

The Curriculum Project

Learning with The Irrawaddy, No. 50

To accompany the December 2010 issue of The Irrawaddy magazine.

Selected article: **Portraits from Exile**

A. Activities before reading

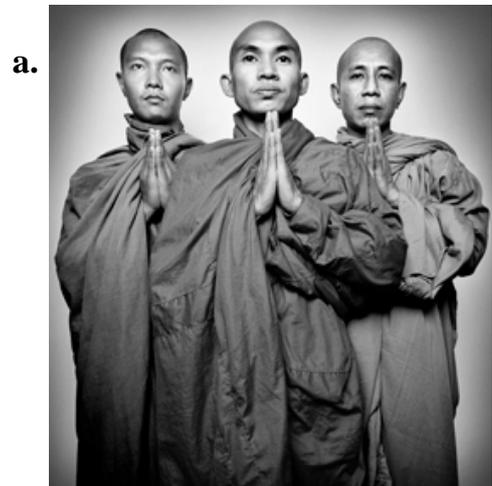
1. Predict from the title

This article is called *Portraits from Exile*. What do you think will be in the article?

2. Predict from the pictures

Here are the pictures from the article.

- Do you know any of these people?
- What do you think these people do?
- How are these people similar?





B. Activities during reading

3. Match the paragraphs

Read the article. Which paragraph goes with which picture?

4. True or false?

Are these sentences true or false? If false, correct the sentence.

Paragraph 1

- a. There are more than 20,000 political prisoners in Burma.
- b. While he was in jail, Bo Kyi decided to work to free political prisoners.
- c. AAPP provides health care services for political prisoners.

Paragraph 2

- d. About 25% of those affected with HIV in Burma have access to treatment.
- e. SAW provides medicine to HIV affected children.

Paragraph 3

- f. KWAT is based in Chiang Mai.
- g. KWAT only works with Kachin women.

Paragraph 4

- h. A lot of countries use landmines regularly.
- i. Burma has signed a global anti-landmine treaty.

Paragraph 5

- j. Burma has more child soldiers than any other country.
- k. About 1/5 of soldiers in Burma are under 18.

Paragraph 6

- l. There are exactly 2,000,000 Burmese migrant workers in Thailand.
- m. A lot of Burmese migrant workers were forced laborers before coming to Thailand.

Paragraph 7

- n. Harn Lay was formerly in the Burmese army.
- o. Human Rights Watch organised for Harn Lay to get a grant.

Paragraph 8

- p. Empower is a Burmese organisation.
- q. They advocate for rights for sex workers.

Paragraph 9

- r. Thee Lay Thee are a husband and wife.
- s. Zarganar is currently serving a long prison sentence.

Paragraph 10

- t. Kyaw Htet came to Thailand to work as a motorcycle mechanic.

Paragraph 11

- u. The 2007 'Saffron Revolution' was lead by monks.
- v. Security forces beat and tortured demonstrators except monks.

Paragraph 12

- w. The DVB produces a newspaper, radio and television programmes.
- x. It is dangerous to work as a journalist in Burma.

5. Vocabulary

Find a word that has the same meaning as these words.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| a. unfairly | (paragraph 1) | g. resulting | (paragraph 7) |
| b. housing | (paragraph 2) | h. supply | (paragraph 8) |
| c. many | (paragraph 3) | i. often | (paragraph 9) |
| d. home-made | (paragraph 4) | j. involvement | (paragraph 10) |
| e. previous | (paragraph 5) | k. scattered | (paragraph 11) |
| f. provide | (paragraph 6) | l. skilled | (paragraph 12) |

6. Summaries

Choose three paragraphs, and write one-sentence summaries of them.

C. Activities after reading

7. Group quiz competition

In groups, write five questions based on information in the text. The questions must be:

- closed (only one correct answer possible – not opinion questions)
- answerable (your group has to know the correct answer.)

Ask other groups your questions. The group with the most correct answers is the winner.

8. Write a poem

Write a poem based on the first letters of one of the people, organisations or issues in text.
e.g. 'landmines'

*Lose a leg or an
Arm or eye
Never walk through the
Deserted village
Maybe the army hid them there
In order to keep people away
Not concerned about the villagers
Eventually they will come home
Safely?*

PORTRAITS FROM EXILE

In May 2010, Human Rights Watch took leading portrait photographer Platon to the Thai-Burmese border to photograph former political prisoners, civil society leaders, ethnic minority group members, journalists and other people in exile from their country, Burma.

All of those in this portrait portfolio have experienced human rights abuses in Burma and sought refuge in Thailand. Instead of being demoralized and defeated, they have united and use their shared experiences to educate and work for a better future for all of Burma's people. Although forced into exile, they have not been silenced.

