



Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition

By *Ellen Wiles*

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This book tells an ethnographic story of a secret literary culture that has recently emerged from its cocoon. Until 2012, Myanmar (also known as Burma) was ruled for fifty years by one of the most paranoid and repressive censorship regimes in history. The military junta enforced strict reading and writing restrictions in line with their ideology, feared writers' potential to trigger change, and did their best to keep Western books and influences out of the country.

As part of an unexpected move toward democracy, the government has recently lifted the worst restrictions on reading and writing, giving rise to a new era in the country's literature and literary culture. While living in Myanmar in 2013, Ellen Wiles sought out the best of its contemporary writers and writing to begin uncovering the country's remarkable literary life and history. This book contains the experiences and recent output of nine Myanmar writers spanning three generations, featuring interviews and English-language translations of their work, along with political, legal, and artistic explorations. It includes men and women, fiction and poetry, reflecting the ripples of political and cultural change as they have moved across different groups and genres. A rare portrait of a people and place in transition, Wiles's work contributes both to the study of literature and culture in Myanmar and to the general study of art under censorship.

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Editorial Review

Review

An intriguing snapshot of Rangoon's (Yangon's) current literary scene, Ellen Wiles's potpourri includes statements by fiction writers and poets about their careers and work, as well as samples of that work. A welcome addition to our knowledge of a little-recognized but newly vibrant literary field. (Ward Keeler, University of Texas at Austin)

Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts is an engrossing, revelatory, and humane study of Burma through the eyes, minds, words, and hearts of its own writers. A country and a history which is so often mediated through commentary from the outside is brought to life from the inside out. Ellen Wiles's book is a feat of generosity, intelligent insight, and, above all, a love of the written word and a faith in that word to convey truth, beauty, and defiance. *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts* demands to be read not just by those who love Burma but by anyone who values the power of literature. (Bidisha, writer and BBC broadcaster)

A fascinating exploration of censorship as experienced by nine writers of Myanmar over three generations. Ellen Wiles is to be commended for her deft account of the political and historical backdrop, but most of all for the grace with which she makes room for these authors to reflect on the marks left by censorship in their own words and works. (Maureen Freely, president, English PEN)

This excellent book is the first one to tell the story of censorship under military rule in Myanmar through the words of its writers and to explore what has changed since our transition began. I am happy that it includes new translations, since not much of our contemporary literature has been translated well into English, and we want to start sharing it with the rest of the world. (Zarganar, comedian, actor, and director)

A very welcome volume.... It offers a fascinating slice of a variety of author-lives and literary experiences.... *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts* neatly captures Burma right at the cusp of what might be a very dramatic change, and it will continue to be of interest both as an historical document(ation) and as a point of comparison for what is to come. (M.A. Orthofer *The Complete Review*)

An engrossing and eye-opening book. (Joe Treasure *The Daily Star*)

Wiles's readable account reveals the appalling depths of persecution writers faced.... [A] refreshing, insightful book. (*Choice*)

Ellen Wiles discusses the secret literary culture that developed under this regime and more recent developments by interviewing prominent writers and providing translations of their intriguing works for English speakers to discover, while also providing important context and a lasting sense of hope for the future of creativity in the country. (*World Literature Today*)

Fascinating and informative.... *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts* is a volume well worth reading if you are interested in Myanmar's literature in the context of the changing politics of the country in recent years. (Robert H. Taylor *Asian Studies Review*)

Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts, brilliantly captures the complicated history of literary life under successive military regimes and the forms it currently takes in the context of rapid change. (Ken MacLean)

South Asian History and Culture)

About the Author

Ellen Wiles is a British writer, human rights lawyer, and scholar specializing in literary culture and cultural ethnography. She lives in London.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karen Plum:

Do you one of people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained inside straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition* book is readable by means of you who hate the straight word style. You will find the information here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer regarding *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition* content conveys thinking easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different such as it. So , do you nevertheless thinking *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition* is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

Thomas Hawkins:

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition*, it is possible to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Dennis Jenkins:

As a scholar exactly feel bored to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just small students that has reading's soul or real their hobby. They just do what the instructor want, like asked to the library. They go to there but nothing reading very seriously. Any students feel that looking at is not important, boring in addition to can't see colorful photographs on there. Yeah, it is to be complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we know that on this period of time, many ways to get whatever we want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. So , this *Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition* can make you feel more interested to read.

Cindy Mattis:

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