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MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**MONTHLY REPORT**

NOVEMBER

**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 Chann Ai</b>     | <b>- Vice-Chairman</b>     |
| <b>3. Nai Kasauh Mon</b>   | <b>- General Secretary</b> |
| <b>4. Nai Dung Htaw</b>    | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>5. Nai Aung Mon</b>     | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>6. Nai Glae</b>         | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>7. Nai Chit Nyunt</b>   | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>8. Nai Tay Jae</b>      | <b>- Member</b>            |
| <b>9. Phra Jon Dae</b>     | <b>- Member</b>            |

## Monthly Report of Mon Relief and Development Committee (November 2000)

### The Crop Production in Resettlement Areas

In our previous October report, we reported some information about agriculture situation of the Mon refugees and IDPs resettlement areas, which are situating in mountainous area of Thai-Burma border. At that time, as the crop harvest season did not reach, it was impossible to estimate the amounts of production of crops in the area, which has remained as main foods for the returned refugees and IDPs in each area.

Why we have to report about the crop production in these resettlement sites? The crop production in the resettlement areas is quite important for survival of the refugees. These resettlement areas of internal communities are economically isolated with outside communities and have relied on only the crops they produced and additional food assistance from international aid agencies. From calculating their amounts of crop production, we could estimate the amounts of foods they required and could make decisions the amounts of foods they still required.

In the previous 5-6 years after repatriation, the refugee farming families have created some high land farms by using "slash and burnt" method of paddy cultivation in the mountainous areas near their respective resettlement areas. Since the population is crowded in every resettlement area, all families could not get lands to grow paddy. Although MNRC/MRDC encouraged them to get enough land to plant paddy to get enough foods for the whole year, the geographical and security situation have not allowed them. Since most areas are in mountainous area, the refugees could not grow paddy in steep mountain slopes but selected only hilly areas to grow. And, they do not dare to go far from the resettlement areas to find lands, because the continuous fighting between the Burmese Army and other ethnic armed groups. This situation does not allow them to stay away from sites or to create farms far from the sites.

In comparing with the previous years, the number of farmers families have been gradually decreased in Halockhani resettlement areas. In previous situation, the refugee families moved far from the site and tried to get lands. Later, because of land disputes in Thai-Burma border, the refugees abandoned some lands, which were right on the border. After the fighting between KNU and the Burmese Army escalated, some farmers had to abandon their lands, which were close to conflict areas. That was why the farmer numbers have decreased in Halockhani area. But Bee Ree and Tavoy sites' have remained the same number of farming families.

In Year 2000, the conditions of farming are as below:

**Halockhani** – most distant farm from site – 4 hours walk. **Tins of seeds** planted (average) – **1.1 tins** (for all farmers). **Harvest** – **20 to 50 tins paddy/** tin of seed (8 to 20 tins of rice), expected. **Crop damage** – late rain, insect attacks, eaten by wild pigs, rats and other animals. **Total number of rice farms is 172 (11% of the total registered refugee families)**, while 11% of both Mon and Karen residents have paddy farms. 45% of farmers lost some parts of land, from 30% to 60% of the lands due earlier rain; and 25 farmers had to abandon their farms completely. Farms are mostly in Badeh Donephai, Htee Wah Doe, Badate Jeang, Day Sot and Jo Hapalu (close to Three Pagoda Pass) areas.

**Bee Ree** – most distant farm from site – 3 hours walk. **Tin of seed** planted (average) – 1 tin (for all farmers). **Harvest** – 30 to 60 tins/ tin of seed (12 to 25 tins of rice) expected. **Crop damage** – late rain, wild animals and insect attacks. **Total number of rice farms is 162 (26% of the total registered families)**. 15% of farmers lost some parts of their farms, from 20% to 40% of the lands due to earlier rain. Farms are almost along Ye river and beside streams above the Ye river.

**Tavoy** – Most distant farms from the site – 3 hours walk. **Tin of seed** planted (average) – **1 tins**. **Harvest** – **25 to 40 tins** (10 to 15 tins of rice, the land soil in this area is not so good like other area). **Crop damage** – late rain, wild animals and insect attacks. **Total number of rice farms is 114 (18% of the total registered families)**. 34% of farmers lost some parts of their farms, from 20% to 70% due to earlier rain. Farms are almost along Kin river area.

