

From Crown Colony to Myanmar: Dynamic of Domestic Politics, 1937 to 2008

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From Crown Colony to Myanmar: Dynamic of Domestic Politics, 1937 to 2008 submitted by me for the Award of ‘Doctor of Philosophy in Arts’ at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Rup Kumar Barman, Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University; and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

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Preface

Myanmar is one of the notable countries in Southeast Asia (having an intact border with South Asia) that has drawn the attention of scholars engaged in exploring the literary transition of nation-states from colonial to post-colonial democratic politics. While other countries in the region have democratized and prospered, Myanmar has gone through extreme military dictatorship for a considerable time. After gaining independence in 1948, Myanmar has experienced more than 50 years under military rule in its 75-year history. This feature of domestic politics derives from a broad historical perspective.

The present thesis thus attempts to focus on the transition of the crown colony to Myanmar during the period between 1937 and 2008. This thesis is set up to explore the reasons, nature, and status quo of domestic political dynamics in Myanmar. It sheds light on several important political issues, namely leadership, political parties, constitutions, elections, the military, and ethnic minorities. The period of the thesis on domestic political dynamics in Myanmar is very important because, in 1937, Burma was separated from British India and placed under the direct control of the United Kingdom. All administrative ties with India were severed, and the colony was granted a new constitution. The year 2008 was named because it turned out to be a crucial moment for the new constitution to designate it as a 'roadmap towards democracy'. The new constitution seems to offer little hope for democratization in Myanmar. This constitution gave more power to the military to control the government.

In Southeast Asia, Myanmar is the second-largest country. It is located in the region between the two powers of South and East Asia, namely India and China. Myanmar is a multi-national and multi-religious society. It is a racially diverse country. The military government run by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) officially refers to 135 distinct racial groups divided into eight main "national ethnic races"-Arakan/Rakhine, Barman/Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni/Kayah, Mon, and Shan. These major national races also include some ethnic minority groups in their ranks. The numerous minority races of the Eight Major Races have their own culture, language, flag, and armed groups. The country is divided into seven regions and seven states. The areas are dominated by the Burmese, while the states are dominated by the remaining seven national races and are named after similar racial

lines, such as Shan State, Chin State, Kachin State, Kayah State, Karen State, Mon State, and Rakhine State, in accordance with the ethnic races that predominately inhabit the states.

The present study consists of six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the thesis. It deals with the statement, research objectives, hypothesis, literature review, research gap, the rationale of the study, methods and sources, theoretical framework and the scope of the thesis.

The second chapter has concentrated on the historical background of Myanmar's domestic politics. It focuses on the political history of Myanmar in the pre-colonial era and the Pyu city-states, Pagan dynasties, Toungoo, and colonialism. This chapter also discusses British colonial rule and Burmese politics, British occupation and British rule in Burma, the separation of Burma from British India, World War II, and the Japanese occupation of Burma and independence after the war. This chapter also analyzes in detail Aung San's role in Burmese politics.

The third chapter analyzes the democratic government and domestic politics of Myanmar (1948–1962). This chapter focuses on Myanmar's democratic government (1948–1958 and 1960–1962) and completely discusses the nature and functioning of this governance. This chapter further explains the failure of the first democratic system in Myanmar. The chapter examines the parliamentary democracy during the independence of Myanmar. In this chapter, an attempt will also be made to describe Myanmar's democratic government, domestic politics, and some important political issues that came to the fore and caused the fall of the parliamentary democratic system. These are elections, political parties and factions, particular battles, and bodies within the AFPFL government; insurrection and demand for autonomy/federalism; and enactment of Buddhism as the state religion.

In the fourth chapter, an attempt has been made to analyze the post-military coup (1962–1988) compulsions of domestic politics in Myanmar. This chapter further analyzes the nature and functioning of Myanmar's first military government and its impact on domestic politics. This chapter will concentrate on the military of Myanmar in pre- and post-Independence politics. This chapter also highlights the Ne Win government and Myanmar's domestic politics. The period from 1962 to 1988 can be divided into two phases. The first phase is the direct military rule from 1962 to

1974, and the circular is the constitutional dictatorship phase from 1974 to 1988. This chapter will describe the challenges of the Ne Win government and the impact of domestic politics. This chapter also describes the foreign policy under military rule from 1962 to 1988, and an attempt has also been made to examine the Ne Win governance impact on the democratic landscape in Myanmar.

The fifth chapter deals with the ongoing process of political development in Myanmar since the mass uprising against the military regime from 1988 to 2008. The chapter also analyzes the factors that have brought about the developments, issues, and challenges concerning political development in the country. This chapter will focus on closely interrelated aspects of political development and Myanmar's domestic politics. This chapter further examines the 1988 mass uprising and its impact on society. This chapter also mooted the emergence of the latest political groups and Aung San Suu Kyi's emergence as a mass leader. This chapter highlights the political development after the Mass Movement. These are the 1990 election and constitutional amendment, and the 2003 development and its roadmap to democracy. This chapter will describe the 2007 Saffron Revolution and its impact. Eventually, an attempt has also been made to concentrate in this chapter on the 2008 constitutional provisions for the socio-political development of Myanmar.

The sixth chapter is the concluding chapter. It is the last chapter of this study. This chapter is devoted to making a summary and drawing conclusions based on the findings of the research.

In examining and evaluating domestic politics, the name of the country in my thesis is both 'Burma' and 'Myanmar' wherever it is necessary and convenient. I also took the liberty of using both the old and new names of places in the country, invariably, wherever necessary.

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Abbreviations

ABFSU	All Burma Federation of Students Unions
ABPO	All Burma Peasants Organization
ABSDF	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABSU	All Burma Students Union
AD	Anno Domini
ADSUB	Alliance for Democratic Solidarity Union of Burma
AFO	Anti-Fascist Organization (later AFPFL)
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
ANUO	Arakan National United Organization
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BDA	Burma Defense Army
BDP	Burma Democratic Party
BFB	Burma Freedom Bloc
BIA	Burma Independence Army
BNA	Burma National Army
BNB	Burma Nationalist Bloc
BSPP	Burma Socialist Programme Party
BWPP	Burma Workers and Peasants Party
BWS	Burmese Way to Socialism
CNF	Chin National Front
CNLD	Chin National League for Democracy
CNVP	Chin National Vanguard Party
CPA	Communist Party of Arakan
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
DAB	Democratic Alliance of Burma
DSI	Defense Services Institute
DSO	Democratic Students Organization

GCBA	General Council of Burmese Association
GCSS	General Council of Sangha Sametggi
GOVT	Government
IAPG	Independent Arakanese Parliamentary Group
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNDO	Karen National Defense Organization
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KMT	Kuomintang (anti-communist Chinese force)
KNPP	Kerenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
KNUP	Karen National United Party
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MNDO	Mon National Defense Organization
NC	National Convention
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDP	National Democratic Party
NDUF	National Democratic United Front
NLD	National League for Democracy
NUF	National United Front
NUP	National Unity Party
PBF	Patriotic Burmese Forces
PCP	People's Comrade Party
PDP	Parliamentary Democracy Party
PLA	Patriotic Liberation Army
PRP	People's Revolutionary Party
PVO	People's Volunteer Organization (later PCP)
RC	Revolutionary Council
RIT	Rangoon Institute of Technology
RUSU	Rangoon University Student Union
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council

SNLD	Shan National League for Democracy
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SRUB	Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma
SSA	Shan State Army
SSIA	Shan State Independence Army
UNLD	United Nationalities League for Democracy
UMP	Union Military Police
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
YMBA	Young Men's Buddhist Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Glossary

<i>Aung</i>	Auspicious, Victorious
<i>Bo</i>	Military Commander
<i>Bogyoke</i>	General, Supreme Commander
<i>Burman</i>	A member of an ethnolinguistic group speaking Burmese as the native language and wearing the dress associated with that group.
<i>Burmese</i>	A citizen of the Union of Burma or any ethnolinguistic group.
<i>Burma Proper</i>	Central Burma exclusive of the constituent states; i.e., all the divisions of Burma
<i>Daw</i>	Courtesy title given to Burmese ladies (Adult female)
<i>Dobama Asiayone</i>	‘We Burmans’ association, emerged in the colonial period
<i>Hluttaw</i>	Pyithu Hluttaw, or People’s Assembly
<i>Lower Burma</i>	British Burma before 1885. Generally limited to Irrawaddy, Rangoon, Pegu, Arakan, and Tenasserim divisions, and (since 1974) the Mon and Arakan states.
<i>Pyidawtha</i>	Welfare State
<i>Sangha</i>	The Buddhist monkhood
<i>Tat</i>	Army, or force
<i>Tatmadaw</i>	Burmese Army
<i>Thakin</i>	Master
<i>Theravada</i>	School of Buddhism followed in Burma
<i>U</i>	Uncle, Respectful term of address to a gentleman
<i>Upper Burma</i>	Burma under the Mandalay monarchy between the second and third Anglo-Burmese wars. Today generally equated with the Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magwe divisions.

Chapter-1

Introduction

1.1: Statement of the Research

Myanmar, formerly Burma, ¹ is a Southeast Asian country. It is bordered by Bangladesh, India, China, Laos, and Thailand. Its geographical location between India and Southeast Asia, as well as its common land borders, gives the country a unique strategic function. Myanmar's long bank on the Bay of Bengal provides control over the eastern Indian Ocean.² These make it well poised to renew its role as a regional trading hub and a vital supplier of minerals, natural gas, and agricultural products. The latest political development in the country has made it more significant in the geopolitical arena.

