

Learning with The Irrawaddy, No. 35

To accompany the **June 2009** issue of The Irrawaddy magazine.

Selected article: *Chronicle of a Cooked-up Crime*

A. Activities before reading

Activity 1 Discussion

The title of the article is “Chronicle of a Cooked-up Crime.” Look at these definitions:

chronicle (*noun*) - a detailed narrative report; record of events

to cook up (*idiom*) - to invent or manufacture a story

Explain the title in your own words.

Activity 2 Cartoon

Look at this cartoon.

Who are the people in the cartoon?

What are they doing?



Activity 3 What do you know?

This article is about John William Yettaw, the American man who swam across Inya Lake and entered Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s compound.

What do you know about these events?

B. Activities during reading

Activity 4 Order the events

a) Skim-read the article, and put these events in order.

- a. Suu Kyi asks her doctor to report Yettaw’s visit to the authorities.
- b. Yettaw spends two nights in Suu Kyi’s compound.
- c. Yettaw visits Mae Sot.
- d. Yettaw swims to Suu Kyi’s compound again.
- e. Yettaw goes to Burma for the first time and swims to Suu Kyi’s compound.
- f. Yettaw is arrested.
- g. Yettaw returns to Burma.
- h. Yettaw goes back to the US and tells his family he is writing a book.
- i. The Burmese government puts Suu Kyi under house arrest

b) Match these events with the time that they happened.

1. May 2, 2009
2. November 2008
3. May 3, 2009
4. Late 2008
5. 5.30am, May 6, 2009
6. May 3-6, 2009
7. 2003
8. early 2009

Activity 5 Match the vocabulary

a) Read the article and underline the words and phrases you don't understand.

b) Match these words and phrases with their definitions.

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|-------------------|--|
| 1. piece together | a. Something that happened |
| 2. reportedly | b. A decrease in the quality of a task |
| 3. incident | c. To see and notice something or someone |
| 4. spot | d. Someone said this, but we aren't sure if it's true |
| 5. break the news | e. To get all information into the same place |
| 6. diabetes | f. To move something to a different place |
| 7. serviceman | h. To tell someone some important information |
| 8. lapse | i. a male serving in the armed forces |
| 9. transfer | j. A medical condition where the body can't control sugar levels in your blood |

Activity 6 Gap-fill

Fill the gaps with words from the text.

- a. That's a very _____ cow – I've never seen one with three horns. (*paragraph 1*)
- b. My office is very _____. I have five locks on the door. (*paragraph 2*)
- c. My grandfather is World War Two _____. (*paragraph 3*)
- d. I met a woman who _____ to be a Princess, but I don't believe her. (*paragraph 3*).
- e. My _____ told me to eat less meat and get more exercise. (*paragraph 3*)
- f. The man looked _____. He was wearing a false moustache, and kept looking around nervously. (*paragraph 4*)
- g. They _____ early, and didn't stop walking until they reached home. (*paragraph 5*)
- h. He has _____, so he sometimes has difficulty breathing. (*paragraph 5*)
- i. Although she's rich, she dresses _____. She never wears expensive jewellery, or designer clothes. (*paragraph 5*)
- j. After U Than retired, he received a small _____ from the government. (*paragraph 5*)
- k. Naw Naw _____ stayed home all weekend, but I think she went to Bangkok. (*paragraph 5*)
- l. I can't give you a job. I'm not _____ to hire new staff. (*paragraph 6*)

Activity 7 True or false?

Are these statements true or false, according to the article? Explain how you know whether they are true or false.

1. It is easy to get into Aung San Suu Kyi's house.
2. John William Yettaw fought in Vietnam.
3. He entered Burma without a visa.
4. Security officials saw him swimming to Suu Kyi's house.
5. Whilst under house arrest, Suu Kyi is not allowed to have visitors, unless the authorities agree to this beforehand.
6. Suu Kyi invited Yettaw to visit her house.

Activity 8 Discussion

"...Suu Kyi was transferred to Rangoon's Insein Prison and charged with violating the conditions of her detention order." (Paragraph 6)

What does the underlined phrase mean?

Activity 9 Identify the main point

What is the main point of this article?

- a. It is very strange that Yettaw was able to get into Suu Kyi's compound without the authorities noticing him.
- b. It is very strange that Yettaw swam across Inya Lake and got into Suu Kyi's compound.
- c. Suu Kyi already knew Yettaw in May 2009, as he had previously visited her compound in November 2008.
- d. The authorities allowed Yettaw to get into Suu Kyi's compound so that they could arrest her for violating her detention order.

C. Activities after reading

Activity 10 What's happening?

Look at these photographs. They were originally published with the article. What is happening in each photograph? Write a couple of sentences describing each one.



Activity 11 Discussion

Do you think the government knew about Yettaw's actions, but allowed him to get into the compound so they could arrest Suu Kyi?

Discuss in groups, and present your reasons for or against this theory.



Chronicle of a Cooked-up Crime

1. *As rumors swirled around the arrest and trial of Aung San Suu Kyi and her uninvited American visitor, The Irrawaddy pieced together the known facts of this bizarre case*
2. Aung San Suu Kyi's lakeside home on Rangoon's University Avenue is one of the city's most secure locations, with at least a dozen security men posted *outside its high fence at all times.*
3. In late 2008, an American citizen, Vietnam War veteran John William Yettaw, stayed for several weeks in the Thai-Burmese border town of Mae Sot and talked openly there about a visit he claimed to have made in November to Suu Kyi's home. He reportedly told Mae Sot residents he had swum to her waterfront compound across Rangoon's Inya Lake. According to National League for Democracy sources, Suu Kyi asked her personal physician to report the incident to the authorities, but they did nothing.
4. Yettaw returned to Thailand from his home in the US earlier this year after telling his family he was working on a book. on May 2, he entered Burma again. Immigration officials at Rangoon International Airport, trained to spot suspicious visitors, issued him with a tourist visa. Yettaw booked into Rangoon's Beauty Land Hotel.
5. On May 7, the state-run newspaper *The New Light of Myanmar* broke the news of Yettaw's arrest, reporting that he had spent two days and nights at Suu Kyi's home after swimming there across Inya Lake. The report said that Yettaw set off during the night of Sunday, May 3, and stayed at Suu Kyi's home until late on May 5. At 5.30 a.m. On May 6, security officials spotted him swimming in the lake near the International Business Center on Pyay Road, more than a mile from Suu Kyi's home, and arrested him. Yettaw is 53 years old, suffers from asthma and diabetes and lives modestly in the US on an ex-serviceman's disability pension. He allegedly strapped a pair of home-made flippers to his feet to help him swim to Suu Kyi's home and back.
6. In 2003, Burmese authorities argued they were putting Suu Kyi under house arrest for her own safety. The lapse in security that allowed Yettaw to enter her home was not an issue, however, when Suu Kyi was transferred to Rangoon's Insein Prison on May 14 and charged with violating the conditions of her detention order. Under the terms of the order, unauthorized visitors are banned. Yettaw's fateful visit was clearly not authorized – and certainly not by Suu Kyi.