The crop production is reduced because of various reasons. Because of earlier rain, the farmers in all resettlement sites also lost some of their lands. Normally, in "slash and burnt" method of paddy growing process, the farmers need to clear all grasses, bushes and trees in the plantation first and this clearing process was done in February. And, the farmers needed to burn down all bushes, small trees and bushes into ashes in April after these were drought. However, this year, the rain came earlier than normal rainy season. In the normal rainy season, the rain would come in May, but in this year, the rain came earlier April and it made surprise to farmers and so they urgently burnt their watse in the plantation. However, these were wet and so they could not their farms wholly. **About 31% of farmers lost some average 45% of their lands.**

During rainy reason, after paddy plants were grown, the farmers needed to clear grasses in the bottom of their paddy plants. If not, these grasses could get taller than their crop plants and they could lost crops. After their farms are grown with plants for two years already, the grasses could grow quite fast and if the farmers are late or no ability to clear, they could lost their crops.

The rice harvest is from the last week of October through the first week of December, depending on the local conditions and seed types. Most farmers planned to grow with many seeds of paddy, but after they could not burn all of their farmlands, they have no choice to complete growing paddy only in some parts which they could finish burning. Before the paddy grains were produced, one type of insects (called in Mon "soil insect") attacked the paddy plants and died because of this insect attack. In farms close to Halockhani area, rats attacked and cut a lot of their paddy plants, while wild pigs attacked and eat a lots of paddy in farms near Bee Ree and Tavoy resettlement sites. Because of late rain in October and November, the paddy grains are destroyed by rainwater and dropped onto grounds.

Therefore, according to our estimation, the crops in these areas could provide only two months foods for the whole refugee population. If the political situation is not stable and human rights situation is worst, more IDPs will come to these areas in Year 2001 and they could face food-shortage problems, if there is no outside assistance.

## **Population Displacement in Kya Inn Seikyi Township Area**

In Kya Inn Seikyi Township, NMSP controls only some part of territory, which is in area between Zami and Win-yaw river. Except this NMSP control area, both SPDC and KNU have operated their military activities in other parts of township to get more control in there and it means most parts of this township area are considered as conflict zones. Under the military definition, Kya Inn Seikyi Township is in "Black Area" or "Free Fire Zone" and so the Burmese Army's various military battalions has committed many types of human rights abuses against the local villagers without caring the existing laws. Normally, the villagers from about 50 Mon and Karen villages, except some villages under the administration of NMSP, have been treated badly by Burmese Army, because the villagers are accused as rebel-supporters and those villages are suspected as rebel bases.

Since the beginning of 2000, the Burmese Army has launched military offensives with objectives to clear all KNU activities. From January until June, Burmese Army, LID No. 44, LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705 and LIB No. 708 have launched dry season military offensives against KNU along Zami river, in eastern part of that river, and along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyzayat motor road.

Continuously, when the rainy season started in June, the Burmese Army has not stopped its military activities and still operated launching offensives against KNU. Since July,

the battalions, such as LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705 and LIB No. 284 have launched the offensives against KNU. Along with military offensives, those battalions always conducted "four cuts campaign" against the local villagers to halt their supports to KNU/KNLA. However, this affected the villagers to stay in their so unstable villages and unsafe to work in their own farms.

Whenever the military battalions arrived into the villages, they always arrested the villagers and used them as porters. In villages, the soldiers took all villagers' food supplies and let the village porters carry them again. In the porter service, the soldiers used the villagers for several days to carry their ammunitions and food supplies to be enough to use during their offensives. If the soldiers could not get the required porters, the headmen must have to pay for porter fees or must be beaten for not taking care the villagers' fleeing outside of the villages. Sometimes, the soldiers took not only villagers, they also forced the village headmen to give them oxen-carts or boats to use in their transportation.

As an instance, on October 26, about one column of troops from LIB No. 705 went into Badar-gyi village and arrested all men they met in the village and used them as civilian porters to carry their ammunitions and food supplies. The commander also asked the village headmen to also provide them with (20) oxen-carts and (5) boats to carry their confiscated rice from different villages to their military outpost based near Danone, on Zami riverbank.