Myanmar was a prosperous colony during British colonial rule. Her natural sources and strategic position had drawn the attention of the British colonizers. British merchandisers first entered Burmese waters in the 1600s, and they soon began to change munitions in return for trading concessions.³ The eighteenth century saw Burmese rulers, whose country had not previously been of particular interest to European dealers, seek to maintain their traditional influence in the western areas of Assam, Manipur, and Arakan. Pressing them still was the British East India Company, which was expanding its interests eastwards over the same territory. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Burma was one of the most important countries in Southeast Asia. During this period, the British launched an attack for the domination of Burma, but the British forces encountered resistance from the Burmese. Thus, the British failed to enthrall the country as fast as they had anticipated. It took three aggressive wars—the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824–1826), the second Anglo-Burmese War (1852–1853), and the third Anglo-Burmese War (1885)—before the British managed to bring Burma under their rule. Only the third expedition in 1885 ended with the annexation of the whole of Burma.⁴ Then Burma went entirely under British colonial rule.

Britain made Burma a territory of India in 1886, with the capital at Rangoon. Then the monarchy was abolished, and religion was separated from politics. A great

change was observed in the traditional Burmese social system. In spite of the blame put on the British for everything they did, their occupation and rule of Burma were not entirely without benefits for Burma. On one hand, they put an end to the feudal contest and administration; on the other hand, they helped the feudalists unite to struggle against the common adversary, the British, and the Indians whom the British had taken to Burma to help in their administration.⁵ To facilitate administration, Britain turned Burma into a terrain of colonial British Indian administration, and the British governed Burma for around fifty years.

On the other hand, the 1917–1918 agitation was the first wide political protest in Burma. The protesters were organized by a non-political “Young Men’s Buddhist Association (YMBA)”. The events connected with the announcement of the secretary of state for India converted this movement into a political bone under the banner “General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA)”.⁶ It was a broad-grounded, non-religious association with branches spread throughout Burma. An alternate political development occurred in 1920 when university students called a national strike to protest against the education plans connected with a new university. The strike marked the entry of the students into national politics. From 1923 to 1941, there was a steady growth in politics in Burma. At that time, the question of participation in politics led the GCBA to split into shifting factions.⁷

In the meantime, the British Government appointed the Indian Statutory Commission on November 7, 1927, under Sir John Simon. In 1928, the British government formed the Simon Commission, and a round table conference was held with Burmese leaders. As an outgrowth of the Round Table Conference, Myanmar was separated from the British Indian administration in the India Act of 1935, which was implemented on April 1, 1937. It was given a new constitution, under which Britain governed Burma for about five years (1937–1941).⁸ Thus, Burma became a separate country under the British Crown. The new constitution called for a fully elected assembly, but this proved to be a divisive issue. Some Burmese felt that this was a ploy to exclude them from any further British Indian reforms. Whereas other Burmese saw any action that removed Burma from the control of India as a positive step, Dr. Ba Maw (1893–1977) became the first Prime Minister and Premier of Burma, but he was succeeded by U Saw (1900–1948) in 1939, who served as Prime

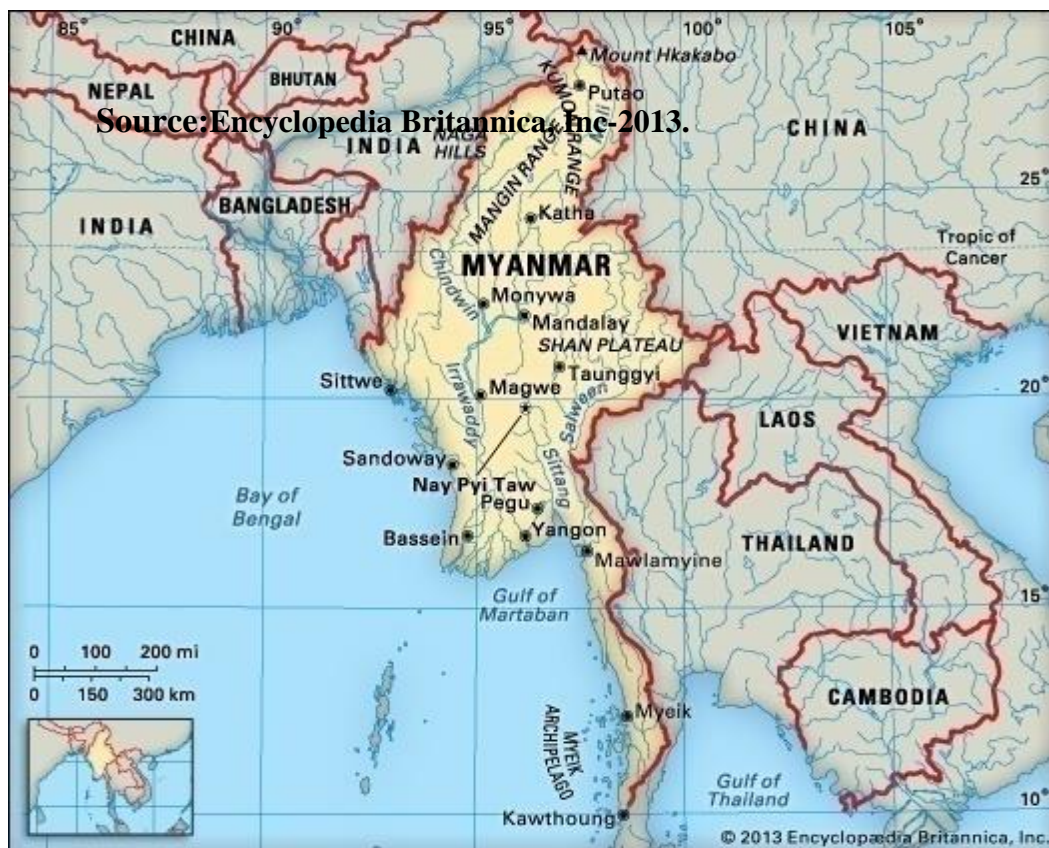
Minister from 1940 until he was arrested on January 19, 1942. Such leaders as Dr. Ba Maw and U Saw made a real effort to work within the framework of the Constitution. The Second World War interrupted constitutional and political progress in Myanmar, but although the experiment was brief, the people could look back upon almost two decades of experience with elections, parliamentary government, political responsibility, and parties.⁹

The Burmese national liberation movement developed and gathered strength for decades. Some Burmese nationalists saw the outbreak of World War II as an occasion to seek concessions from the British in exchange for support in the war. Others opposed Burma's participation in the war under any circumstances. Aung San (1915–1947), along with others, formed the Communist Party of Burma in 1939. With the help of the Japanese, Aung San formed a group called “Thirty Comrades”.¹⁰ In anticipation of the Japanese incursion into Burma, Aung San formed the ‘Burma Independence Army’ (BIA) in 1942. In 1943, the Japanese declared Burma an independent country. So, the BIA was converted into the Burmese National Army.¹¹ The Japanese declaration proved to be a hoax, and the Burmese leaders started reaching out to the British to oust the Japanese. After the surrender of the Japanese, the British returned to Burma and set up a military government to take control of the country.

The British agreed to incorporate Burmese leaders into the administration of Burma. Aung San and some other Burmese leaders joined the Governor’s Executive Council. Still, the Burmese, under the leadership of Aung San, started making accommodations with the British authorities for the independence of Burma. The negotiations concluded successfully in London with the signing of the ‘Aung San-Attlee Agreement’ on January 27, 1947. The socialists and some other leaders were not happy with this agreement. This gave rise to divisions within the rank and file of the independence movement in Burma. In the meantime, Aung San successfully negotiated with the ethnic leader for a unified Burma at the Panglong Conference on February 12, 1947.¹² The ultimate of the prominent leaders of Burma rallied behind Aung San and decided to form the ‘Union of Burma’. This made Aung San the undisputed leader of Burma.

Aung San's party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), won an unprecedented victory in the April 1947 Constituent Assembly elections.¹³ Burma's politicians wanted to resolve the status of the frontier areas before handing over the government. And they also wanted the frontier areas to join the new union. Although Aung San negotiated an agreement with the people of the borders, all were included, and some were not satisfied with the arrangement being made for them to join the union. If there was one person who had the vision and diplomatic skills to resolve the issue, it was Aung San.¹⁴ However, the internal rift within the AFPFL cost him his life. On July 19, U Saw, an ambitious elderly politician and conservative pre-war Prime Minister of Burma (1940–42), finagled the assassination of Aung San during a cabinet member meeting in the Secretariat. Burma became independent on January 4, 1948. Under the constitution of 1947, Myanmar became a republic known as the Union of Burma (now Myanmar).

Plate 1.1
Map of Myanmar



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc 2023.

<https://kids.britannica.com/students/assembly/view/52672>

U Nu (1907–1995) was the first Premier, and Sao Shwe (1895–1962) was the first President of independent Myanmar. The first stage of independent Burma/Myanmar constituted the 12-year democratic period from January 4th, 1948, to 1958, when the military caretaker government of General Ne Win took over power from U Nu's democratic government.¹⁵ On March 2, 1962, a coup deposed the U Nu government, which came to power again through an election in 1960 conducted by the military-led caretaker government of General Ne Win.¹⁶ A one-party authoritarian government led by General Ne Win took over the country.

After the coup, the military government suspended the 1947 Constitution, dissolved the Congress, and arrested top state officers and politicians. It also appointed a Revolutionary Council (RC) to govern Myanmar by decree. The Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was made the sole political party of the country.¹⁷ Eventually, in 1974, Myanmar naturally became a socialist country. Since the emergence of the Ne Win government, the service has become the most important force and support base of authoritarian governance in Myanmar. The fortified forces, led by General Saw Muang, seized power on September 18, 1988, and formed the 'State Law and Order Restoration Council' (SLORC). Muang's government started some kind of political leftism in the face of the public protest movement, and for profitable and strategic consideration in the wake of the end of the Cold War in 1989, in May 1990, the government held free and fair multiparty elections for the first time in 30 years.¹⁸ In that election, the National League for Democracy (NLD) of Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory. But the military ignored and cancelled the results of the election, and Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest.

