

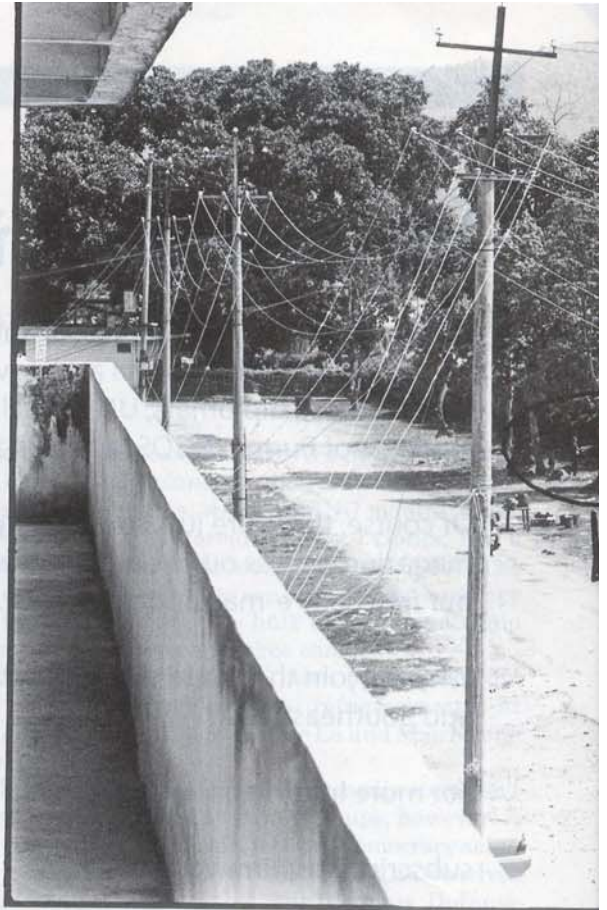
PHOTO ESSAY

Two Chinese policemen sit under a parasol at the Burma-China border crossing of Kyang Phon. Less than 100 meters away, drug traffickers slip with their contraband through the hedge that marks the frontier between China's Yunnan province and Burma's Kachin State.

The Chinese authorities make haphazard attempts to stop the trade, but they'd need far more than a few token policemen and a garden fence for their efforts to be at all effective. Official corruption is rife, profits from the illegal narcotics trade are high and motivation among Chinese and Burmese lawmakers is low.

Narcotics and prostitutes are the two chief commodities in this Wild West frontier region of western China and northeastern Burma. Addicts shoot heroin openly on backstreet sidewalks of the Chinese border town Ruili, where an estimated 100 or so Burmese women work illegally as prostitutes on the city's brothel-lined Jiegong Road. About the same number of Burmese prostitutes ply their trade in the nearby town of Jiegong, which directly borders Muse in Burma's Shan State. The two towns together have around 100 brothels, some of them no more than backstreet hovels.

The sex trade customers are mostly traders, truck drivers and drug traffickers from western China and the Burmese cities of Mandalay, Lashio and Myitkyina. Apart from their loads of legal and illegal goods, the truckers are transporting a lethal freight—the HIV virus. The AIDS death rate here is high, particularly among the prostitute population.