Additionally, the Burmese Army's military battalions in the township area also made restriction against the local villagers such as to not sleep in their rice-farms at night and to not keep their foods in their farms. And, if they met someone without permission by village headmen, he could be accused as rebel soldier and could be killed. During rainy season, the farmers had lots of work to do, they could not follow according to orders and so some villagers were also killed by soldiers.

As an instance, on October 10 evening after sun fell, when the troops from LIB No. 284 passed in the rice-fields close to Badar-gyi village, the soldiers met a light in a hut and shot into it. Three farmers were in farm-hut, and two of them were hit by bullets. One village could hide on the ground. After shooting, the soldiers left. Because of serious injuries, one village died on the spot, while another one got serious injuries but not died. The remaining unwound villager went back to village and asked help from the villagers. Then a group of villagers came out and take a dead man and a wounded man to village.

Such killings, with suspicion of rebels or rebel-supporters have regularly happened in this area, it created to be frightened among the villagers to stay in their farms or other work-places.

Sometimes, the villagers had to flee from their homes because the Burmese Army's regular battalions, such as Tactical Column No. 9, IB No. 32, LIB No. 284 and LIB No. 708, have constantly forced the local villagers to contribute free labour in the battalions owned rice-farms, rubber plantations and building of military barracks. These military battalions ordered about 20 villages under their loose control and have used at least 100 villagers a day to do many things of their works in rice-farms, rubber plantation and military barrack. At the same time, the villagers also were also used as civilian porters for the same battalions again. Some villagers also fled from their villages to escape from the conscription of forced labour. Among them, many villagers from Kyauk-pone also fled to western side of Zami river and took refuge in NMSP control area.

Besides Badar-gyi and Kyauk-pone, other two villages in eastern part of Zami river, Taroad-maw and Thar-yar-gone were destroyed by the Burmese Army, after the soldiers arrested the villagers as porters, took their foods, asked fund and arrest of some villagers with suspicion of rebel-supporters.

These villages are not close to Zami river and about 5-7 kilometers far from the riverbank, and so, the Burmese soldiers from LIB No. 284 and LIB No. 703 regularly went into these and tried to check the KNU activities. Since these villages are suspected as rebel villages and the villagers have been suffered more if compared to other.

Since July, the Burmese Army's two battalions have launched offensives in eastern part of Zami river and always went into these villages. When they arrived into villages, the soldiers took all foods in villages, because they accused that the villagers would give these foods to rebels. Or, sometimes, they asked fund to pay with 1000-2000 Kyat per household as porter fees when they could not get the required number of porters as they needed. And, as the soldiers accused the villagers were supporters to KNU, they arrested all men and interrogated to tell about the activities of KNU or to admit that they were supporting KNU. During the interrogation, the soldiers also tortured the villagers. In third week of September, the troops from LIB No. 284 suddenly went into Taroad-maw village and arrested the village headmen and then they tried to arrest another villagers. The village headman was brought by soldiers from nearly one month and additionally, the soldiers regularly came into this village and tried to arrest another villagers. The villagers from Taroad-maw had no choice but to flee from the village to escape mistreatment committed by Burmese soldiers.

Another village, Thar-yar-gone was similarly suffered from the constant mistreatments by the Burmese soldiers and at the end, the villagers have no choice but to flee from their village. Soldiers also killed some villagers after they were accused as rebel-supporters or rebels. The soldiers confiscated the villagers' foods and other belongings at village and put village to be starved. Because of this conditions, most families in these two villages, have faced food-shortage problems very often since July and most of them decided to leave their homes in September and October.

Similarly many other villagers from eastern part of river, such as, Pawthawmu, Kyauk-sein, Kyein-chaung, See-sane and Sinboke-inn villages also suffered from the same persecution of the Burmese and some of them also arrived to NMSP control area to take safe haven.

**THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE CAMPS**  
(November, 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	625	1139	1240	390	396	156	163	3484
2	Tavoy	639	1069	1073	427	414	203	192	3378
3	Halockhani	1521	2388	2384	986	944	477	491	7670
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2785</b>	<b>4596</b>	<b>4697</b>	<b>1803</b>	<b>1754</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>14532</b>

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

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



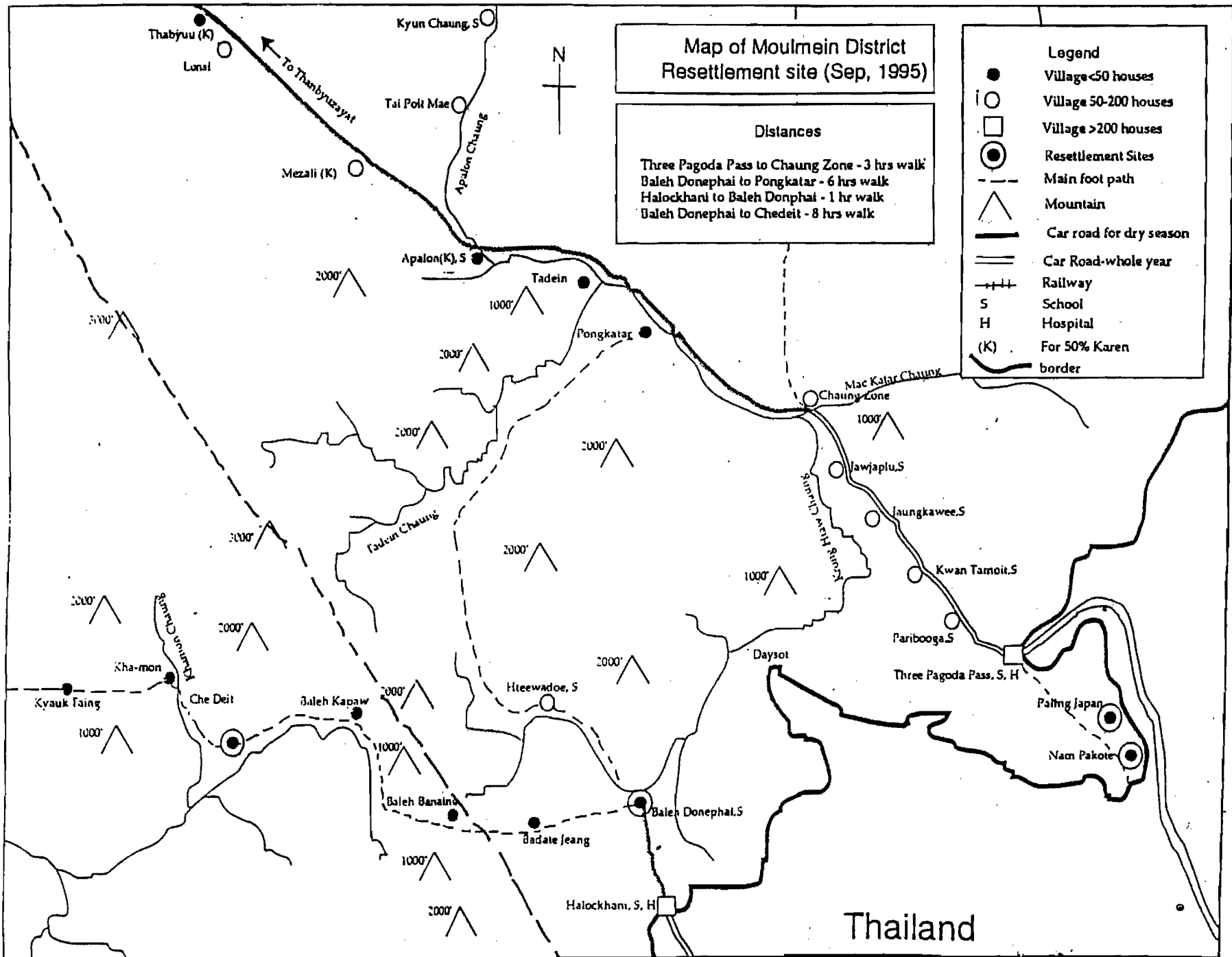
# Map of Moulmein District Resettlement site (Sep, 1995)

