



Christian Freedom[®] International

➤ CFI's refugee Bible school students from Burma silk-screen t-shirt designs in support of Persecuted refugees in Iraq.



HELP REFUGEES FLEEING SEVERE PERSECUTION...

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3

EMPOWERING REFUGEES TO THRIVE IN SPITE OF PERSECUTION & POVERTY...



➤ Thousands of Pakistani Christians have fled severe persecution in their home country to apply for refugee status in Bangkok, Thailand in hopes of being able to be resettled to a free country.

But what happens upon arrival is a different story entirely. While they await their asylum hearings, which are generally scheduled years in advance, they can't work, and most live in the shadows of Bangkok slums with expired visas and passports.

➤ CFI is already helping empower persecuted refugees from Burma at our Huai Kalok Bible Institute by teaching the students the textile trade of silk-screening, so that they can earn an income while they attend Bible School.



“CHRISTIAN FREEDOM
INTERNATIONAL TRIES TO EMPOWER
PERSECUTED BELIEVERS WITH A HAND UP,
NOT A HAND OUT. THIS IS ALWAYS OUR
GOAL WHEREVER WE WORK.



➤ Now, CFI is changing the narrative for Pakistani refugees living in Bangkok slums by offering them a means to provide for their families and a sense of accomplishment while they await their asylum hearings.



➤ The Pakistani refugees are now crafting each t-shirt that is then silk-screened by the Huai Kalok Bible Institute students.



➤ “Both the Christians from Pakistan and Burma are extremely happy with their work and feel a sense of accomplishment. They earn a fair wage for every shirt they make and silk screen.”

T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT:
➤ STORE.CHRISTIANFREEDOM.ORG

ACROSS THE BORDER

A Field Report (cont.)

HELP



KEEP OTHERS INFORMED ABOUT the PERSECUTED CHURCH

PLEASE

PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ALONG WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED READING IT.

"...SUCH A SHARP CONTRAST OF OPPOSITES."

The stunning mountains that border the village offset the hellish heat of the sun; the scarcity of food and the endless hospitality; the tragic stories of loss somehow not affecting genuine smiles and joyful spirits in all the villagers I encounter.

We were directed to the pastor's home in the middle of the village, and brought our things inside. His home was made of wood with a tin roof that did its best to reflect the intensity of the sun. There were two large common rooms and three tiny bedrooms, with a porch out back that held large stalks of ripening bananas, a makeshift stove, and a

large basin of water for dish washing. There were half-inch spaces between the floorboards and walls to promote air circulation within the hut. Although this meant anything outdoors could come indoors, I was quickly grateful for any moving air as the afternoon heat grew to be stifling.

His home is open to any villager, any child, and any visitor; no one is ever turned away at the door. His wife is a very small woman, with long black hair laced with grey, is usually pulled up in a low bun. She smiled at me often, and she was missing her two front teeth that had rotted away and blackened. She walked with an air of humility and servitude, and was

always bringing glasses full of drinks, some chou-chou (an Asian version of Jell-O) and other snack items for anyone who decided to drop by. The hospitality I encountered in this home knew no end.

My room while I was in Burma was the size of the walk-in closet in my last apartment. There was a thatched mat on the ground with a pillow for me to sleep on and a hammock was slung in the corner, where I spent most of my afternoons. I awoke in the middle of my first night curled in a ball and shivering. Was I cold? I put on my warmest clothes in layers and took the blanket I had put underneath me on top of me for cover.



It turns out that despite the sweltering heat of the day, Burma got cold enough to be chilly at night. This chill lasted through the morning until around nine, when the temperature leveled temporarily before making its deadly climb again.

The village of Kwee Ler Shut provides rice and a house for the pastor in exchange for the work he does as the village preacher. He seems to be a pillar in the village as a pastor; the Karen Nation has a long-standing Christian history. Most of the villagers are rice farmers and although they are incredibly poor, they're proud to be free men who are working and providing for themselves and their families.

Every night men and young boys would come and gather at the pastor's

home. His home was one of few in the village that was lucky enough to have a light bulb. These bulbs are powered either using a battery fueled by running a tractor during the day or by solar panels that were gifted by past visiting missionaries. That single bulb in the pastor's home, which was hung strategically between the kitchen and the common room, cast a faint glow into both rooms for a few hours before we were all engulfed in the blackness of night. At that point, a candle would be the only source of light that was available until sunrise.

I noticed very quickly how unimportant meals were in this country. Food was something that fueled your body and nothing more. Most people only ate two meals a day, if that. Once was around half-past seven or eight in the morning, which would be "breakfast".

The other was at around half-past four, which would be "dinner". All meals followed a similar pattern and were served "family-style", in traditional Asian manner.

There was a table close to the ground and diners would squat, sit, or perch on a small wooden stool. All of these options got to be quite the balancing act by the end of the meal. Rice was always a staple and everyone was given his or her own helping. In the center of the table were several dishes, which could vary from a broth with noodles, to fried eggs, to cooked wild greens, and if lucky, some tinned fish or chicken. Leftovers from the previous meal, which were carefully kept under a basket away from flies, were also placed on the table for eating.

(To be continued, submitted by CFI Intern A. Bovitz)

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Christian Freedom[®] International



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