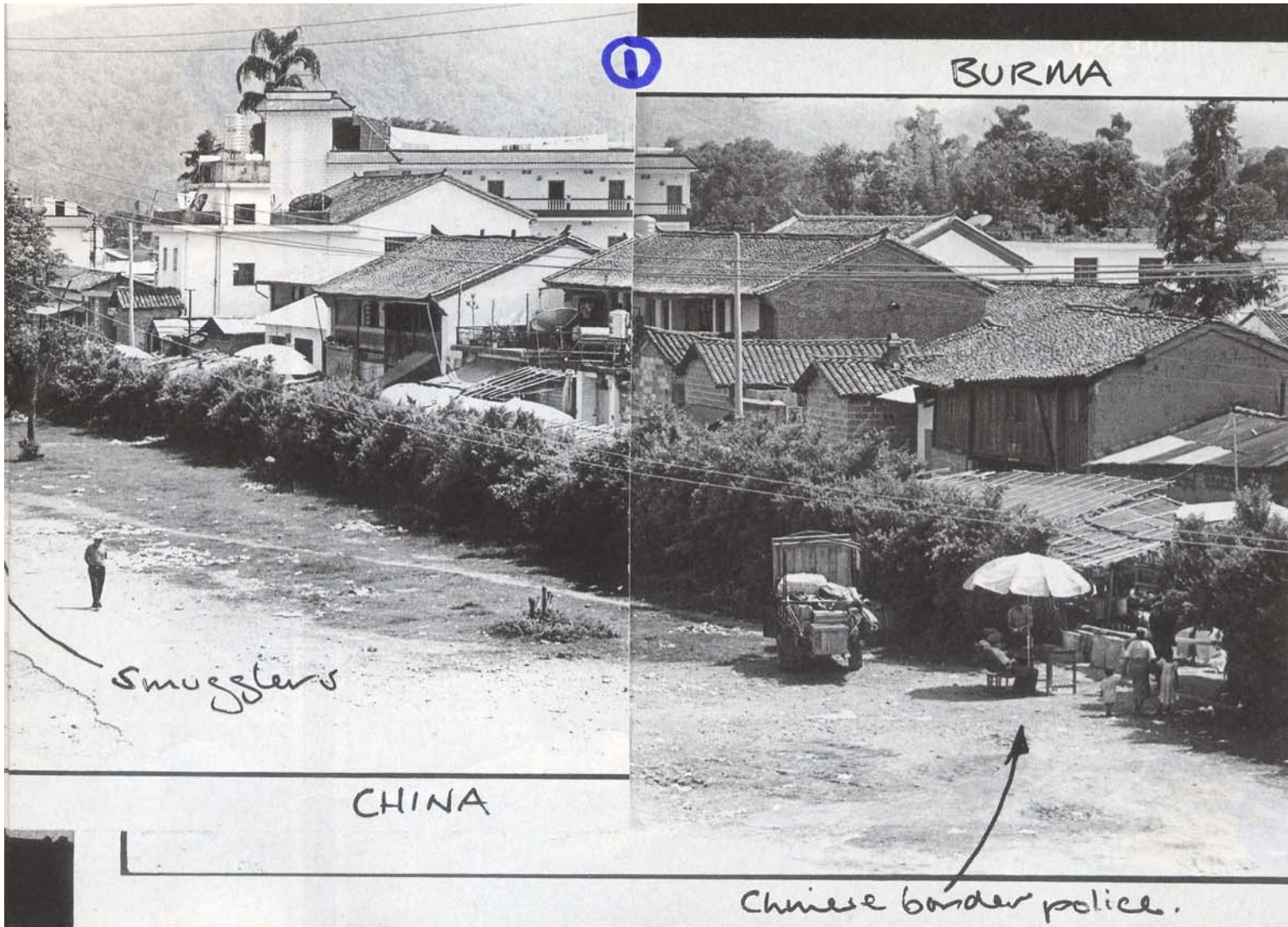


Checkpoint Charlies fooled by footloose smugglers

By Nic Dunlop

Asia's Backyard





Fence Border



The porous Burma-China border at Kyang Phon—two Chinese policemen and an improvised checkpoint (top)

Burma's "garden fence" border with China, where smugglers have no difficulty carrying in contraband. This side of the fence is China, beyond the bushes lies Burma (left)

