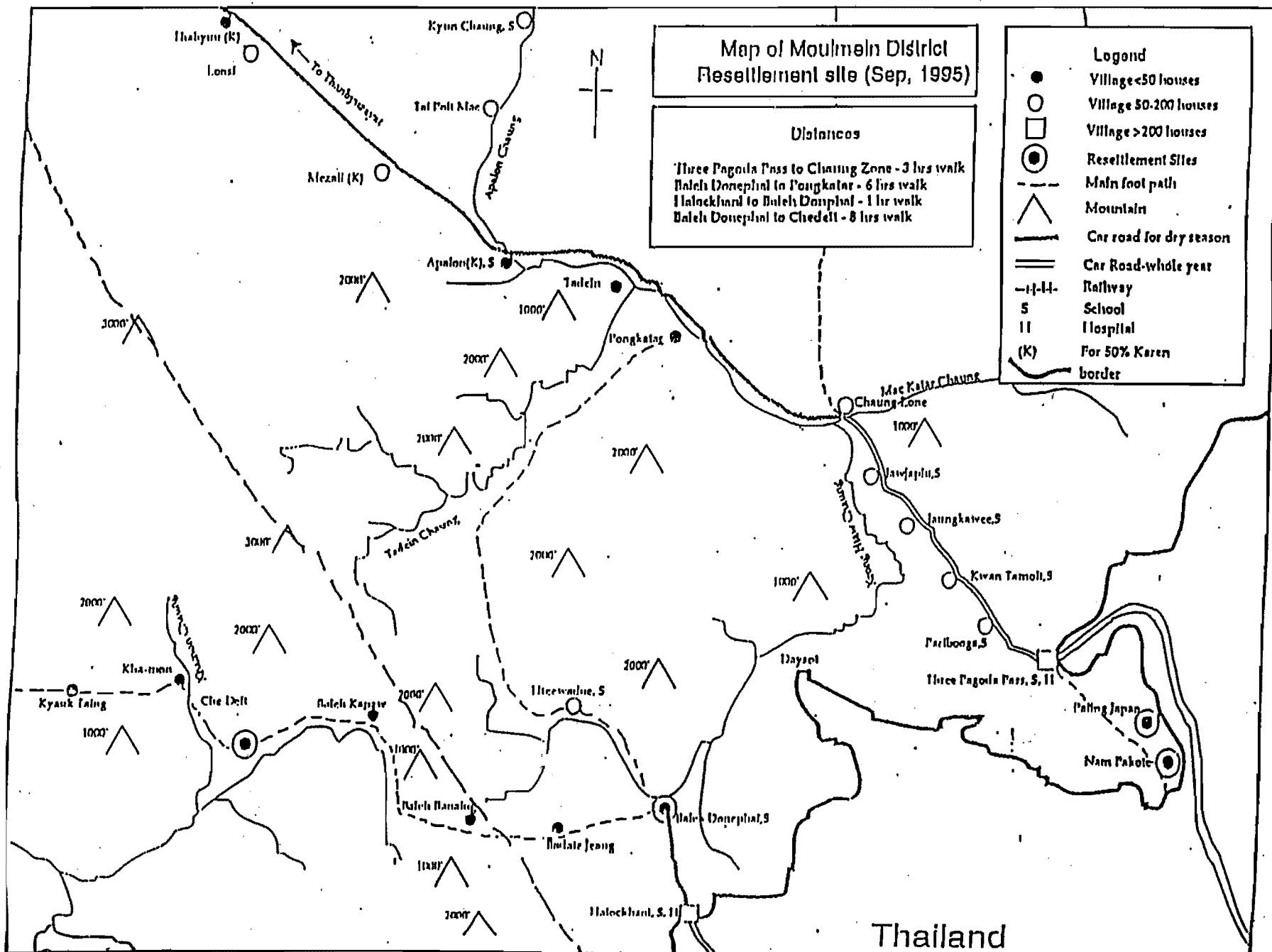
From May until the end of June, when Burmese Army escalated their military activities in many parts of Kya Inn Seikyi Township area, more and more villagers left from their villages. Among displaced villagers, many of them moved into SPDC control areas, where they felt they are not so safe but expected fewer abuses than in their native villages. Some families, whom their family members were severely abused by the government soldiers felt they are not safe in SPDC control areas and decided to move into NMSP control area or KNU's firm control area. While a few numbers of families could enter into Thailand based refugee camps. Since Thai government has a certain policy to not accept the new refugees in their territory, most escapees are displaced in Burmese territory after they escaped from their native villages.

THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE CAMPS
(June, 2000)

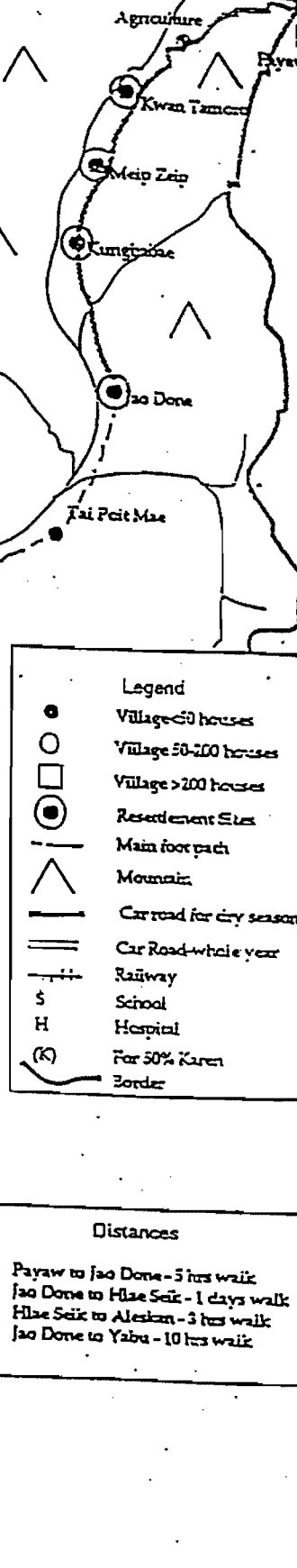
No.	Camp	Number of Family	Over 12 years		5-12 years		Under 5 years		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	611	1090	1209	344	382	193	204	3422
2	Tavoy	640	1125	1113	368	368	204	242	3420
3	Halockh _ji	1573	2354	2358	888	902	532	558	7592
	TOTAL	2824	4569	4680	1600	1652	929	1004	14434

