Workshop #1:

Public Memory — လူထု အမွတ္သညာ

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Call for Papers – Writing Workshop on Public Memory in Myanmar

စာသီဥတုပြောင်မှုများစွာ စာရင်းသြင်းချင်မည် ပြန်သွားမည်

Workshop #1
December 12–15 2014
Organizer: Tun Myint, Associate Professor of Political Science, Carleton College, Northfield, MN, USA

စာရင်းသြင်းမှု(၀)

စိုးရိမ်မှု အားပြောင်း အချိန် ပြောင်းမှု

စြိုင်သူ ၅ (၅) စာမျက်နှာဖော်ပြထားပါသည် မှန်ကန်ပြီး အချိန်ပြောင်းမှုများ ပေါ်မှုမှုများစွာ
The history of Burma/Myanmar, as in many places around the world, has been predominantly defined through the lenses of state and its official accounts. In that sense, the history is applied in defining

1. the power of state,
2. the position of state, and
3. the “people” of state in Burma/Myanmar.

The official history, written by state-appointed historical commissions and textbook committees, and narrated through school curriculum, centralized classroom pedagogies, official museums, and official archives, thus, has very little to do with the day-to-day public life of the people in Burma/Myanmar.

Carefully selected events, cultural symbols, ethnic identity, and popular heroes are promoted as the mainstays of historical account of Burma/Myanmar, while less palatable facets, from the state’s point of view, are ignored and left out of the historical record.
In fact, during the past five decades, the Burmese/Myanmar state in several circumstances treated the diversity of the public’s memory as a potential threat to the state-defined political order.

As Burma/Myanmar transitions from an era of military dictatorship to one of democracy under the 2008 constitution, the public’s historical memory continues to be sidelined by both the mainstream and opposition leadership in the interest of pragmatic reforms and concessions from the military.

Given the wide power still wielded by the military who initiated and led political reforms, little effort has been made to discuss and document the conduct of the military during the years between the 1962 when the military government officially emerged and 2010 when the democratic transition officially took place in Burma/Myanmar.

Elected political leaders have been unwilling to challenge the official history of Burma/Myanmar for fear of losing the reforms that they have so long sought.
Figures like Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi consider the political landscape too ‘delicate’ to upset and thus remain silent about the years of repression, torture, disappearances, land and property confiscation, and the corruption of the military regime since 1962.

Only a thorough history, documented, researched, and publicly available, can become part of the Public Memory of the Burmese society and its people.

This Workshop on Public Memory invites writers and scholars of Burma/Myanmar to contribute the writing workshops to be launched in July 2014 and in December 2014 respectively.

These two workshops will be guided by the following questions:

1. What is history and what is public memory in Myanmar?
2. How is public memory of military oppression treated in the context of political transition in Burma/Myanmar such as the peace agreements with ethnic groups and the 2008 Constitution?

3. How is public memory relevant to the foundation of democracy and democratic transition in Burma/Myanmar?

4. How do the military and affiliated businesses treat public memory of Burmese society as they frame political transition to democracy and capitalist market economy?

5. How is public memory applicable in explaining the cases of land confiscation, industrial zone development practices, educational reform, and democratization in Burma/Myanmar?; and

6. How do practices of arts, music, cultures, religions, and Nat explain the ways in which public memory is exercised in day-to-day public life in Burma/Myanmar?
While these questions serve as guidelines for the workshop, scholars are encouraged to submit their papers which address relevant questions to the theme of public memory in Myanmar.

Timeline — Venue — Contact

Timeline for Paper Submission and Workshop တစ်ဦးကျော်ကြားမှုအပေါ် အခြေခံချက်အပွုံး

- Submission of Abstract: September 15, 2014
- Writing Workshop and Paper Presentation: December 12-15
- Venue: Yangon, Myanmar (details to be announced)

Contact: Please send abstract and draft of papers to:

- James Scott at james.scott@yale.edu
- Tun Myint at tmyint@carleton.edu
- Aung Soe Min at aungsoemin@gmail.com

Registration and Expenses
Registration and Expenses

စာရင်းသွင်းရန်အားလုံး၏ ဦးပုန်တိုင်းခရီးသွားစရိတ်အားလုံးကို လျားလျား မြန်မာ သုေတေသန ဂ်ာနယ် (Independent Journal of Myanmar Scholarship) မှ ယူပါမည်။

Peer-Review and Publication

မြန်မာ ပညာ့ရှးချပ်မ်ားကို ထုတ်ဖော်ရန် အစီအစဥ်များကို ပညာရှိများ၏ စာသီးစီးဦးစီးပြီး ပညာရှိအားလုံးကို လျားလျား မြန်မာ သုေတေသန ဂ်ာနယ် (Independent Journal of Myanmar Scholarship) မှ ပထမဆံုးစာစုတွင် ဖော်ဦးရန် အစီအစဥ်များကို ယူပါမည်။

Myanmar authors, whose research papers (thu tay thana sar tan) are finally selected by peer-review process to be published in the first issue of the Independent Journal of Myanmar Scholarship, will receive an honorarium of US $500 as a token of appreciation for their time and energy.

The Myanmar authors, whose research articles (thu tay thana saung par) are finally selected by peer-review process to be published in the first issue of the journal, will receive an honorarium of US $200 as a token of appreciation for their time and energy.

Important Note: You can submit your papers on the theme of Public Memory even if you cannot attend the workshop in December. Your paper will still be considered for peer-review process to be selected for publication in the first issue of the journal.
Readings PDFs of articles on public memory that may spark interest and serve as sample research papers for potential writers of public memory in Myanmar [PDFs open in new windows]:

Derek H Alderman
Street names and the scaling of memory: the politics of commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr within the African American community

Benjamin Forest, Juliet Johnson & Karen Till
Post-totalitarian national identity: public memory in Germany and Russia

Yinan He
Remembering and Forgetting the War

Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook
Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory

E. Doyle Stevick
The Politics of the Holocaust in Estonia: Historical Memory and Social Divisions in Estonian Education