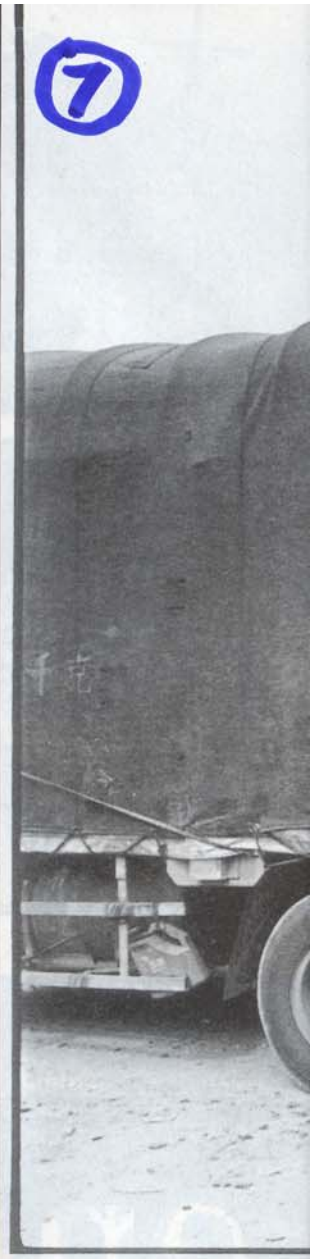
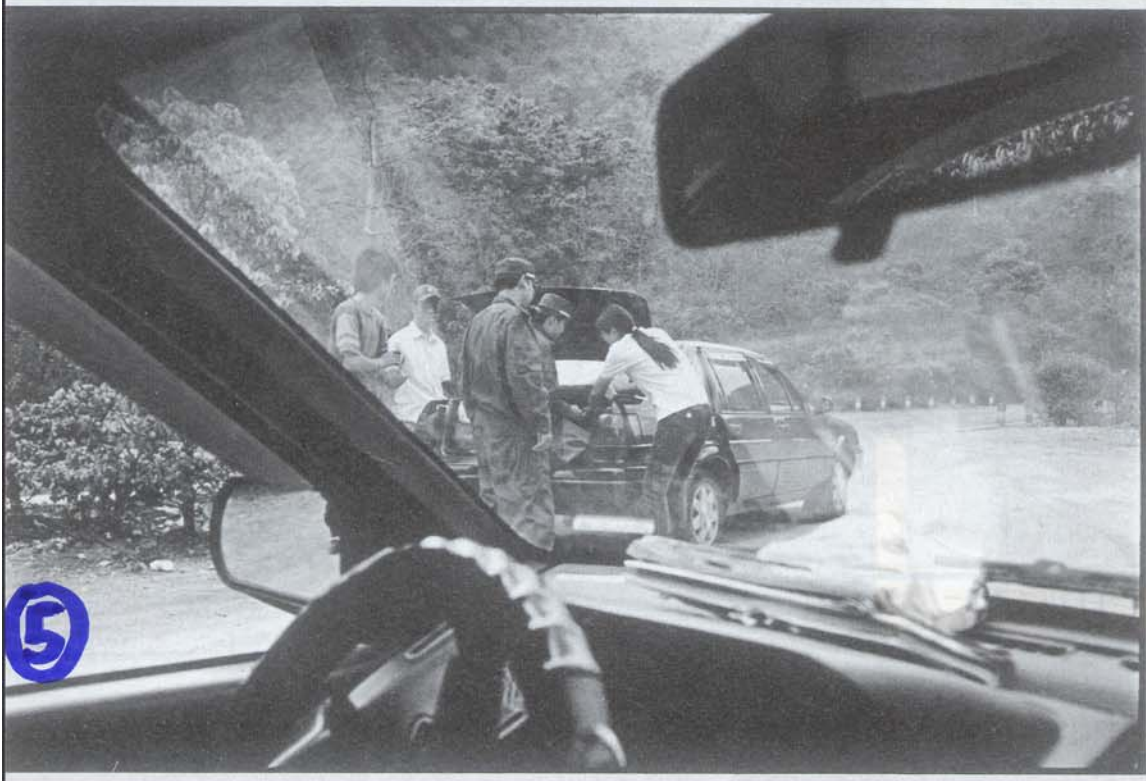
Chinese border police relax beneath their parasol while smugglers slip through the "garden fence" frontier 50 yards away (right)



PHOTO ESSAY

Chinese police conduct spot checks for drugs on the roads out of Ruili (top)

Trucks wait for processing at China's Jie Gao border checkpoint. Behind them is the Burmese border town Muse and the Kachin hills (bottom)





Burmese laborers are employed to load and unload trucks at the Jie Gao border depot (top)



A Chinese truck laden with Burmese goods heads across the border, making for the interior of China (left)

A Burmese craftsman in Ruili cleans a chunk of jade (bottom)



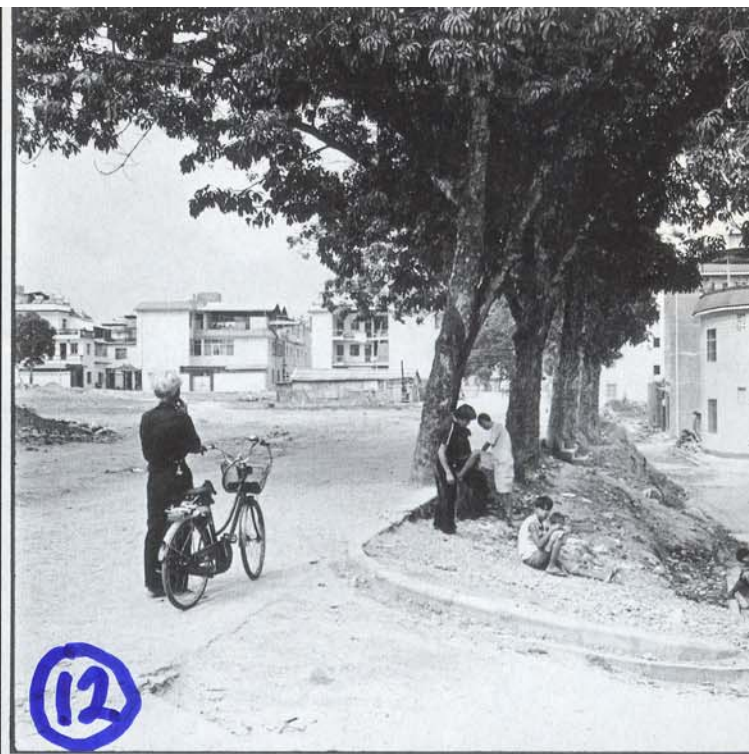
PHOTO ESSAY



High on methamphetamines—a Burmese woman lights up in a back room in Jie Gao (top)

