

CAPTIONS :

BURMESE IMMIGRANTS in THAILAND

Photographs by **John HULME**

2004-2007



Photo 01 -

The Nasawat Apparel factory in Mae Sot in the Tak province has a reputation for slave-like working conditions. During December 2001, after the workforce had not been paid for three months, workers tried to organize a strike. The employer called the police and five of the workers leaders were beaten and deported back to Burma. The remaining 360 workers were forcefully evicted from a temple where they had taken refuge, here they are being taken to Thai immigration holding pens before deportation. January 2004



Photo 02 -

An arrested strike organiser. January 2004



Photo 03 -

Illegal Burmese migrant's look out across the Moei river waiting to cross back into Burma, as soon as military intelligence officers on the opposite bank move out of sight. They have spent the day working in Mae Sot. Migrant workers are subject to routine and systematic extortion by officials on both sides of the border. March 2004



Photo 04 -

Thai/Burma crossing point. A migrant worker returns her day pass to a security guard on her way back across the "friendship bridge" linking Mae Sot with Myawaddy on the Burmese side. A day pass costs 20 Bhat (30 pence) and enables the holder to work in one of the 235 mainly garment factories for 60/80 Bhat a day. March 2004



Photo 05 -

On the friendship bridge on her way home to Myawaddy a day worker exchanges her Thai Bhat wages into Burmese Kyat. March 2004



Photo 06 -

One group of migrants comprising fifteen families have made temporary homes on top of Mae Sot's refuse tip, preferring to make a living amongst the stench recycling paper, plastic and any food they can salvage than working for a factory owner. February 2007



Photo 07 -

Late afternoon bicycles laden they set off for the wholesalers.



Photo 08 -

Street children collect a few Bhat from the garbage recycling depot having spent the day wandering the streets collecting paper and plastic bottles from waste bins. January 2002



Photo 09 -

After a long night butchering two bull's this migrant worker is finishing by scraping residues of meat from the bones. January 2002



Photo 10 -

Loading "duty free" cement to a boat headed for Myawaddy moored on a creek off the Moie river which borders Burma. January 2005



Photo 11 -
Young Burmese sex workers outside a brothel in Mae Sot. February 2004



Photo 12 -
A customer arrives and engages in conversation with three young workers. February 2004



Photo 13 -
Portrait of a young Burmese sex worker. February 2004



Photo 14 -
15 Year old Mabyu travelled from her home in Mon State to the Thai border town of Mae Sot. The three day journey cost 30,00 Kyat's (£15) for bribes to clear check points along the route. She now works a ten or twelve hour day in a garment factory for 50 Bhat (80 pence) a day excluding deductions for water and accomodation (she sleeps under her machine), and also her monthly repayments for a work permit which the factory owner paid for and keeps. While migrant workers must pay 3,800 baht for registration, this does not protect them from police extortion because the cards are confiscated by their employers. March 2003



Photo 15 -
The 2004 Tsunami claimed the lives of an estimated 2,000 Burmese migrant's along the coast of Khao Lak in southern Thailand. Here forensic scientists document as yet unidentified corpses. January 2004



Photo 16 -

New arrival at Mae Tao Clinic established in 1989 to meet the health needs of Burmese migrants, there were 1,798 births recorded during 2006 in one of the breeze block buildings that make up the compound. February 2003



Photo 17 -

A young boy suffering from malaria in the trauma unit. His mother stays with him sleeping under the bed nursing him for three or four days until he recovers. February 2003



Photo 18 -

A new born baby with a heart condition awaiting funding to be sent for treatment at a specialist Thai hospital in Chiang Mai.



Photo 19 -

Two children with heart problems at a safe house in Chiang Mai awaiting treatment, funding for their operations has been found but they will have to wait for further test results. February 2007



Photo 20 -

Naw Dah died on the "line bus" in which she was traveling to work in Mae Sot, her husband takes a last look. February 2007