In 1997, the SLORC changed its name to 'The State Peace and Development Council' (SPDC). The political stalemate carried over into the 21st century in all aspects of life in Myanmar, with the SPDC continuing to harass the NLD and the military maintaining strict control. Again, to invite spendthrift investment and to have a more balanced relationship with China and other powers like India and the West, Myanmar began to gradually open up and liberalize its political system. On the other hand, in 2003, the Depayin (a municipality in the Sagaing Division in Myanmar) incident was cracked down by the government, and the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) killed a multitudinous dozen of Aung San Suu Kyi's backers.

This Depayin incident outbreak made Myanmar's domestic political situation worse. As a result, the United States and Western countries assessed Myanmar with tighter concurrences on Myanmar.¹⁹ ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) sought to pressure the Myanmar government to break the political impasse and make political reforms by taking an unusual political action.

The SPDC, having gauged the intensity of pro-democracy terrain in the country, embarked on a policy of 'divide and rule' in a tricky way. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt blazoned in August 2003 a 'seven-point roadmap' to democracy under which a new constitution was proposed to be drafted by the National Convention (NC). Consequently, the NC was convened in May 2004, in which over one thousand delegates from 28 cease-fire groups shared. The two major political parties, NLD and the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), transacted the Convention with the expectation that there was no possibility of a comprehensive and formative debate over the core issues. In the wake of this uneasiness, the National Convention eventually approved a draft of a new constitution in May 2008 that was put to a referendum and passed. A brief transition period took place in early 2011. The new council convened on January 31, when the 2008 constitution slightly went into effect. Nonetheless, in the last national parliamentary election in 2015, NLD got a majority, and on March 15, 2016.²⁰ Myanmar's parliament had elected Aung San Suu Kyi as the first head of state who didn't come from a military background since 1962. Thereafter, elections were held: a by-election in 2017 and a general election in 2020, and reforms have been continuing in the country.

The present research attempts to focus on the period from the crown colony in 1937 to 2008 in Myanmar. This research is about to explore the reasons, nature, and present state of the dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar. It highlights some important political issues, which are leadership, political parties, the constitution, elections, the military, and ethnic minorities. The time period of the present study in the dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar is of great importance because, in the year 1937, Burma was separated from British India and placed under the direct rule of the British Crown, whereas the year 2008 selected since this year proved a year of great significance regarding the new constitution, which was termed a "road map to democracy". The new constitution appears to give little hope for democratization in

Myanmar. This constitution gave more power to the military to control the government.

1.2: Objective of the Study

The present research work follows three major objectives. These are:

- (1) The main objective of this research is to find out the evolution of the dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar;
- (2) To find out the role of the democratic and military governments and other forces in Myanmar's politics and to analyze the potential for change; and
- (3) To highlight the constitutional development and electoral democracy and to explain the nature of democratic transition in Myanmar.

1.3: Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are framed for the present research study:

- (1) The process of the transition of domestic politics in Myanmar is slow in nature;
- (2) Constitutional development and electoral democracy have a positive impact on the democratic transition in Myanmar;
- (3) A long military government is a major obstacle to Myanmar's democratic transition.

1.4: Review of Literature

There is enough literature available, both in libraries and on the internet. A review of the various Indian Universities and e-libraries shows that research work has been done on India-Myanmar relations, Myanmar's democratic transition, democratic movement, and ethnic conflict. On the other hand, the major libraries in Bangladesh have little literature on Myanmar. Similarly, very little research work has been done on Myanmar-Bangladesh relations and Rohingya issues; there are not many major works on the domestic politics in Myanmar. This paper aims to further explore the crown colony of Myanmar, with special attention to the dynamics of domestic politics from 1937 to 2008. The following books, journals, articles, working papers and newspapers have formulated the basis of the research:

In *History of Burma* (1925), based on primary sources, Geoffrey E. Harvey²¹ covers a vast span of Burmese history, from early history to the first Anglo-Burmese war. This is an intensive study that hardly omits any non-trivial political event that occurred in Burma during the concerned time period. It recounts the rise and fall of pre-colonial Burmese dynasties, the interactions of Burmese peoples with their neighbours—China, India, and Siam (present-day Thailand), and how they came into contact with the Europeans. In the later part, it elaborates on the circumstances leading to the first armed confrontation between the Burmese and the British. Although the volume does not exclusively address socio-cultural themes, it remains of great importance in comprehending the complex contours of pre-colonial Burmese history since it uses the scientific tools of historiography. It is a very important book on Burmese political history. This book helped me gain in-depth knowledge of theoretical analysis.

Another book by Geoffrey E. Harvey²², *British Rule in Burma 1824-1942* (1946), includes almost every aspect of British rule in this country. In the first two chapters, he writes about the country, its people, and its history. After that, he emphasizes the main theme, giving details about the newfangled British administration: civil service, judiciary, revenue, army, communications, and public health. In addition, he also examines the economic system precisely but refrains from the conventional British claim that it developed the country. In the final section, he elucidates the constitutional developments. This work knows no bounds of chronology and is thematic in methodology. This book also helped me gain in-depth knowledge of theoretical analysis.

In his authoritative work, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (1956), John S. Furnivall²³ dedicates five out of thirteen chapters to the study of the consequences of colonial policy and practice upon Burmese society. Having given a brief introduction of the physical features and the historical background of Burma, he starts his inquiry from the first Anglo-Burmese war. After that, he tells how the British colonial administrative machinery, revenue system, and judicial system were implemented first in the two maritime provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim. He also details the changes that occurred in the economy, communication, and demography. He further reached Lower Burma and finally extended his inquiry to Upper Burma after the

third Anglo-Burmese war brought complete annexation of Burma. He examines how colonial rule affected both Burmese political and social institutions. In his conclusion, he says that British colonial practice could not contain the workings of the anti-social economic forces that eventually led to the disintegration of Burmese social life. According to him, this was the predominant reason that Burmese people successfully resisted any kind of special association between them in the post-colonial era.

Later Robert H. Taylor²⁴, in his book, *The State in Burma* (1987), followed the same idea through a study of the development of the state and its relationship with society. His study examines the social and economic ramifications of the three concerned state formations undertaken here—the early modern monarchic state, the colonial state, and the post-colonial state. Those books are very helpful to the present research about Burmese domestic politics.

In *A History of Modern Burma* (1960), author John F. Cady²⁵ presents Burmese history in four parts. The first part discusses, in detail, the pre-modern era and a century (1784–1886) of Anglo-Burmese relations, not only the political aspect but also the socio-economic aspects. The second one starts in 1886, when the British annexed the whole of Burma into its Indian Empire, and ends in 1914, the year that witnessed the commencement of the Great War. This part was also a balanced one, incorporating economic and social developments with politics. Part three advances with the rebirth of Burmese nationalism during WWI (1914–1918) and culminates in Burma under the New Constitution (1937–1941) after its separation from British India under the Government of Burma Act of 1935. The fourth part commences with the Japanese occupation of Burma in 1941 and stretches to 1951 when independent Burma is heavily engaged in assuaging minority secessionism. The book covers a vast historical period, and it remains an authentic source for scholars and lay enthusiasts who intend to explore the historical terrains of Burma. The book is especially helpful to the present research because it provides information about the historical perspective of Myanmar's politics.

Daniel, George Edward Hall (D. G. E. Hall),²⁶ in his book *Burma* (1960), undertakes a long period of Burmese history. He starts his narrative with a brief explication of the pre-Pagan era, establishing a strong early bond between India and Burma. After

having described the Pagan Period (1044–1277), the Shan penetration, the Mon ascendancy, and the rise of the Toungoo Dynasty, he gives an account of the arrival of Europeans in Burma. Further, he takes up the issue of Arakan and Dutch, the Mon Revolt, the cause of the downfall of the Toungoo dynasty, Alaungpaya, the author of the last Burmese dynasty, the Konbaung dynasty, and British relations with Burma between 1795 and 1826. Also, he wrote about the first British occupation, the alternate Anglo-Burmese War, the third Anglo-Burmese War, and the annexation of the whole country by the British. He proceeds to further chronicle the pre-colonial Burmese system of governance, the preface of the British executive outfit, the severance of Burma from India, the socio-economic elaboration under colonial rule, the Japanese occupation of Burma during WWII, and eventually an autonomous Union of Burma. Actually, this book is well-written to satisfy the appetite of a general anthology. This book is useful for the present exploration of Burmese pre-colonial history, British political history and economic developments, and Japanese occupation.

Donald Eugene Smith²⁷ described religion and politics in Burma in his book *Religion and Politics in Burma* (1965). He has examined the relationship between Buddhism and politics in Burma, the nation that claims leadership among the Theravada Buddhist countries of South and Southeast Asia. He argues that the case of Burma provides illustrations of a wide variety of religious and political marvels: the breakdown of an effective Buddhist ecclesial scale under the impact of foreign rule, the part of religion in Burmese nationalism, the commerce of Buddhism and ultramodern political testaments, the uses of religion in democratic politics, the political role of Buddhist monks, the unique leadership of a politician in promoting religious reanimation, and the differing role of military governance. It's a veritably important book on Burmese religion and politics. This book is veritably helpful to the present exploration of Burmese domestic politics.

In the *Burma-From Kingdom to Republic: A Historical and Political Analysis* (1966) by Frank N. Trager²⁸ is an excellent publication on the substantial study of Burma dealing with its domestic history, politics, and foreign connections. He deals with the emergence of ultramodern Burma in Part 1. This part presents how Burma is approached by the West through India, how the battle between the British and the

Burmese became ineluctable, the growth of nationalism, and how Burma regained its independence. Part two discusses the survival of the Union of Burma against ethnic rebellions, the structure of a weak state, Pyidawtha, the political insecurity of 1948–58, the military caretaker government, and the failure of U Nu and Ne Win's military governance. Part three takes on Burmese foreign policy and examines its neutrality and Burma's relations with China, India, Japan, and other Asian countries. The fourth and last part considers, simply, Burma's relations with the United States from the pre-WWII period to the arrival of Ne Win's absolutism. The book is especially helpful to the present exploration to learn about the historical background of Myanmar's politics.