A Ruili "shooting gallery", where addicts gather for their heroin shots (right)

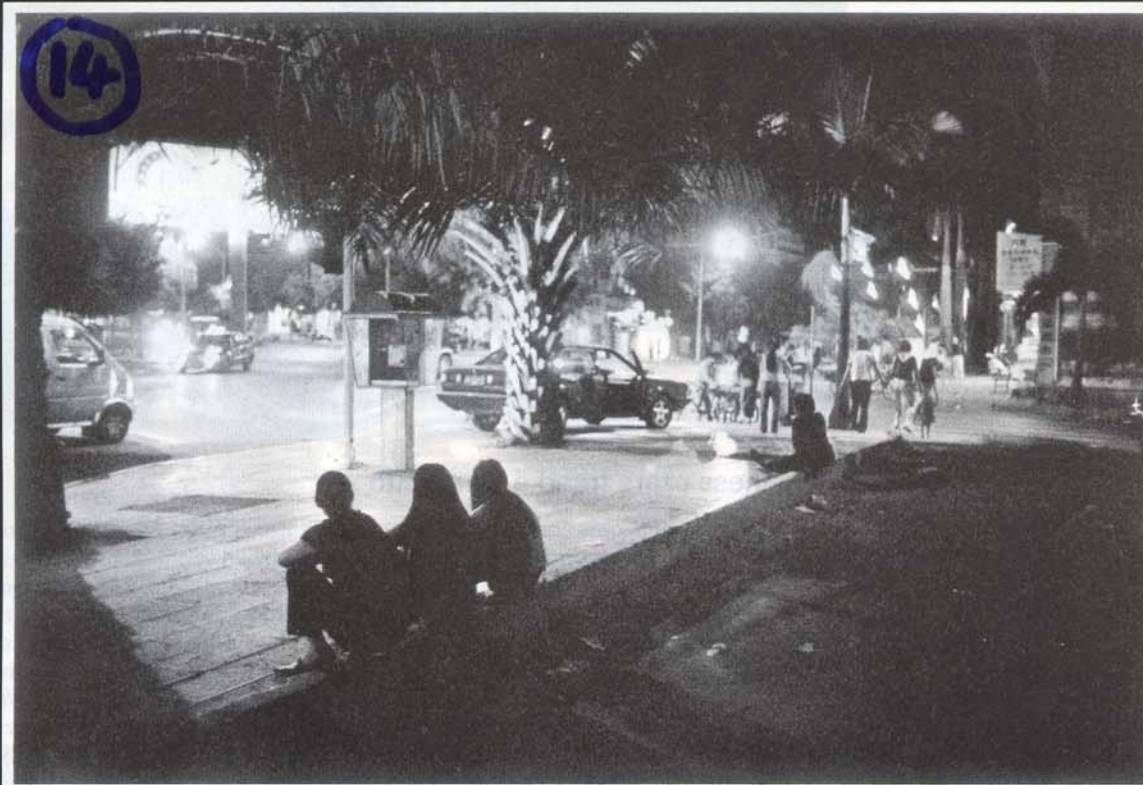
"Shooting up" on a Ruili backstreet—two Burmese addicts (bottom)





View from the brothel—Burmese prostitutes wait for clients (top)

Waiting for customers on a Ruili street (bottom)



Learning with the Irrawaddy 6

To accompany September 2005 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine
Selected article: *Asia's Backyard Fence Border*, pages 14-19

Activities to do before reading

Activity 1

Prediction: Title and description

- a) Look at the title of the article: *Asia's Backyard Fence Border*.
What do you think will be in the article?
Which part of Asia do you think the article is about?
- b) This is a *photo essay*. What do you think a photo essay is?

Activity 2

Prediction: True or False?

