

CALL FOR PAPERS

Centre for Asian Legal Studies

Islam, Law and the State in Myanmar Workshop 2014

NUS Law School, Bukit Timah Campus ✦ Thursday 23 to Friday 24 January 2014

Please circulate this call for papers widely.

The Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALs) are pleased to invite applications to present a paper at the Workshop on 'Islam, Law and the State in Myanmar'. The Workshop will be convened by Dr Melissa Crouch and will be held at NUS in Singapore from 23 to 24 January 2014. Abstracts must be for work that is original and has not been published previously. Participants will be selected through a competitive process based on the relevance of their proposal to the workshop theme. Successful applicants will have their travel and accommodation expenses covered. It is expected that participants will contribute an article of 8,000-10,000 words to an edited publication that will form the intended output of this workshop.

Theme for the Workshop

This interdisciplinary workshop will explore the relation between Islam, law and the state in Myanmar from both an empirical and theoretical perspective. It will address current debates on the Muslim communities of Myanmar from a socio-legal perspective. It seeks to provide an informed response to contemporary issues facing the Muslim communities of Myanmar by furthering knowledge on the dynamics of, and the interaction between, the legal system, state institutions and the Muslim communities of Myanmar.

The Muslim communities of Myanmar, in comparison to the rest of the Muslim world, are largely under-researched. While the Muslim population is estimated by the Myanmar government to be 4 per cent of the population, other estimates put this figure as high as 10 per cent. We know that the Muslim community of Myanmar is ethnically diverse, institutionally fragmented, and geographically scattered across Myanmar, as well as outside its borders. We therefore anticipate that papers may focus on one particular Muslim community, or papers may address an issue or theme common to Muslim communities of Myanmar, either those living within, on or outside its borders.

Formally, the 2008 Constitution provides for freedom of religion, but also recognizes the 'special position' of Buddhism, as well as the existence of several other religions including Islam. In the tradition of legal pluralism, this conference seeks to explore the interactions between state law and institutions with the informal practice and regulation of Islamic norms. Further, given the reach of globalization, the conference seeks to explore the connections between the Muslim communities of Myanmar and the Islamic world more broadly.



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In keeping with these themes, papers should address one or more of the following issues:

- How can we conceptualize or theorize the relation between Muslim communities and the state in Myanmar?
- How is the practice of Islamic norms by Muslims regulated in Myanmar ? This may relate to a wide-range of issues such as marriage, divorce or inheritance; Islamic education; or the practise of issuing a fatwa, among other matters.
- What function and position do religious institutions, whether recognized by the government or not, have in Muslim communities in Myanmar?
- What role and influence do Muslims have in terms of the current process of reform and transition in Myanmar?
- To what extent do concepts such as citizenship and multiculturalism apply to state-Islam relations in Myanmar?
- What are the key legal challenges facing the Muslim communities of Myanmar, and to what extent are these similar or different to the issues experienced by other Muslim minorities in the region?
- What are the points of connection between Muslim communities of Myanmar and the Islamic community both regionally and globally, and what are the implications of this?

The submission form including abstracts of proposed papers and bio-data should be submitted by email to cals@nus.edu.sg.

Important Deadlines

Submission of Abstract: 20th June 2013
Notification of Acceptance: 20th July 2013
Full Paper Submission: 5th January 2014
Conference: 23rd to 24th January 2014