The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Year of Independence (1967) by Hugh Tinker²⁹ is another jotting and important work on Myanmar politics. The author has made an endeavour in this study to present a check of the whole Burmese scene of the first decade of independent Myanmar. He has discussed independence, the Communist uprising and insurrection, the Karen insurrection, the welfare state plan, the Chinese nationalist irruption, and the Sixth Buddhist Council. He has tried to illuminate the shadowy areas between these highlights to present a coherent picture of Burma during the period of struggle and strain from 1948 to 1956. His writing helps us understand the first year of independence in Burmese politics.

In the edited book *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia (1969)*, George McTurnan Kahin³⁰ describes a collection of articles that dealt with the governments and politics of several Southeast Asian countries like Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. He concentrated on the historical background, contemporary social and economic settings, recent developments in government and politics, and anatomized governmental organization and the political process. The second chapter of the book 'Burma' by Josef Silverstein analyzes the historical background, the contemporary setting, the political process, and major problems. This book helped me gain in-depth knowledge about the domestic politics of Myanmar.

In his book, *From Sangha to Laity: Nationalist Movements of Burma: 1920-1940 (1980)*, U Maung Maung³¹ examines the two-decade history of the Burmese nationalist movement in chronological order. After giving an abridged introduction

about the birth of nationalistic sentiment in Burma, he started his main inquiry in the year 1920. In Part 1, he traces the rise and fall of YMBA and GCBA, along with their conditioning and the dominance of the Buddhist order in Burmese politics, at length. He concludes this part by analyzing the decline of the early nationalist movement. He wrote about the failure of leadership, the dishonours of amateurs and Sangha likewise, and the loss of effective leaders either into the Council or to incarcerations that left the movement leaderless and spent. The alternate part deals with the reanimation of the nationalist movement, this time dominated by revolutionary rudiments and nearly devoid of Sangha. He extends his work to 1940 and explicitly says that the two nationalistic movements were far different in characteristics. It's a veritably important book on the history of the Burmese nationalist movement. The book is veritably especially helpful to the present exploration to learn about the various trends of the nationalist movement.

Surendra Prasad Singh³² in his book *Growth of Nationalism in Burma 1900-1942* (1980) has examined dialogues about the origin and growth of Burmese nationalism. He has made a humble attempt to present a methodical and chronological study of the Burmese struggle for freedom from British colonial rule. He has discussed that during the period (1900–1942), the Burmese nationalist movement passed through a number of stages and eventually paved the way for the final liquidation of British colonial rule in Burma. It's a veritably important book on Burmese nationalism. He tried to explain the emergence of national consciousness in Burma from the beginning of British dominance until the end of the First World War. The book is also veritably especially helpful to the present research to know about the various trends of nationalist thinking in Burma.

David I. Steinberg³³ in his book *Burma's Road toward Development: Growth and Ideology Under Military Rule* (1981), has examined discourses about the current military government, which is akin to previous civilian governments in its commitment to socialism as a vehicle for development. He argues that the economic flexibility demonstrated by the government has not been matched by political liberalization, and as a result, economic growth remains a captive of administrative and policy constraints. He traces the origins and acceptance of socialist thoughts and planning in Burma and shows how socialist ideology has had to be tempered with

pragmatism in order to make economic development possible. Looking to Burma's future, he also points out two central problems facing the country: strained minority relations, which have kept the nation from developing a sense of unity, and difficulties with political succession brought on by the military regime's preoccupation with perpetuating its own leadership. The book is useful for the present research about Burmese political and economic developments and helpful for learning.

Another book by David I. Steinberg³⁴, *The Military in Burma/Myanmar: On the Longevity of Tatmadaw Rule and Influence* (2021), has a special focus on the military politics in Myanmar and the longevity of its rule and influence. In this book, he shows the creation of the state and its protection (1948–58), the “constitutional coup” of the Caretaker Government (1958–60), and mercenary fate. He has also analyzed the Burma Socialist Programme Party and its collapse (1962–1988) and the junta and Thein Sein administration (1988–2016). He highlights the book ‘The Longevity of Military Influence: The Coup of February 1, 2021’ with institutional and emotive contrasts. It's a veritably important book on recent elections and the role of the military in Myanmar's politics. This book is veritably helpful to the present exploration of recent Burmese domestic politics.

Aparna Mukherjee³⁵ in her book *British Colonial Policy in Burma: An Aspect of Colonialism in South-East Asia 1840-1885* (1988), exhaustively illustrated British colonialism in Southeast Asia with reference to the relations between the Government of India and the lords of Burma during the period 1840–1885. She has traced British territorial expansion and vigorous marketable thrust in Burma, which began with the two covenants concluded in 1826 at the end of the First Burmese War and the Alternate Burmese War, the annexation of Pegu, the Phayre Mission, the re-establishment of the Residency, the marketable covenants of 1862 and 1867, and the circumstances leading to the fall of Thibaw. It is a very important book on Burmese political history. Her writing helps us understand valuable information from a Burmese historical perspective.

In *Burma: Nationalism and Ideology, An Analysis of Society, culture and Politics* (1989), the author Shwe Lu Maung³⁶ has described the complexity of Burma's present political and social dilemmas. He has traced its roots in the historical and

cultural diversities of the Burmese people, in the feudal and colonial heritage of the country, and in the stormy whirlwind of ultramodern political doctrines. He claimed that Burma stood at the crossroads of illiberalism sermonized by Ne Win, communism of the Burma Communist Party, a democracy-based Federation of Burma, and the decomposition of the present territory into feudal states. It's a very important book on Burmese post-independence political history. His writing helps us understand precious information on Burmese domestic politics.

In the edited book *The Politics of Election in Southeast Asia (1996)*, Robert H. Taylor³⁷ which is a collection of articles that deals with ten separate case studies by leading authorities, examines the countries that have conducted multiparty elections since the 1940s: Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, and Singapore. He concentrated on identifying the common features of electoral politics in the region. It's a veritably important book on electoral politics in Southeast Asia. The 7th chapter of the book 'Election in Burma/Myanmar: For Whom and Why?' by Robert H. Taylor analyzes the colonial elections, transitional elections, post-independence elections, and Burma's electoral record. The chapter is veritably especially helpful to the present research about Burmese electoral politics.

South-East Asia People's Struggle and Political Identity (1998) edited by Rameshwar P. Sinha and Surya Dandekar.³⁸ This book is about Southeast Asian politics and programs in the context of the people's national as well as regional aspirations. South-East Asia, as a distinctive political region, comprises subcontinental and island countries that have historic and strategic significance. The independent countries of Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea (North and South), and Singapore have at several times been the settings for great and savage deputy wars of the big political powers. The recent economic and political storms in the region of Southeast Asia have brought into focus the fragility of the simulated political economies of several of the ASEAN nations. The 5th chapter of this book, 'Myanmar: The Dilemma of Japanese Occupation, Post-War Independence, the Governing System, the Constitution and Background of the Constitutional System, and Government in the Constituent Units. This book helped me gain in-depth knowledge about the dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar.

In *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (1999) authored by Martin Smith³⁹ has banded the largely unlisted struggles of Burma's different ethnic groups through the period of colonial rule and a near-partial century of war and civil strife. Whether a result is now at hand or whether the bitterness formed over the past three years is only paving the way for future decades of conflict remains unclear. But as the country, like much of the communist and socialist world, now pauses on the threshold of a new period, the time seems particularly right to take a step back into the past and begin a new reassessment of Burma's long and inconclusive history of both fortified and political struggle, which has so far failed to produce a cohesive national identity for this deeply worried land. It's a veritably important book on Myanmar's ethnic politics. This book helped me gain in-depth knowledge about the domestic politics of Myanmar.

Christina Fink⁴⁰ in her book *Living Silence: Under Military Rule* (2001) is another important work on Myanmar's military politics. The author has portrayed a moving and perceptive picture of what life under military rule was like. Her book on Burmese society depicts the wide diversity of people, religious figures, the artistic community, and indeed political captures. She presents the political history of the country and examines the internationalization of Burmese politics. She also makes an important donation towards an understanding of the root causes of the problems and choices that the people of Burma are facing. It's a veritably important book on the cerebral goods of military rule for the Burmese people. This book is veritably helpful to the present exploration of Burmese domestic politics.

In *The Making of Modern Burma* (2001), the author Thant Myint-U⁴¹ describes the British colonial expansion of Burma in the nineteenth century. He has examined the lords and distant wars, the Irrawaddy vale in the early nineteenth century, the Court of Ava, conglomerate and identity, the grand reforms of King Mindon, rebellion and the incoming of British rule, reformists and royalists at the court of King Thibaw, war and occupation, colonial society, and the timber of ultramodern Burma. He has traced that it has frequently been portrayed as a dateless place, a country of egalitarian Buddhist townlets, ruled consecutively by autocratic lords, British colonialists, and most lately, a military dictatorship. He argues that numerous aspects of the Burmese society moment, from the borders of the state to the social

structure of the country to the veritable notion of a Burmese or Burman identity, are largely the creations of the nineteenth century, a period of great change, down from the Ava-rooted polity of early ultramodern times and towards the 'British Burma' of the 1900s. It's a veritably important book on Burmese political history. His writing helps us understand precious information on Burmese history and political developments prior to British annexation in the nineteenth century.

Ashley South⁴² in his article "Political Transition in Myanmar: A New Model for Democratization (2004)" has examined the social and political transition in Myanmar/Burma. He has described elite-position politics and the national convention, openings and challenges, inter-ethnic politics, civil society as a vehicle for democratization, and foreign aid and civil society. He has also analyzed the conditional re-emergence of civil society networks within and between ethnic and nonage communities over the past decade, which is one of the most significant. He claimed that the challenges facing the country's ethnic nationalist leaders and communities He has also addressed the role foreign aid can play in supporting the re-emergence of civil society in Myanmar and advocates a policy of picky or targeted engagement.