## Distances

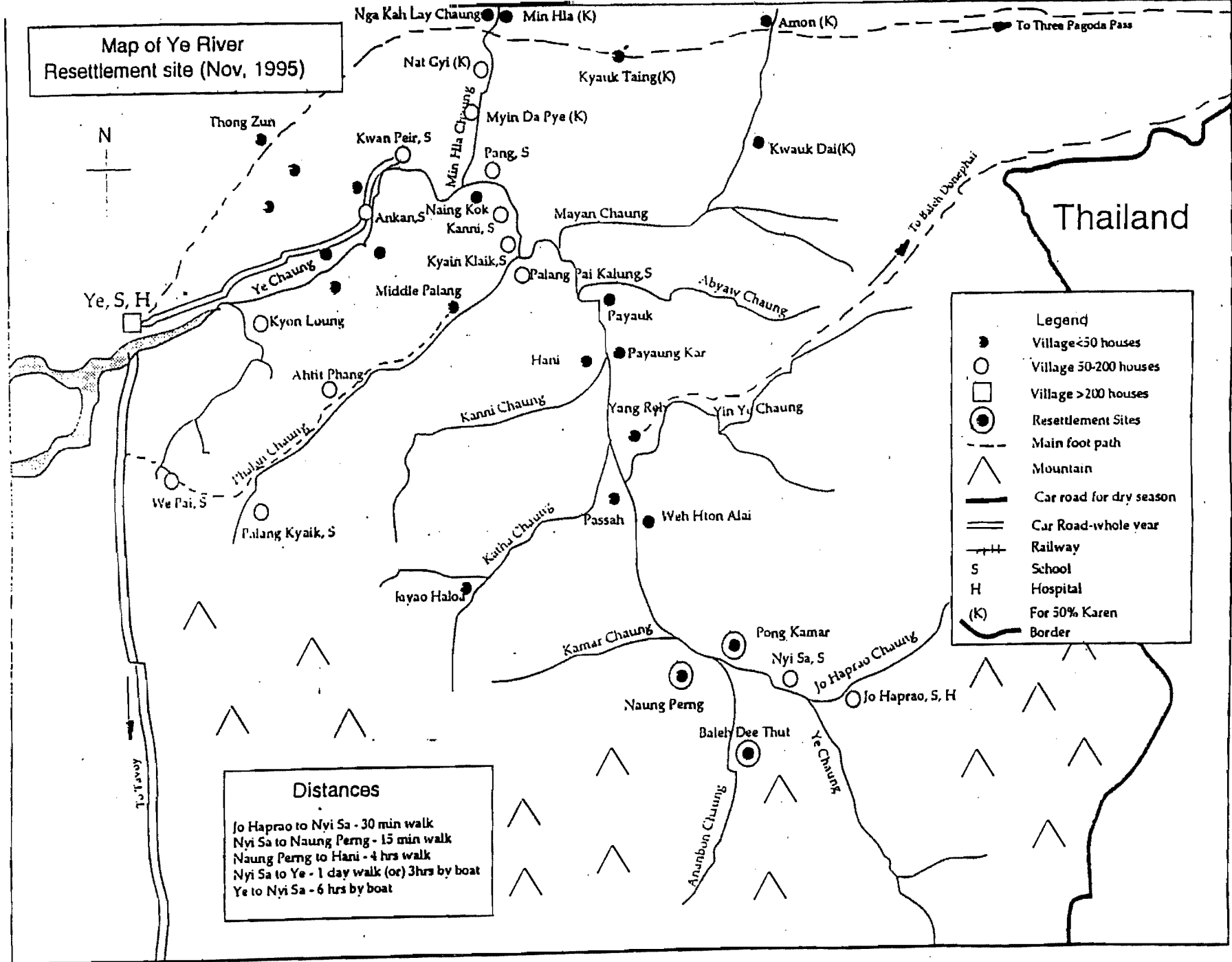
Three Pagoda Pass to Chaung Zone - 3 hrs walk  
 Baleh Donephai to Pongkatar - 6 hrs walk  
 Halockhani to Baleh Donphat - 1 hr walk  
 Baleh Donephai to Chedeit - 8 hrs walk

## 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



Map of Ye River  
Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



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

