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ကို
ပရဟိတအကျိုးပြုလုပ်ဆောင်မှု**

MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

SEPTEMBER

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 (September, 2000)

Preparation for Needs Assessment Survey

Like every previous year, with objectives to know the needs of returned or internal refugees, MRDC always has conducted a needs assessment survey in three Mon refugees resettlement campsites. The needs assessment survey is conducted by using a set of questionnaires, consulting with camp leaders and other important people in camps. Before the end of September and at the beginning of October, MRDC has prepared for data collection and conducted survey during second and third weeks of October. Then it will send report to concerned organizations to consider for the humanitarian food assistance for these internal refugees at the beginning of November.

Since NMSP-SLORC ceasefire, the political situation has not been improved as expected. Although international and internal pressures have pushed SLORC/SPDC to hold the political talks with democratic oppositions led by NLD and Daw Aung Suu San Kyi, the regime still rejected the proposal. When NMSP entered for ceasefire, Mon leaders expected that the regime would hold for political talks within three years, but until now does not see any possible political dialogue. Furthermore, SPDC leverages political oppression against democratic oppositions, and launched more intensive military offensives against ethnic armed oppositions. These have resulted political turmoil, economic crisis and huge population displacement in both rural and urban areas of Burma.

Along with offensives, various types of human rights abuses and violations have been committed by soldiers from various regiments of the Burmese Army, tatmadaw, with accusation of rebel-supporters against rural ethnic minorities. On the other hand, under the name of border area development programme, some villagers who are not in conflict areas have been constantly forced to contribute labour in development projects, or have to pay fund for these projects unceasingly. In conflict areas, most civilians are arrested and used as frontline civilian porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies or sometimes used them as human-shields and mine-sweepers. The life in the porter service is the most terrible and inhumane among all abuses and violations.

The returned refugees received these information well and these human rights abuses and violations are the reasons that stopped them to decide and stay in the current resettlement campsites. They believe if they went back to their homes, they must be used by soldiers as forced labour or porters. On the other hand, since the Mon refugee repatriation is not officially recognized by the international community, there is no real plan for reintegration plan to be provided to these refugees.

Additionally, during they have been in the resettlement campsites, many hundreds of new arrivals fled from the persecution committed by the Burmese Army and government authorities also arrived to these sites. Thus, the populations have been gradually grown after more and more new arrivals added to these sites.

However, MRDC has encouraged both new and former refugees to create self-reliance programme or to seek lands for farming or find jobs for income and other many ways. Some former refugees could have access to agriculture and found lands to grow paddy. Normally, in these resettlement areas the refugees have used the "slash and burnt" method of paddy

growing and clear some mountain lands to grow paddy. As the sites are in the mountainous areas and over-crowded population in campsites, the lands are quite limited to be provided to all families in there. Therefore, the new arrivals and some refugees did not receive any land to access for agriculture. Only 25-30% of families in campsites could receive lands and the remaining refugees still rely with other works, which are always not permanent.

For refugees who have agriculture lands could grow paddy and produce crops that could only provide foods for their own families. Very few families have some extra paddy to sell it to other families. Accordingly our estimation, the total crop production could support only 35-40% needs of the total populations in campsite. On the other hand, since these campsites are in isolated areas and the families have lack of communication to outside communities and lack of work-opportunity to have regular income.

Therefore, although these refugees were repatriated for some years, their economic situation is not improved enough and most still have faced various difficulties. With objectives to encourage them to create self-reliance, the food assistance for them also have been reduced. In this case, with additional food supplies from relief committee, although farmers families could support themselves, other many remaining families could not support themselves. During the mid-rainy season when most of them have no jobs and no income, some of them still have to eat rice-soup. As they received 50% of foods, they have to manage to cover for the whole month.

During this needs assessment survey, we will collect population/demographic information, situation of agriculture and livelihoods, conditions of new arrivals and the perception of the whole refugee community, and political situation and security. The information on these issues also effects to refugee's attempts for creation of self-reliance. After studying from these information, we can draw conclusions what the real conditions of these refugees and what problems they have been encountered during nearly the whole year. Then, we will also give some recommendations for assistance for the coming year, 2001.

Among the information for these issues, the conditions of agriculture and livelihoods, and the security situation are quite important. Because of security reason, the refugees in the camp have limited work-opportunities and less income. Actually, the refugees in these campsites are likely blocked in their own camps and they are not safe if they go far outside of their campsites. The Burmese army and other rebel armies still operate military activities in areas surrounding of campsites and their movement to other areas is still restricted. These conditions also pushed them losing communications with outside areas and relationship for work and economic activities. According to our records, some refugees who had lands far from campsites also abandoned their lands in the previous years because of unsafe situation.