Later Sampa Kundu⁴³ in her article "Political Transition, Tatmadaw and Challenges for Myanmar's Democracy (2016)" followed the same idea through a study of the two most challenging concerns for Myanmar's democracy: ethnic unrest and economic hardships and how the new government is planning to address these issues in particular and also more generally the influence of the Tatmadaw in politics.

Nationalism as Political Paranoia in Burma: An Essay on the Historical Practice of Power (2005) written by Mikael Gravers⁴⁴ enables us to understand that nationalism in Myanmar is grounded in Buddhism, which is the source of the culture and traditions of the Bama maturity population. Burmese nationalism concentrates primarily on the preservation and protection of Buddhism, Bama culture, tradition, and language, and it views the Western Model of Modern Social Order as a trouble. Burmese nationalism discourages dialogue with other cultures. Nationalism after Ne Win's period unified the historical memory of the experience from the period of Burma's independence and focused on the unitary state to cover culture and national unity. The author noted that Burmese nationalism defines the person who protects

the culture of Bama as a chauvinist. In a similar situation, it's delicate for non-Bama groups to become chauvinists. At the same time, accommodating ethnic groups into the socio-political system in the country would not be easy.

“Dynamics of Political Transition in Myanmar (2006)” This article by B. M. Jain⁴⁵ has examined the discourses about the dynamics of political transition in Myanmar from a holistic perspective. He has analyzed the mobilization of various opposition parties, which can facilitate the establishment of constitutional democracy. It will evaluate a myriad of challenges and dilemmas facing minority communities to help promote democratic forces from the “bottom-up”. This apart, the ethnic question is at the “heart” of Myanmar’s political turmoil. He has also examined the role of ethnic nationalist parties and of civil society networks in creating a conducive environment for bolstering democratic forces at the grassroots level, involving ethnic nationalities that constitute 30%–40% of the population. This article also focuses on the prevailing political trends in Myanmar. The paper is especially helpful to the present research to learn about the recent political perspective of Myanmar.

Sunjay Chandiramani⁴⁶ in his article “Burma and Western Precepts of Democracy (20008)” analyzed the failure of Burma’s “8888 Uprising” in August 1988 to usher in democracy, which has influenced the Western critique of the military junta’s rule, criticism that has been loaded with “liberal democratic” precepts that do not understand the unique political history of the nation. He has also examined the democratic period in Burma from 1948 until 1962, which may offer more relevant solutions than what is currently offered by Western organizations. He has described Burma’s democratic past, ethnic conflict, unwanted external influence, and prospects for change. This article is very important to the focus of Myanmar’s first democratic regime and to know about valuable information on Western precepts of democracy.

Southeast Asia in a New Era (2010) edited by Rodolfo C. Severino, Elspeth Thomson, and Mark Hong.⁴⁷ This book is about Southeast Asia in a new period. This new period began with a new century and a new renaissance, posing great challenges to the region and to each country in it. It has a chapter on each of the ten countries, like Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. In the region, it covers both the political and economic aspects. The 7th chapter of the book ‘Myanmar’ by Tin

Maung Maung Than and Kyaw Yin Hlaing analyzes political history, geography and society, economy, political transition and trends, constitutional provisions for unborn government, and stakeholders in the political transition. This chapter is veritably helpful to the present exploration of the contemporary political transition in Myanmar.

“Political Change in Burma: Transition from Democracy to Military Dictatorship (1948-62) (2011)” article Nehginpao Kipgen⁴⁸ has anatomized the first democratic government (1948–1962). He has described the Panglong conference and independence, insurrection and demand for autonomy/federalism, civilian administration, the response of non-Burman groups, military institutions, and military coups. He has also explained that, a year before independence, leaders of different ethnic groups—the Chins, the Kachins, the Shans, and the Burmans—gathered at Panglong to form the Union of Burma. He has also concentrated on the essential part of race in the political transition from democracy to military dictatorship.

On the other hand, another article by Louis J. Walinsky⁴⁹, “The Rise and Fall of U Nu (1965)” has described the special focus on U Nu’s political rise and fall of his government. He has explained some historical terms of U Nu’s political life that contributed to his rise and eventually to his particular tragedy. He has also discussed some important political issues that came to the fore and caused the fall of U Nu’s government. Those papers are veritably important to the focus of Myanmar’s first democratic governance and to know the precious information on the dynamics of Myanmar’s politics.

The 1988 Uprising in Myanmar (2012) written by Maung Maung⁵⁰ explored the 1988 democratic movement in Myanmar. The author commented that the movement was unsystematic and undersigned, with very little patience and compromise, but spread quickly. The author surprisingly said that many of the democratic leaders were people who had never opposed the government when they were in government offices. However, once they have retired or are fired from their posts, they begin to oppose the government. It is a very important book about the 1988 uprising movement in Myanmar. This book is very helpful to the present research about the Burmese democratic movement.

Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's Struggle for Democracy (2012) written by Bertil Lintner⁵¹ is translated into a Burmese textbook by Naing U. The author made a critical analysis of the 1988 Democratic movement, 2007 Saffron Revolution, Aung San Suu Kyi's democratic movement. The author points out that the former Myanmar military governance wasn't interested in political dialogue and national conciliation but in the conservation of their power. The elimination of the main democratic force called the National League for Democracy was tried. He also reflected on Aung San Suu Kyi as a leader who didn't make enough progress in leading the movement in 1988. The author also said that Aung San Suu Kyi should be more temporal, realistic, and methodical in her movement. He also mentioned that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the only hope for Myanmar, but how important Aung San Suu Kyi understands ethnic issues is unclear. Without the support and cooperation of the Burmese military governance, it would not be possible for her to achieve the political goal she set for the country. Due to the lack of Western values of liberalism, leftist ideology has substantially influenced the leaders of Myanmar's independence struggle.

“The Political Role of the Military in Myanmar (2014)” In this working paper HNIN YI⁵² has described the political part of the military in Myanmar. He showed how Myanmar's military played an influential part in national politics for nearly five decades. It has always perceived national security as a crucial concern for decision-making on domestic and foreign policy matters. He has anatomized the ongoing partial military pullout from Myanmar's domestic politics during the current reform period. It's a veritably important paper on the role of the military in Myanmar's politics. This paper is veritably helpful to the present exploration of recent Burmese domestic politics.

Konsam Shakila Devi⁵³ in her article “Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962-1988 (2014)” has dissected the military rule in Myanmar from 1962 to 1988. She has described how Myanmar gained its independence from the British Empire in 1948 under the Burmese Independent Army. The roots of the military in Myanmar have been associated with the struggle for independence. She has also explained that the first military rule began in 1958 and direct military rule started when Ne Win captured power through a military coup in 1962 and lasted for 12 years in the claim to save the country from decomposition. During this period, there was some

democratic geography in the form of elections, giving citizens the right to handpick and stand for election. This article also focuses on foreign policy during the first military government. It's a veritably important paper on the first military rule in Myanmar's politics. This paper is veritably helpful to the present exploration of Ne Win governance.

Another article by Konsam Shakila Devi ⁵⁴ “Democratization in Myanmar: Development and Challenges (2015)” has analyzed the democratization in Myanmar, its development, and challenges. She described that Myanmar gained its independence from British rule on January 4, 1948, and espoused constitutional democracy, but the incipient stage of democracy that was espoused after independence couldn't last long and ended in 1962 when the military under Ne Win carried out a coup. She has also examined how the country was under direct and circular military rule, but the severe economic extremity in the 1980s led to the pro-democracy movement in 1988, which was the topmost corner in the history of democratization in Myanmar. She claimed that after the demonstration, an election was blazoned to be held in 1990, and later, two further elections were held in 2010 and 2012 as part of the process to homogenize the country. Still, this composition focuses on the process of democratization and a challenge that's arising in the path of democratization in Myanmar. It's a veritably important paper on the history of democratization in Myanmar. This paper is veritably helpful to the present exploration of constitutional development and electoral democracy.

Marco Bunte⁵⁵ in his article “Institutionalizing Military Rule in Burma/Myanmar: External and Internal Factors (2015)” has dissected Myanmar's military administrations and military intervention in politics, conducive and inimical conditions for military pullout, the military in Burmese politics (1948–2010), from direct rule to military control: Burma's transition to “Disciplined Democracy,” and endogenous and exogenous factors in the military's pullout (1988–2011). He has examined how the retreat from direct rule has brought with it a further institutionalization of military rule in politics since the military was suitable to safeguard its interests and design the new electoral authoritarian governance according to its own purposes. The article identifies the internal dynamics within military governance as a high motive for a form of military governance. This paper also focuses on the new situation that can be attributed to a metamorphosis in the

internal and external factors that impact the military's moods and motives, as well as its disposition to intermediate. This composition is veritably important in the focus on Myanmar's military politics and the precious information on the dynamics of Myanmar's military politics.

Another paper by Marco Bunte⁵⁶ "The End of Military-Guided Electoral Authoritarianism: The 2015 Elections in Myanmar (2016)" has described the special case of military-guided electoral authoritarianism in Myanmar. He has examined why electoral authoritarianism crumbled so easily; it looks into the historical significance of elections, the conformation of electoral authoritarian governance under military guidance, and its demise. He has also analyzed the strong seductiveness of the opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as the added struggles within the ruling party and the peremptory government's pledge to the transnational community to hold free and fair elections as the main triggers of the downfall of electoral authoritarianism. It's a veritably important paper on the recent elections and the role of the military in Myanmar's politics. This paper is veritably helpful to the present exploration of recent Burmese military politics and electoral authoritarianism.