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

No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Bean (Kg.)	Remark
1	COERR	120	360	240	1000	
2	BBC	-	-	-	-	
	TOTAL	120	360	240	1000	



Map of Tavoy District
Resettlement site (Nov. 1995)

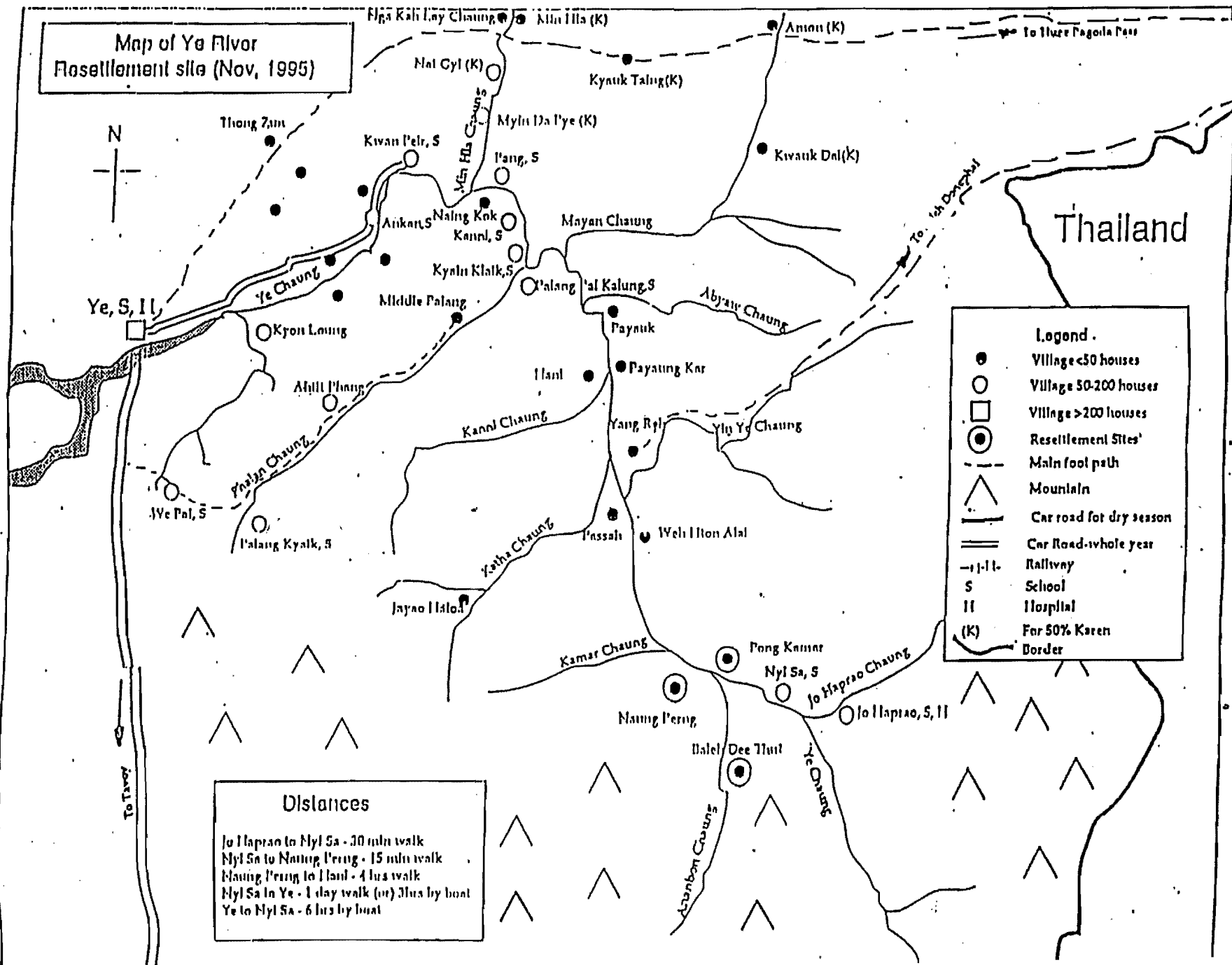


Distances

Payaw to Jao Done - 5 hrs walk
Jao Done to Hlae Seik - 1 days walk
Hlae Seik to Aleskan - 3 hrs walk
Jao Done to Yabu - 10 hrs walk

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Jao Done to Hlae Seik - 1 days walk
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Map of Ye River
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
- +1-1- Railway
- S School
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen
- Border

Distances

Jo Haprao to Nyl Sa - 30 min walk
 Nyl Sa to Nating Pring - 15 min walk
 Nating Pring 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