The organizing committee for the project *thi saq myin nhàn*, aka *Independent Journal of Burmese Scholarship*, originally met at Yale University in October 2011, well before the political “opening” in Burma.

It was composed of 10 members — seven young Burmese scholars in the diaspora and three Western scholars of Burma — and took as its mission to re-establish, in a new digital format, immune to censorship, the *Journal of the Burma Research Society* (1911–1980) in Burmese and English for Burmese scholars in the humanities and social sciences.

Once it became clear that political conditions in Burma might allow us to operate in Burma with open participation, we added six members based permanently in Burma, planned for a physical (printed) version of the journal, and held several planning meetings in Yangon.
This 16-member organizing committee in Burma and abroad, with a temporary fiscal executive of three (Prof. Tun Myint, Prof. Tharaphi Than, and Prof. James Scott), represents the international planning body whose mission is to help organize the first thematic workshops and journal issues with the local Burmese scholarly community.

American Friends of Prospect Burma (AFPB) serves as the fiscal agent of and provides independent accounting and financial reporting services to the Journal. (AFPB’s primary mission is to raise funds to support scholarships for international undergraduate and graduate study for students from Burma.)

Plans developed to organize an Independent Journal of Burmese Scholarship Society centered on the intellectual center of the Pansodan Gallery and Pansodan Scene in Yangon, presided over by Aung Soe Min, that will foster debates, forums, and discussions on a wide range of contemporary issues (e.g., popular literature, ethnic identity, the history of military rule, democracy, federalism, art, music, religion).
This Society, together with the continuing discussion groups growing from the thematic workshops that are planned and the interactive readership of the Journal, will constitute the formal and informal intellectual community around the Journal.

In an ideal world one might imagine such a journal based at a major university in Yangon or Mandalay. However, Burmese universities, moribund for decades, are only now beginning to revive, and for the time being we judge that remaining an independent organizing committee or society maximizes our freedom, a freedom that does not preclude practical cooperation with Burmese universities.

The vagaries of political repression in Burma since 1962 have had two consequences relevant to our Journal:
They destroyed the once vibrant intellectual community alive within the universities (though not the teashops!) of Burma, and they drove an important segment of the student community into exile and education abroad.

The excellent prospects for our *Journal* derive from both the scattered but fervent cultural and scholarly life emerging within Burma and the desire of returning exiles, educated abroad, to help restore the vigorous intellectual life and public culture Burma once had. The veritable explosion of little societies, discussion groups, informal research, and tea-shop debates reflects a great hunger for an intellectual life still far too little institutionalized, and which our workshops and *Journal* aim to support.