A New Constitution for Myanmar: Towards Consensus on an Inclusive Federal Democracy (2022) by W. Elliot Bulmer⁵⁷ is an excellent publication on the constitutional history and trajectory of Myanmar. He focused on the historical, participant, and preference analysis. This paper makes an in-depth analysis of the Burma Act of 1935, the Constitution of 1947, the Constitution of 1974, the 2008 Constitution, and an analysis of the Constitutional line. He also analyzes the National League for Democracy (NLD), the committee representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the armed forces of Myanmar, ethnic armed associations, and ethnic political parties. He has examined the concerns about the interaction of the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar with democracy, parliamentarians, human rights, federalism, constitutionalism, and mercenary control of the armed forces. It's a veritably important paper on Burmese constitutional history. His writing helps us understand precious information on the Burmese constitution's history and political developments from 1935 to 2022.

1.5: Research Gap of the Study

The major limitation is the dearth of research work on Myanmar's domestic politics from 1937 to 2008. Whatever materials are available are mostly on India-Myanmar relations, Bangladesh-Myanmar relations, Myanmar's democratic transition, democratic movement, and ethnic conflict issues. No serious effort has been taken to carry out research on Myanmar's domestic politics. It is also very uncertain as to how much information can be obtained from the official sources in Myanmar. Funding for a trip to Myanmar will also be a limitation.

1.6: Rationale of the Research

It is quite evident that Myanmar is one of the unparalleled countries in South Asia. While other countries have democratized and prospered, Myanmar is governed by a repressive military dictatorship in politics. Despite, a recent experiment with an incomplete democratic transition from Authoritarian Rule, the military still wields significant power and authority in Myanmar. This research highlights constitutional development and electoral democracy and explains the nature of the democratic transition in Myanmar. It also attempts to thoroughly analyze the various aspects of a crown colony from 1937 to 2008 in Myanmar and also discusses the reasons, nature, and present state of dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar. To the best of the knowledge of this researcher, there is a dearth of no comprehensive study on this topic. While there are works on many aspects of Myanmar/Burmese politics, socials, and ethnic conflict in general not many major works on the recent transition though slow, piecemeal, and still complete and imperfect are yet to be noticed. Here lies the rationale for carrying out this research. This study intends to fill in this gap and present the readers with valuable information on the dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar.

1.7: Research Methodology and Sources

Research in social science generally focuses on one or more of the following goals: description, explanation, or evaluation. This is a qualitative-descriptive and interpretative study. Descriptive research emphasizes the description of an issue or it attempts to explore new facts or interpret or reinterpret reality.⁵⁸

However, the present research work has been mainly designed on the basis of the use of historically significant data both qualitative and quantitative in order to reveal the origin and the course of dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar and its two phases 1937 to 2008. The techniques of content analysis and historiography have been used as analytical tools for explaining the process of Myanmar's political evolution with primary emphasis on the reasons, nature, and prospect of dynamics of domestic politics in Myanmar. The collapse of the British colonial mansion in the Indian sub-continent brought significant changes to its political map. Since the present study deals with pre-colonial and post-colonial Asia, it is bound to encounter these alterations in political geography. The researcher adopted a 'universal approach'⁵⁹ rather than parochial while analyzing historical facts and details of the study. This research is also descriptive and interpretative. It describes, interprets, and reinterprets Myanmar's political transition and impact of the constitutional development and electoral democracy.

A variety of data was collected from diverse sources such as standard books on political science and international politics, international relations, foreign policy, the history of India, the history of Burma, history of the United Kingdom; research papers and articles from pertinent journals, biographies, newspapers, magazines, economics surveys, census, publications of embassies, documents of government, non-government and international organizations and details from internet would form the secondary sources. Archival records, i.e., correspondence of officials, documents of treaties, etc. would be the primary sources to collect and compile the relevant material of the study. Moreover, the researcher may also conduct an interview of participants in the incidents if it seems necessary for the study. On the basis of the obtained data, qualitative analysis was performed. The researcher tried her best to keep an objective approach in the collection and explanation of data and also while writing.

The researcher adopted the reference style should follow the American Psychological Association (APA). The standard usually used at Cambridge College is the APA style, which is the standard for academic papers in social science, like psychology, anthropology, and sociology, as well as education, business, and humanities disciplines. In an APA style paper, the citation is given twice in the

paper: in the body of the text and on a separate page titled. The APA style calls for three kinds of information to be included in in-text citations. The **author's last name** and the work's **date of publication** must always appear, and these items must match exactly the corresponding entry in the references list. The third kind of information, the page number, appears only in a citation to a direct quotation. The researcher chose the particular style which could be accessed through the URL: <https://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/apa-referencing/7Theses>.

1.8: Theoretical Framework of the Research

The theory is a framework or generalized view by which a certain issue is explained in a formative way, and eventually, any research has to follow a certain framework of analysis. There are a good number of theories and schools of analysis regarding Democratization issues. Some of the important theories are the economic approach, cultural approach, dependency approach, colonial heritage approach, civil-military approach, and democratic transition and consolidation approach.

This study is going to democratic transition and consolidation approach. According to Linz, consolidated democracy is “one in which none of the major political actors, parties, or organized interests, forces, or institutions consider that there is an alternative to the democratic process to gain power and that no political institution or group has a claim to veto the action of democratically elected decision-makers.”⁶⁰ O'Donnell says that democratic consolidation has no theory that would tell us why and how the new oligarchies that have institutionalized elections will “complete” their institutional set, or otherwise become “consolidated”.⁶¹ The nature of democratic transition is important for consolidation. Huntington thinks that there is a link between the transition process and consolidation. He identified three types of democratic transition:

1. transformation- it passed when the elites in power took the lead in bringing about democracy;
2. replacement- it passed when opposition groups took the lead in bringing about democracy, and the authoritarian governance collapsed or was overthrown;
3. transplacement- it passed when democratization redounded largely from common action by government and opposition groups.⁶²

These three types of transition are based on the balance of forces between the government and the opposition. Huntington also says that every historical case combines elements of two or more transition processes. He concludes that transformation and trans placement are the most usual forms of transition from both military regimes and one-party systems and the transition through replacement is rare.

The above discussion offers us useful perceptivity in grasping the complexity of the ongoing political fermentation in Myanmar. After gaining independence from Britain in January 1948, Myanmar encountered numerous problems due to the “divide and rule policy” of British colonialism. Nonetheless, it was fortunate enough to have democracy till 1962. Since, General Ne Win's governance, the military became an important force and support base of the authoritarian governance in Myanmar that still remained as well. The recent political metamorphosis may be defined as a strategic game between the soft-liner liberals versus hardliners with a particular focus on the elite actors. In this situation, Myanmar's government should make the quick enterprise to establish a democratic government and restructure its constitution with the flavour of democracy. Intended for the democratic consolidation of Myanmar, I would suggest that a consociation democratic is suitable because Myanmar has faced ethnical conflict and civil war. Consociation democracy can drop religious and ethnic polarization that's one of the major rudiments of ethnic conflict and civil war.

1.9: Scope of the Research

The period to be covered for the study is from 1937 to 2008. It has been decided to start with the year 1937 because it's a watershed year in the history of Myanmar. The British colony of Burma was part of the British state in India, the Conglomerate of India, from 1824 to 1937. Burma was separated from the rest of the Indian Empire in 1937, just ten years before India became an independent country, in 1947. Imagine, also if Burma had remained a part of India, rather than getting a separate reality in 1937. Like numerous regions that weren't inescapably part of the historical conglomerates of India, Burma was acquired by the British in order to cover their Indian conglomerate. The British stressed that violence and screams by Bamar against ethnical Indians and other groups would grow out of control unless they separated Burma from India.

On the other hand, the political history of Myanmar shows that the military remained the unchallenged power in the country. It came to power in 1962. Since then, it has suppressed all democratic movements in the country. The crackdown of 1988, the military's turndown to accept the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in the election of 1990, and the dismantling of the Saffron Revolution of 2007 established the military as the single political power of the country. The military considers itself as the 'sole rescuer' of the country. Hence, they always deny transnational enterprises about their programs towards the democratic forces. The military junta considers any transnational response towards Myanmar as hindrance in the internal affairs of the country. The military exploits it as an occasion to deny any democratic transition of the country. The Western support towards Aung San Suu Kyi occasionally compels the military to reevaluate its strategies toward democratic forces in the country. The new 2008 Constitution is, therefore, considered the consequence of constant pressure from the transnational community to establish democracy in Myanmar.

1.10: Organization of the work

The study is divided into six broad chapters. However, in the process of research, some of the chapters and sequences may be adjusted and re-arranged to keep the continuity and logical development of the study.

The first chapter is *Introduction*. This chapter deals with the statement of the research, objectives of the study, hypothesis, review of literature, research gap, rationale of the study, research methodology and sources, theoretical framework, and scope of the used for the research. Chapter arrangements are also included in this chapter.

The second chapter is *Historical Background of Myanmar's Domestic Politics: From Pre-History to Independence (1948)*. This chapter deals with the historical background of Myanmar. It concentrated on the political history of Myanmar in the pre-colonial period and completely bandied Pyu city-states, Pagan dynasty/empire, Toungoo and colonialism. This chapter also discussed British colonial rule and Burmese Politics, British occupation and British rule in Burma, the separation of Burma from British India, World War II and Japanese occupation in Burma, and the post-war Achieved Independence. This chapter also detailed analysis of the role of Aung San in Burmese Politics.

The third chapter is *Democratic Government of Myanmar (1948-1962): Dynamics of Domestic Politics*. This chapter will concentrate on Myanmar's democratic Government (1948-1958 and 1960-1962) thoroughly discuss the nature and functioning of this governance and explain the failure of the first democratic system in Burma/Myanmar. This chapter examines the parliamentary democracy in the independence of Myanmar. In this chapter, an attempt will also be to describe Myanmar's democratic government and domestic politics and, some important political issues which came to the fore and caused the fall of the parliamentary democratic system. These are elections, political parties and factions, personal rivalries and factionalism within the AFPFL government, insurgency and demand for autonomy/federalism, and enactment of Buddhism as the state religion.