However, these refugee resettlement campsites have still remained as safe havens for former refugees and new arrivals who have escaped from their home areas to avoid various types of systematic persecutions committed by the Burmese Army and government authorities during the course of five-decade-long civil war. Additionally, the political situation also shows there is still no optimism for the political solutions and peace in Burma.

It should be noted that these Mon resettlement campsites are similar to the previous refugee camps in Thailand, except that they are on the other side of the border. Although the refugees now have limited access to agricultural lands, their situation is otherwise little to different to that before (except that the security situation is worse). At the same time, many refugees come and stay in these sites. The new arrivals arrived to these sites with expectation they could get safe shelter, food and health assistance from MRDC, NMSP and international organizations, because of they have been well-informed about these sites. On the other hand, the closure of the border camps by Thai authorities has also created

population growth in these sites. Certainly, the Mon and Karen refugees in these sites, have not returned to their original homes (in safety and dignity, or otherwise). The new arrivals are very afraid even to move not so far outside of the site, because of their experience in the native places. Therefore, these refugees still **do** need assistance while they are in these sites.

As our consideration, the cut of all relief supplies is impossible and also against the rights of the people to have access to foods and survival. From our study, the provision of foods with 50% of total needs for refugees should be minimum amount for them and should not reduce beyond that amount. Even with that amount of assistance, the refugees in these sites are already in hard conditions to get the remaining foods. After our survey, we will submit the assessment report to the concerned aid agencies to consider for provision of food assistance to these refugees.

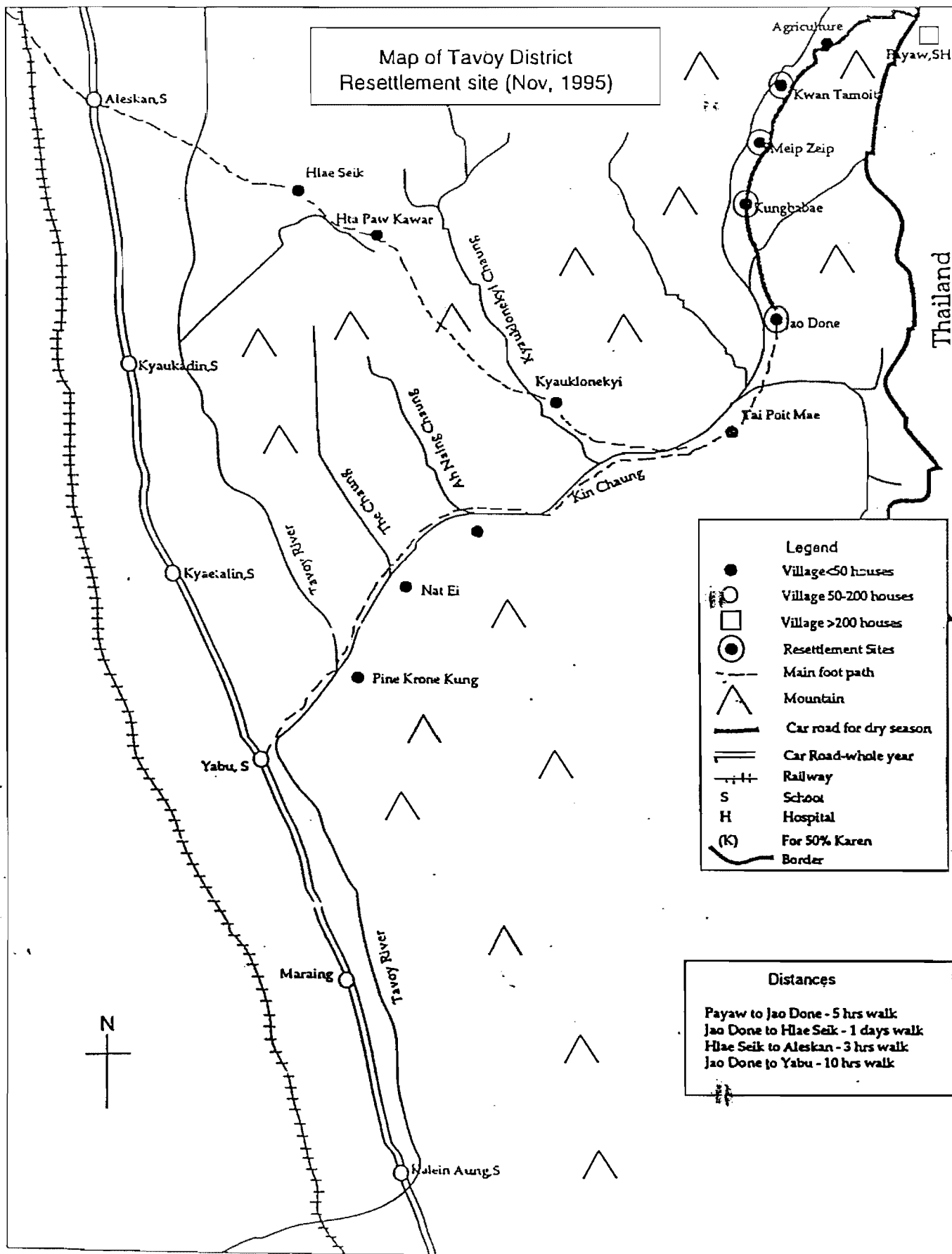
THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE CAMPS
(September, 2000)

