

To: Immigrant's Rights Clinic
From: Wendy and Donna
Re: Interpretation Issues

Here is the transcript for class on November 7.

Grace: Mae, I know this is very difficult for you, but we would like to ask you a few more questions about when the soldiers attacked you.

Reverend Sen: (translating)

Mae: (suddenly looking away and starting to tremble) Okay.

Grace: The soldier who raped you, had you ever seen him before?

Reverend Sen (to the students): You already asked her about this incident.

Grace: We just need to get some more detail. The more detail we have, the more credible Mae's story will be and the better her chances of getting asylum.

Reverend Sen: I don't think you should be asking these questions again. It is very difficult for her to answer. Already you can see she is becoming upset.

Margaret: We don't mean to upset her, but this is a really important part of her story.

Reverend Sen: Margaret, let me explain to you about Burmese culture. Burmese women are not to talk about such things. She has been taught that what happened to her is shameful, not just for her but for her entire family. And it is shameful for her to talk about it now.

Grace: Reverend, as difficult as it is, Mae needs to learn how to answer these questions, because the judge and the government will probably ask them at trial even if we don't.

Reverend Sen: (speaking in Burmese to Mae)

Mae: (shaking her head side to side and speaking in Burmese)

Margaret: What did you ask her?

Reverend Sen: I told her that you had some sensitive questions to ask and asked if she would be willing to answer. She said she will answer your questions.

Toward the end of the meeting, we asked Mae if she would be willing to undergo a medical exam in order to obtain corroborating evidence of the physical injuries she suffered in Burma. We explained that it would include a pelvic exam. Mae agreed. Two weeks later, we were at the Doctor's office with Mae with another volunteer interpreter—this time, a woman—and Mae became very upset when she learned that a pelvic exam would be involved.

(see other side)

The Six Practices for Surfacing and Exploring Assumptions, and Designing Action, described in the materials in the Conference Materials, will be demonstrated in the following order in the Presentation:

- I. Parallel Universes**
- II. Except When/Especially When**
- III. Narrative Theory**
- IV. Critical Reflection on Disorienting Moments**
- V. Methodological Doubt/Methodological Belief**
- VI. Untangling Agendas**