The fourth chapter is *The Post-Military Coup (1962-1988) Compulsions of Domestic Politics in Myanmar*. This chapter makes an in-depth analysis of the nature and functioning of Myanmar's first military Government and its impact on domestic politics. This chapter will focus on the military of Myanmar in the pre-and post-Independence politics. This chapter highlights the Ne Win Government and Myanmar's domestic politics. The period from 1962-1988 can be divided into two phases. The first phase is direct military rule from 1962 to 1974 and the circular military rule Constitutional Dictatorship phase from 1974 to 1988. This chapter will describe the challenges of the Ne Win government and the impact of domestic politics. This chapter also describes the foreign policy under military rule from 1962 to 1988 and an attempt has also focused on the Ne Win governance: impact on the democratic landscape in Myanmar.

The fifth chapter is *Political Development and Domestic Politics in Myanmar (1988 to 2008)*. This chapter analyses the ongoing process of political development in Myanmar since the mass insurrection against the military regime from 1988 to 2008. The chapter also analyses the factors that have brought about the developments; issues and challenges concerning political development in the country. This chapter will concentrate on nearly inter-related aspects of the political development and Myanmar's domestic politics. This chapter will examine the 1988 Mass Uprising and its impact on society. This chapter also discussed the emergence of rearmost political groups and Aung San Suu Kyi: Emergence as a Mass Leader.

This chapter highlights the political development after the Mass Movement. These are the 1990 election and constitutional amendment and the 2003 development and its roadmap to democracy. This chapter will describe the 2007 Saffron Revolution and its impact. Finally, an attempt has also been made to concentrate in this chapter on the 2008 constitutional provisions for the socio-political development of Myanmar.

The sixth chapter is ***Conclusion***. It is the last chapter of this study. This chapter is devoted to making a summary and drawing conclusions on the findings of the research.

Notes and References:

¹ The military government changed its name from the 'Republic of the Union of Burma' to the 'Republic of the Union of Myanmar' in July 1989. The UN and most of the countries including India accepted that change except the Burmese opposition, the US, and the UK. Indeed, the use of the name has become a surrogate indicator of political persuasion. David I. Steinberg, (2010). "The United States and Myanmar: A Boutique Issue?" *International Affairs* (published by Wiley on behalf of Royal Institute of International Affairs) Vol. 86, No.1, p. 175, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40389093>. However, the military government's claim that the new official name, Myanmar, is ethnically neutral and inclusive of all the country's ethnic groups is obviously untrue since both words mean the same, and have been used within Burma to refer to the politically and numerically dominant Burman (Bamar) ethnic group, who make up about two-thirds of the population, for a long time, says anthropologist, Gustaaf Houtman, 'Should it be Burma or Myanmar?' news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7013943.stm. There is no international consensus on which set of names should be used. The present study uses Burma since it is in commensuration with the time span of the study. Also, see Donald M. Seekins 'Historical Dictionary of Burma (Myanmar)'. Much of the discussion in this thesis refers to the period when it was known as Burma. To avoid confusion, I have used both Myanmar and Burma interchangeably.

² See, *Eurasisches Magazin* (Germany) I www.eurasischesmagazin.de/artikel/?artikelID=20110805 © (2011) I Wilfried Arz: Geostrategic importance of Burma/Myanmar increasing; <http://www.networkmyanmar.org/images/stories/PDF10/geostrategic-importance-of-burma.pdf>, browsed 25 Nov 2015.

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Chapter- 2

Historical Background of Myanmar's Domestic Politics: From Pre-History to Independence (1948)

2.1: Introduction

Myanmar is a country in Southeast Asia. It is roughly diamond-shaped with a long southeastern 'tail' and extends 925 km (575 miles) from east to west and 2,100 km (1,300 miles) from north to south. With a total area of 676,578 square kilometres (261,228 square miles) and a bank of 1,930 kilometres (1,200 miles), Myanmar is bordered in the northwest by the Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh states of India and the Chittagong division of Bangladesh. Its north and northeast borders are with the Tibet Autonomous Region and Yunnan, China. It is bounded by Laos and Thailand to the east and southeast, and the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to the south and southwest.¹ The population of more than 54 million makes Myanmar an average-sized country (Myanmar Population, 2021).² It has one of the smallest population concentrations in the Southeast Asian region, coupled with significant untapped agrarian capabilities and a rich endowment of natural resources. A major rice-producing country, Myanmar, until recently, was one of the world's top exporters of rice.³ It also has great teak forests, which yield durable timber used primarily for shipbuilding. Myanmar was a major source of various metal ores, particularly wolfram lead and zinc ores. It has also been blessed with abundant natural resources, including oil and gas, yet it's one of the least advanced countries in the world.

A variety of nationalities and tribes live in Myanmar. It is a country of 135 ethnic groups. The composition of different ethnic groups falls under the eight major groups: Arakan/Rakhine, Barman/Burmans, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni/Kayah, Mon, and Shan.⁴ Of these groups, Burmese/Barmans constitute 70% of the total population.⁵ The country's ethnic composition is one of the most complex composites in the world, with over 100 languages and dialects. Myanmar is a multi-religious country. There is no sanctioned state religion; however, the government shows a preference for

Theravada Buddhism, which is the religion of the majority of people. Officially, it is estimated that 89% of the Myanmar population practices Theravada Buddhism. Both Christians and Muslims make up 4% of the population. There are about 1% Hindus, too. The culture of the people of Myanmar has been heavily influenced by Theravada Buddhism.⁶ The mountainous border regions of the western, northern, and eastern corridors of the country are inhabited by the Naga, Wa, and other tribes, who are still extremely backward in their socio-economic and cultural development. The Ayeyarwady River (formerly known as the Irrawaddy River) runs through the centre of the country and suckers out to form a delta on the south coast; Yangon stands beside one of its numerous mouths.⁷ Its new capital megacity is Naypyidaw, and its largest megacity is Yangon (Rangoon).

Myanmar was a prosperous colony during the British colonial period. Her natural riches and strategic position had attracted the British colonialists. The political history of Myanmar and Burma before the British subjection can be epitomized as a never-ending struggle among at least four different indigenous groups and between the peoples of Burma and their neighbours. The predominant group in the internal struggle was the Burmans⁸, whose home was in the Irrawaddy Valley; the Mons or Talaings, who lived in the south; the Shans from the north, central, and eastern; and the Arakanese, whose home was the semi-isolated area in the west of Burma. The other indigenous groups played no important part in the struggles. The first countries in Myanmar/Burma territory appeared at the beginning of the Christian period.

The history of Myanmar may have begun with the arrival of Mon people from Central Asia between 2500 and 1500 B.C. The second wave of people to come was the Tibeto-Burman from the north. The Burmese, who at the moment form the largest ethnic group in Myanmar, believe that their early Tibeto-Burman ancestors were the Pyus, the Kanyans, and the Theks. Little is known about Kanyans and Theks. Still, the Pyus have traces of a well-developed civilization.⁹ In the early ninth century, a kingdom named Pagan Kingdom was established by uniting the region of Irrawaddy Valley and its fringe. After the Mongol irruption in 1287, the Pagan Kingdom was resolved into a number of small kingdoms. In the eleventh-thirteenth centuries, the ancestors of the modern Burmese formed the Pagan Kingdom, in which farming, irrigation, culture, and architecture reached a high level of development. This period of the Pagan dynasty was Myanmar/Burma's golden age.¹⁰ The period ended in 1287

AD (Anno Domini), when the armies of Kublai Khan drove the Burman king from his throne and destroyed the empire. In the sixteenth century, Toungoo kings subdued their neighbors and re-established Burman rule in roughly the area that constitutes ultramodern-day Myanmar/Burma. The Toungoo kings were successful in forcing the Shans to accept endless Burman suzerainty. In Burma's wars with Siam during this period, neither country gained an endless victory; a major result of this warfare was the depopulation of the area of lower Burma.¹¹

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the vigour of the new dynasty was spent, and Myanmar/Burma again became the centre of jarring groups. In the eighteenth century, the Kanbwan dynasty occupied power and followed the state reform policy of the Toungoo. They established central authority in the surrounding regions and made Burma one of the most signature states on the continent of Asia. Under this dynasty, Burma was at war with the neighbouring countries. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, Burma was one of the most important countries in Southeast Asia. During this period, the British launched an attack to conquer Myanmar, but the British forces encountered steep resistance from the Burmese. Therefore, the British failed to enthrall the country as fast as they had anticipated. It took three aggressive wars before the British managed to bring Myanmar and Burma under their rule, and only the third passage in 1885 ended in the annexation of the total of Myanmar/Burma.¹² In 1886, Britain made Burma a province of India. At this time, they separated religion and state. Accordingly, Burmese traditional society changed drastically. In spite of the blame put on the British for everything they did, their occupation and rule of Burma were not entirely without benefits for Burma. On the one hand, they put an end to the feudal contest, and the administration, on the other hand, helped the feudalists unite to struggle against the common adversary, the British, and the Indians whom the British brought to Burma to help in their administration.¹³ Thus, the British governed Myanmar for around fifty years.