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	Halockhani	1573	2354	2358	888	902	532	558	7592
	TOTAL	2824	4569	4680	1600	1652	929	1004	14434

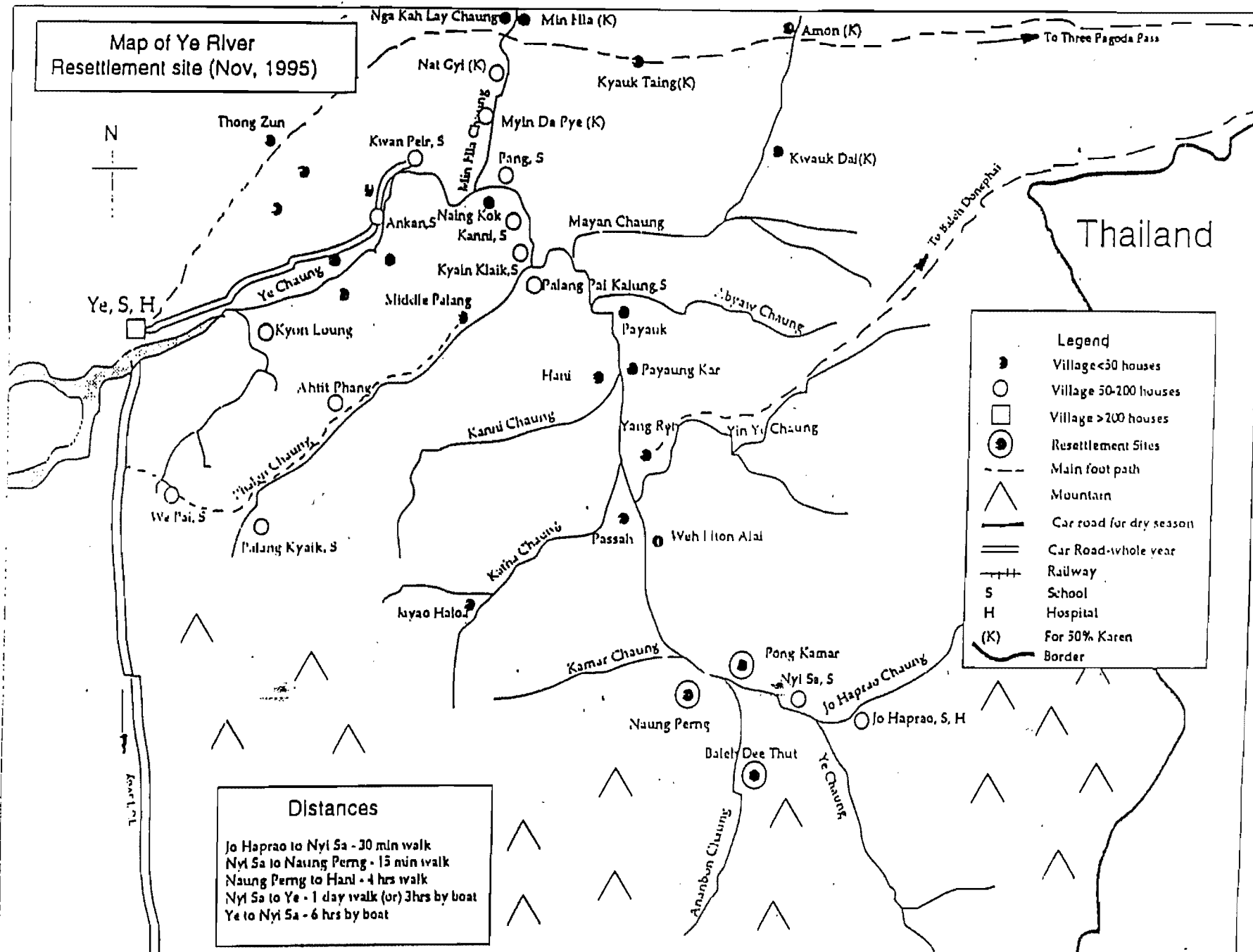
THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
(September, 2000)

