



KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL, 2005

Karen Refugee Committee

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In the Buddhist Calendar, April is the month when the old year gives way to the New Year. In Burma it is the Time of **Thin Gyan**. The occasion is celebrated by the Water Festival, where people throw water on each other to show friendship and good-will. It's bidding farewell to the old year and welcoming in the New Year. There are merits making to usher in good fortune. There are merry making. Young boys are made to become novices. Old People are venerated by being fed, washed, bathed and cared for. Many people take time to meditate and make amends to cleanse themselves of past misdeeds. For the Refugee Camps Buddhist community, it's **Thin Gyan** with limited merry making. Many families find it beyond their means to make merit. Many will be thinking how many more **Thin Gyans** they will have to go through as Refugees in camps, in a place away from Home. Many young people born on the run, born in Refugee Camp's will not know where home is. Most disheartening would be the fact that there is yet no change for the better, back home in Burma.

Then, looking around the world, there are still very little for people to be encouraged, to be optimistic. Drought and pestilence is affecting many parts of the world, making people suffer. Resources are dwindling, making living more expensive and difficult, aggravated by the harrowing ill-will, greed and corruptions. Not much less disheartening is the on-going conflicts between men. Not a day passed by where there was no fighting, no killing, no maiming. Killing for the sake of killing has been going on unabated and which have been going out of control. Even people are being used as killing machines in the form of Suicide Bombers and which is against any form of morality. It is random, wanton killing, which may even kill relatives or loved ones. It has become a trend already, which in all likelihood will continue.

In this **Thin Gyan** there is very little for people of Burma to be optimistic. The country and people have been under the severe repressive Rule of the Military for decades. In all likelihood, this will continue into the unforeseeable future as the Junta, however disliked by many, still have supporting friends but then who can have only interests of their own. The dissenting groups, the oppositions, the Ethnic, all are in no position to put up a stiff challenge. What can never be argued is that Power issues forth from the Barrel of the Gun to which the Tatmadaw Junta unswervingly adhered to.

Now there were ripples inside as well as outside of Burma when one Shan Resistance Group announced the formation of a Free Shan State Government. It was nothing out of the ordinary as all Ethnic will have the same feeling of subjugation, of being phased out, marginalized, repressed, and marked for elimination. Attempts for recognition, involvement, participation have fallen on deaf ears. Efforts for Reconciliation have gone nowhere.

This month is the 19th Anniversary of the Chernobyl Nuclear Tragedy. People came to know of the great danger of Nuclear Power even when applied for Peaceful means. Nuclear Power for warfare can be more destructive, more dangerous. Now these dangerous weapons are possessed by many countries and still many more are attempting at Nuclear Capability. Then some countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Iran may strive for Nuclear Capability citing Self-Protection, which will make the world a surely dangerous place to live in.

Near the end of this month there was news of fighting between SPDC and Karenni Troops. There was also fighting between UWSA (Wa) and Shan State Army Troops which would only be Ethnic made to fight other Ethnic, the Master Plan applied throughout by the Military Junta. There was accusation that the SPDC Troops used Chemical weapons on the Karennis and which was substantiated by some independent observers. Which goes to show that the decades long conflicts will still be intensified and on-going for a long time to come. And, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Her NLD colleagues, together with U Khum Htun Oo and his Shan Colleagues will be in for a long New Year Sleep, reminiscent of Rip van Winkle. The former Tatmadaw Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and his followers will also be in for the same kind of a long sleep, but for quite different reasons. That's Life. State Affairs make strange **"Bedfellows"**.

K.R.C - Camps- Activities

April – 2005

◆ 4.4.05 - 5.4.05 – There was a meeting at K.R.C office, where KRC, Camps Committee Representatives from Umphiem and Mae La Camp, and TBBC Coordinators participated. The meeting was for the purpose of getting the camps Feeding Population as near as possible to the accurate figure.

◆ 6.4.05 – There was a meeting at Wattana Village, where K.R.C, Educational NGOs and Camp's responsible persons attended. The purpose was implementation of the Thai Language Teaching programme in Refugees Camps which was being advocated by the local Authorities. It was agreed that teaching of Thai Language will benefit both the Camps and Local Population.

Decision –

(1) All person (Refugees in Camps) Between 16- 60 years of age to participate in Thai Language Teaching.