- a) Read the sentences. Do you think they are true or false?
1. Police on the China-Burma border try hard to catch drugs traffickers.
 2. There is a lot of corruption on the China-Burma border.
 3. People can make a lot of money from drugs on the China-Burma border.
 4. Over 10,000 Burmese women work as prostitutes in Ruili and Jiegong.
 5. Most of the prostitutes' customers are from Western countries.
 6. There is a high rate of HIV infection on the China-Burma border.
- b) Read the article, and check your predictions.

Activities to do during reading

Activity 3

Paragraph Summaries

- a) There are four paragraphs in the article.
Which ideas are expressed in which paragraph?
Match the sentence with the paragraph the information appears in.
1. There are a lot of Burmese women working as prostitutes in the border towns.
 2. The prostitutes' customers are mostly from Burma and China.
 3. The Chinese authorities are not trying very hard to stop drug smuggling.
 4. The police do not watch very hard for drug smugglers.
 5. Heroin addicts inject heroin on the streets of Ruili.
 6. Many truck drivers spread HIV infection.
 7. There is a lot of corruption, because it is so easy to make a lot of money.
 8. Drug smugglers can easily travel from Burma into China.
 9. The HIV infection rate is very high in this area.
 10. Drugs and prostitution are the main goods and services in this area.

Activity 4**Vocabulary from Context**

- a) Find these words in the text.
Read the sentences they are in and try to guess the meanings.
Don't look at your dictionaries!

parasol contraband frontier haphazard rife commodities sidewalk estimated brothel hovel lethal freight

- b) Match the words with these synonyms and definitions.

goods smuggled across borders
everywhere
umbrella
building where prostitutes work
probable
border
goods being transported
deadly
very small, dirty house
goods and services
disorganized
pavement

Activity 5**Descriptions of Photos**

- a) There are 14 photos in the photo essay. Here are descriptions of three of them.
Match the descriptions with the photos.
- a. *Three women are sitting on the pavement. They are on a busy street – there are cars driving past them, and people doing their shopping. There are trees planted along the pavement. The women look bored.*
 - b. *A man is working with a small rock. He is concentrating quite hard. He is holding a long, thin tool, and there are many other tools laid out on a cloth in front of him. He's wearing a white vest, and a longyi.*
 - c. *A woman is walking onto a road, carrying a medium-sized box in each hand. She has just come through a gap in a fence – the fence is made of bamboo which is broken in places, and surrounded by bushes. There are some buildings behind the fence.*
- b) Choose another photograph. Write a description of it. Read it to the class.
Can they identify which picture you are describing?

Activity 6**Inferring**

Here are ten statements. Using the information in the article and the photos, can you infer that these statements might be true? Is there enough evidence to support these statements?

1. The Chinese government is not interested in stopping drug trafficking.
2. It is easy to smuggle drugs from Burma to China.
3. People use drugs openly in the Chinese border towns.
4. Many Chinese people like to use heroin.
5. People are making a lot of money from drugs.
6. Prostitutes can make a lot of money in China.

Activity 7**Identify the main point**

- a) What do you think is the main point of this article and photo-essay?
1. The China-Burma border has a lot of drug smuggling and prostitution.
 2. Chinese police are not very effective against drug smugglers.
 3. Many Burmese women become prostitutes because of poverty.
 4. There are a lot of trucks travelling between Burma and China.
- b) Look at the options above, Which option is the main point, and which points are:
- *supporting points?*
 - *not a point of the photo-essay?*

Activities to do after reading

Activity 8

Behind the Picture

- a) Here are some made up stories giving background information about three of these photos. Which photos are the stories about?
- a. *This couple are visiting their relatives, in a nearby town. They are very annoyed, as they are in a hurry. They have never used or carried drugs, and they don't want to waste time while the police check their car. They tried to persuade the police to not search them, but the police have their orders, so they have to wait around while their car is searched. Then they can continue their journey.*
 - b. *She manages a brothel. She really hates her job – the customers are rude and unpleasant, and many of the women who work for her are very unhappy. She also has to work very long hour, often all night. Three times a day, she smokes Ya Ba. It helps her to stay awake, and helps her forget her horrible job.*
 - c. *It is very hard work for these men. They are very, very tired when they finish for the day. They work in groups – about six men, mostly young men as the work is so hard. Most of them have families back home in Burma who need the money. They can't get good work in Burma, so they have come to China to support their families.*
- b) Choose another photograph. Write a paragraph telling the story of the people in it. Read it to the class. Can they identify which picture you are describing?

Activity 9

Discussion

- Do you think Ruili is a good place to live? How do you think it compares to the Thai-Burma border?
- If you lived in Ruili, how would you try to solve its problems?