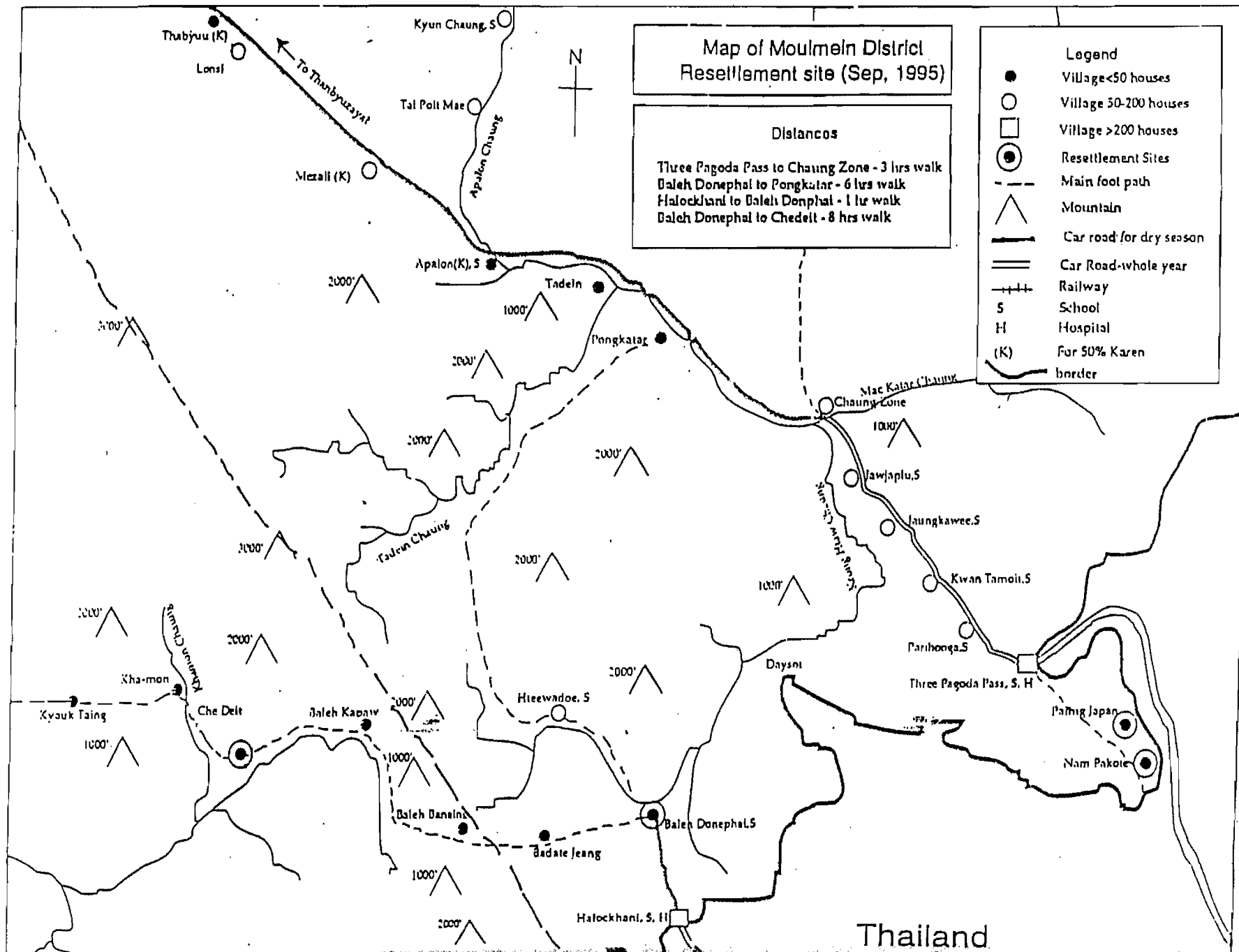
No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Bean (Kg.)	Remark
1	COERR	120	360	240	1000	
2	BBC	-	-	-	-	
	TOTAL	120	360	240	1000	

Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



Map of Ye River Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)





Map of Moulmein District
Resettlement site (Sep, 1995)

Distances
Three Pagoda Pass to Chaung Zone - 3 hrs walk
Baleh Donephal to Pongkatar - 6 hrs walk
Halockhant to Baleh Donephal - 1 hr walk
Baleh Donephal to Chedelt - 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
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen border
- border

Thailand