1. As a former political prisoner and co-founder of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, Bo Kyi works tirelessly to secure the release of more than 2,100 Burmese citizens who have been jailed for their political independence and activism. After taking part in peaceful demonstrations during Burma's 1988 popular uprising, Bo Kyi was arrested in March 1990 as a college student for joining the human rights cause. He ultimately spent seven years and three months in prison, suffering interrogations, beatings, shackling and torture amid squalid living conditions. Throughout his long ordeal, Bo Kyi resolved that he would work for the release of all those who remained unjustly held in Burma's prison network. On release, Bo Kyi escaped to Thailand where he helped found the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, pressing for the release of those still in prison and providing health services, guidance and care for them and their families.
2. In Burma, the HIV/AIDS medication supply is so limited that only one in four people requiring treatment receives it. These children, who are HIV positive, were orphaned or sent by their parents to the Social Action for Women's safe house, the Children's Crisis Center in Mae Sot, for treatment or protection. SAW provides shelter, education and basic services for Burmese children including antiretroviral medication.
3. Shirley Seng, 63, Mary Labang, 36, and Nan Pyung, 21, are members of the Kachin Women's Association Thailand in Chiang Mai. They speak out against the multiple forms of violence in Burma that result in the displacement, trafficking and migration of indigenous Kachin women, as well as women belonging to other ethnic minorities such as the Karen, Lahu and Shan.

4. Three landmine victims: Kio Say, 43, Hsa Ka Twe, 15; aPar Taw, 45. Burma is one of the top remaining users of landmines as part of long-running armed conflicts between government forces and ethnic minority groups. According to the 2010 Landmine Monitor, Burma is the only country that continues to use landmines on an ongoing basis, having failed to sign the global anti-landmine treaty. The Burmese army routinely deploys landmines near borders with Thailand, Bangladesh and India, as well as in Burmese states with ethnic minorities such as Karen state and Shan state. Many of the non-state armed groups also use landmines and improvised explosive devices widely.
5. Burma has the largest number of child soldiers in the world. Here, a 16-year-old former child soldier from Mandalay hides his face to protect his identity. He fled after he was sent to the front line in Kachin state. The overwhelming majority of Burma's child soldiers are found in the national army, which forcibly recruits children as young as 11, although armed ethnic opposition groups use child soldiers as well. As many as 20 percent of Burma's active duty soldiers may be children under the age of 18.
6. These migrant laborers work in the fields near Mae Sot, Thailand. There are currently an estimated two million migrant workers from Burma living in Thailand. Many Burmese migrants previously suffered as forced laborers in Burma. The Burmese army has used forced labor to build roads, act as "porters" for the military, build infrastructure, maintain bases and serve troops and patrols. Women are routinely subjected to sexual violence. Villagers receive no pay, must supply their own food and are threatened with imprisonment should they refuse to cooperate. Porters have been beaten and killed when they tire under their heavy burdens.
7. Harn Lay, 44, is Burma's best-known cartoonist. His work is published in The Irrawaddy. A graduate of the Rangoon School of Fine Arts Academy and former rebel soldier, Harn Lay fled to Thailand following the 1988 protests and ensuing crackdown in Burma. In April 2010, he was awarded a Hellman/Hammett grant, administered by Human Rights Watch.
8. Abu Mayoe and Linda Desube are sex workers from Burma and members of Empower, a Thai organization of sex workers promoting rights, education and opportunities. Most sex workers from Burma provide the main source of income for their families, often supporting five to eight other adults. At Empower in Chiang Mai, migrant Burmese sex workers strive to improve working conditions and promote the dignity of migrants, women and sex workers.

9. The comedic troupe Thee Lay Thee: Mya Sabal Ngone, “Godzilla,” and his wife, Chaw Su Myo. The creative community in Burma has been among the leading voices challenging military rule with art and humor and they are therefore frequently targeted for arrest and detention. The Thee Lay Thee trio fled Burma after their colleague Zaraganar was arrested and sentenced to 59 years in prison in 2008.
10. Kyaw Htet, 22, is a former motorcycle mechanic from Prome. Like many young people in Burma, his opportunities and education are limited, especially if the family has any association with the political opposition. Kyaw Htet left Burma to pursue his dream of being a musician and helping his community.
11. Three exile Buddhist monks (left to right): Ashin Sopaka, Ashin Issariya, known as “King Zero,” and U Teza. In September 2007, hundreds of monks left the relative safety of their monasteries to lead street protests, which came to be known as the “Saffron Revolution.” Burmese government security forces killed, beat, tortured and violently dispersed peaceful protesters, including monks. In the ensuing crackdown, Burmese courts sentenced hundreds of political activists and monks to prison terms of up to 65 years. Many monks subsequently fled the country.
12. Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) *broadcast* journalists Thiri Htet San, 30, a former newscaster in Burma, and Moe Myint Zin, 34. The DVB is a satellite radio and television news service, with highly professional reporters who risk their lives to report and record events inside Burma. One DVB video journalist was arrested in 2009 and sentenced to 27 years in prison for filming interviews with monks.