(2) Teaching Class for one Term – 50 students to be accepted

(3) Duration of Term – 5 months duration

(4) In one Term of 5 months, at least (500) Thai Words to be taught and learned – To be able to write, to read and to understand. There will also be need for students to learn about Thailand and the People's way of Living and Culture.

(5) Student Entrance Fee – to be Bt. 500 for one Term

(6) Students who have passed the examination will be given certificates

(7) Thai subject will then be upgraded and taught up to the Middle School Level.

◆ 7.4.05 – PPAT (Parenthood Preparation Association of Thailand) called a meeting in Mae La camp where KRC, the Camp Committee and the Medical NGOs attended. Discussed were the planned extension of PPAT service work activities in Mae La Oo and Mae Ra Ma Luang Camps, where the focus will be on :

1. Participation of young men and women in PPAT service works in Camps.
2. Heads of families to participate in PPAT service works.
3. Camps Community will be involve in PPAT service works.

◆ 12.4.05 – Mae La Camp, led by the Camp Commander, the Camp Committee and the K.W.O, there was veneration of Elders during Thin Gyan where over 1500 Elderly People were Venerated and Gifts presented. The Veneration Activities were helped supported by the Project to support Refugees from Burma and facilitated by Mrs. Sally Steen.

◆ 22.4.05 – There was a meeting in Umphiem Camp where KRC, UNHCR and the Camp Committee participated. Discussed were improvements of coordination by all parties concerned in addressing problems within the camp.

◆ 25.4.05 – There was a meeting between KRC and UNHCR at KRC Mae Sot office. Discussed were awareness needed with regard to the presence of P.O.C (Persons of Concerns) in camps and to foresee and address any problems that may arise and which may lead to destabilization in Camps (Information received was that P.O.Cs may demand support money from UNHCR and they may involve camps people in making such demands.)

◆ Mae La Oo Camp – Registration by UNHCR of Camp's population in Mae La Oo, beginning 18-4-05. Expectation Mae La Oo Registration to finish in 1st week of May. Then to continue with Registration in Mae Ra Ma Luang Camp.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS APRIL, 2005.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No. of families	Over - 12 Yrs		6 - 12 Yrs		Under 5 Yrs		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La	5183	11312	11004	3526	3333	1917	1768	32860
	Um Pheim Mai	3346	6202	5915	2116	2040	1242	1119	18634
	Total	8529	17514	16919	5642	5373	3159	2887	51494
NORTH	Mae Ra Moe	2098	4584	4146	1396	1243	998	975	13342
	Mae La Oo	2652	5468	4707	1711	1580	916	756	15138
	Total	4750	10052	8853	3107	2823	1914	1731	28480
SOUTH	Noh Poe	2332	3988	4011	1269	1159	857	891	12175
	Ban Dong Yang	850	1316	1467	476	442	213	195	4109
	Htam Him	1583	2435	2657	1009	1011	598	639	8349
	Total	4765	7739	8135	2754	2612	1668	1725	24633
Grand Total		18044	35305	33907	11503	10808	6741	6343	104607

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.

FROM	CAMP	Rice 100 kg Sack	Salt Kilos	F-paste 15 -Kg Tins	Yellow Bean 60 Kilo	Chilies Kilos	Cooking Oil 200 ltr	Charcoal 20 Kg Sacks	ASIA MIX	Fire- wood m3
B.B.C	Umphiem Mai	5617	6174	930	293	2339	88	7401	1047	
	Mae La	13429	14663	2230	699	5565	209	17562	2494	
	Noe Poe	3754	28875	1250	392	6250	59	4938		

We shall always be grateful to the Thai people and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

BBC- Support in Food and Shelter Material. BBC is also supporting with warm clothing for all the camps.

MSF- Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI- " " " " "

ARC- " " " " "

MHD- " " " " "

ZOA (ABWaid) - Support in Educational facilities Teachers' Training.

Consortium - Support in Educational facilities, Teachers' Training and Education for Deaf/Mute/Blinds.

TOPS- Support in Educational facilities.

ICS- Asia- Support in Educational facilities and school buildings.

COERR- Rice and Educational support. EVI- to be involved with Extremely Vulnerable people.

H.I- Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year-end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA- (Norway Church Aid) has been providing KRC with administrative & organizational Support.

It has also supported with remuneration for KRC members and workers.

UNHCR- For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.

SMRU- Support with Malaria Control, Prevention and Treatment.

SVA- to support with Libraries in the camps.

PPAT- Parenthood Planning Association Thailand - Supporting with Family Planning and Preventive/ Education in Refugee Camps.

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