The 1917–1918 agitation was the first wide political protest in Myanmar. The protesters were organized by a non-political “Young Men’s Buddhist Association (YMBA)”. The events linked with the announcement of the secretary of state for India converted this movement into a political one under the banner “General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA)”.¹⁴ It was a broad-grounded, non-religious association

with branches spread throughout Myanmar. An alternate political development occurred in 1920 when university students called a national strike to protest against the education plans connected with a new university. The strike marked the entry of the students into national politics. From 1923 to 1941, there was a steady growth in politics in Myanmar. In this period, the GCBA resolved into shifting factions mainly over the question of participation in politics.¹⁵

Some Burmese chauvinists saw the outbreak of World War II as an occasion to prize concessions from the British in exchange for support in the war. Many again opposed Burma's participation in the war under any circumstances. Aung San formed the Communist Party of Burma in 1939. Thereafter, with the help of the Japanese, Aung San formed a group named "Thirty Comrades."¹⁶ In anticipation of the Japanese invasion of Burma, Aung San formed the 'Burma Independence Army' (BIA) in 1942. In 1943, the Japanese declared Burma an independent country. The BIA was converted into the Burmese National Army.¹⁷ The Japanese declaration proved to be a hoax, and the Burmese leaders started reaching out to the British to oust the Japanese. After the capitulation of the Japanese, the British returned to Burma. They set up the military government to take control of the country and agreed to include Burmese leaders in the administration of Burma. Similar to this, Aung San and some other Burmese leaders joined the Governor's Executive Council. In the meantime, the Burmese, under the leadership of Aung San, started accommodations with the British authorities for the independence of Burma. The negotiations concluded successfully in London with the signing of the Aung San-Attlee Agreement on January 27, 1947. Still, the socialists and some other leaders were dissatisfied with this agreement. This gave rise to divisions within the rank and train of the independence movement in Burma. But Aung San, in the meantime, successfully negotiated an agreement with ethnic nonages for a unified Burma at the Panglong (a city in former Shan countries) Conference on February 12, 1947. Most of the prominent leaders of Burma rallied behind Aung San and decided to form the 'Union of Burma'. This made Aung San the undisputed leader of Burma.

Aung San's party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (hereafter AFPFL), won an overwhelming victory in the April 1947 Constituent Assembly elections.¹⁸ Before the British government handed over power, they wanted to resolve the status of the frontier areas. On the other hand, the Burman politicians also wanted the frontier areas to join the

new union of Burma. Although Aung San negotiated an agreement with the people of the borders, all were included, and some weren't satisfied with the arrangement being made for them to join the union. If there was one person who had the vision and diplomatic skills to resolve the issue, it was Aung San.¹⁹ However, the internal rift within the AFPFL brings his life. On July 19, U Saw, an ambitious elderly politician and conservative pre-war Prime Minister of Burma (1940–1942), finagled the assassination of Aung San and most of his cabinet members meeting in the Secretariat. Burma became independent on January 4, 1948. Under the constitution of 1947, Myanmar became a democracy known as the Union of Burma (now Myanmar).

With the above background, an attempt has been made in this chapter to make an in-depth analysis of the historical background of Myanmar's domestic politics, from pre-history to independence. This chapter will focus on four closely interrelated aspects of the historical background of Myanmar's politics. First, it will examine the political history of Myanmar in the pre-colonial period. Second, it will describe British colonial rule and Myanmar politics. Third, it will describe the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) and the war that achieved the independence of Myanmar. Finally, this chapter has also been made to introduce Aung San and discuss his role in Myanmar's pre-independence politics.

2.2: Political History of Myanmar in the Pre-Colonial Period

2.2: i. Pyu City-States

Myanmar, or Burma, is an ancient country. The history of Myanmar dates back to the first human settlement in the region, approximately 13,000 years ago. The foremost occupants of Myanmar were the Tibetan-Burman-speaking population. According to historians, the people of Burma belong to a group called Tibeto-Burman who came down into Burma from the north.²⁰ This group of Buddhists innovated the megacity of Pyu states in Upper Burma and the Mon Kingdoms in Lower Burma.²¹ The original home of the Pyu is reconstructed to be Qinghai Lake in present-day Qinghai and Gansu (in northwestern China).²² The Pyu established megacity-kingdoms in Myanmar at Binnaka, Mongamo, Shri Kshetra, and Halingyi. Shri Kestra State was one of the largest and most important civic countries in the region.²³ The states of Haiyu and Sri Kestra introduced a new yearbook together with what is now known as the Burmese Calendar. According to the information received, Eyabatakale

are Burma's most ancient settlers of the Paiyu community.²⁴ On the other hand, Chinese historical records noted that the Pyu claimed sovereignty over 18 kingdoms, numerous of them in the southern portions of Myanmar.

At that time, Burma was a part of the route between China and India. In this way, the Pyu culture was heavily told through trade with India, importing Buddhism as well as other cultural, architectural, and political generalities, which would have a continuing influence on Burmese culture and political organizations.²⁵ In the Chinese document of the eighth century, there are references to the six Piyu states in the entire Irrawaddy receptacle, where these states have been described as peaceful and humane countries. The word 'war' was a word unknown to the inhabitants. The residents used cotton cloth instead of silk so that the silkworm would not be killed. Chinese documents also show that the Piyurs were proficient in astronomy and that the Piyu boys practised monasticism from the age of seven to twenty years. The men, dressed in blue, wore gold beautifiers on their headdresses, and the women wore jewels in their hair.²⁶

Plate 2.1

Map of Burma in the Pyu City-States



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Myanmar#/media/File:Pyu_Realm.png

At the beginning of the sixth century, another group called Mana began to enter the lower part of Burma. By the eighth century, Manara was able to establish at least two states (or city-states). The Burmese people who invaded the state of Pyu in the early seventh century from the northern region originally lived in the highlands of Burma. From the beginning of the eighth century, a small number of Burmans began their migration to the region.²⁷ In the alternate half of the ninth century, the Pagans established prolonged settlements along the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers.²⁸ The Pyu civilization lasted for a long time until the ninth century. By the ninth century, several megacities-countries had picked up across the land: the Pyu in the central dry zone, Mon along the southern coastline, and Arakanese along the western littoral. The balance was worried when the Pyu came under repeated attacks from Nan Zhao (Circan Yunnan) between the 750s and the 830s. Nan Zhao developed a special way to pacify the adversaries around them. In the mid-to-late ninth century, the Bama people innovated a small agreement at Bagan. It was one of several contending megacity countries until the late tenth century when it grew in authority and majesty.²⁹

2.2: ii. Pagan Dynasty/Empire

Another group of Tibeto-Burman speakers, the Burmans also became prominent in the northern dry zone. They were centred around the small agreement of Pagan on the Irrawaddy River. By the mid-ninth century, Pagan had surfaced as the capital of an important area that would unify Myanmar and inaugurate the Burman domination of the country that has continued to the present day.³⁰ During the eighth and ninth centuries, the area of Nan Zhao became the dominant power in southwestern China; it was peopled by speakers of Lolo (or Yi), a Tibeto-Burman language. Nan Zhao mounted a series of raids on the metropolises of landmass Southeast Asia in the early decades of the ninth century and indeed captured Hanoi in 861. The Mon and Khmer metropolises held establishments, but the Pyu capital of Halingyi fell. The Burmans moved into this political vacuum, establishing Pagan as their capital megacity in 849. The Burmans learned much from the Pyu, but they were still cut off from the trade earnings of southern Myanmar.

Theravada Buddhism had faded from India and was replaced by Mahayana Buddhism and a resurgent Hinduism. Over the next 30 years, Anawrahta (or Anorata) innovated the Pagan Kingdom, unifying for the first time the regions that would latterly constitute the ultramodern-day Burma. Anawrahta's successors by the late twelfth century had extended their influence further south into the upper Malay Peninsula, at least to the Salween River in the east, below the current China border in the further north, and to the west, northern Arakan and the Chino Hills.³¹ The Burmese language, culture and Theravada Buddhism sluggishly became dominant in the country. The Pagan Kingdom fell due to the Mongol irruptions and several warring countries surfaced.³² Descriptions of Thai history suggest that the Pagans extended their conglomerate down the Malacca Peninsula to the Malay Peninsula.³³

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Pagans surfaced as an important state alongside the Khmer Empire. The Chola lords of China and India were also honoured by them. By the middle of the thirteenth century, much of Burma's territory was under Pagans or Khmer.³⁴ On the other hand, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Sun autocrats began to compass the Pagans from the north and east. In this period, the ancestors of the ultramodern Burmese formed the Pagan Kingdom in which husbandry; irrigation, culture, and armature reached a high position of development. This period of the Pagan dynasty was Burma's golden age.³⁵ Pagan was a fabulous area indeed to its coevals; although he did not visit it, the thirteenth-fourteenth century Venetian rubberneck Marco Polo was impressed by the tales of its splendours that were reported to him. By the time of its subjection, Pagan had an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 tabernacles and cloisters. Hundreds of these still stand a moment and swear to the substance of its people and the uproariousness of its culture. The period ended in 1287 A.D. when the armies of Kublai Khan drove the Burman king from his throne and destroyed the conglomerate.

Plate 2.2

Map of Burma in the Pagan Empire



Source:https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Myanmar#/media/File:Pagan_Empire_-_Sithu_II.PNG

Following Pagan's demise, there was a 250-year period of political disintegration that lasted well into the sixteenth century. Like the Burmans four centuries before, Shan settlers who arrived during the Mongol invasions stayed before. Several contending the Shan States came to dominate the entire northwestern to eastern bow girding the Irrawaddy vale. The vale too was beset with petty countries until the late fourteenth century when two sizeable powers, Ava Kingdom and Hanthawaddy Kingdom, surfaced. In the west, a politically fractured Arakan was under the contending influences of its stronger neighbours until the Kingdom of Mrauk U unified the Arakan bank for the first time in 1437. Beforehand, Ava fought wars of unification

(1385-1424) but could no way fairly assemble the lost conglomerate. Having held off Ava, the Mon-speaking Hanthawaddy entered its golden age and Arakan went on to become a power in its own right for the coming 350 years. The Mon tradesmen, crafters, artists, engineers, goldsmiths, and wood-carvers who were captured at that time and taken to Pagan tutored their skills and arts to the Burmans.

Mon monks and scholars tutored the Burmans on the sacred Pali language and the Buddhist Holy Writ, and the Burmans soon became scholars themselves, making Pagan the centre of Theravada knowledge. Some of their religious narratives came to be accepted as part of the Pali canon by other Theravada countries. The Pagan women also took part in this exertion, particularly in the structure and gift of tabernacles and cloisters. In distinction, constant warfare left Ava greatly weakened, and it sluggishly disintegrated from 1481 onward. In 1527, the Confederation of Shan States conquered Ava itself and ruled Upper Myanmar until 1555. Like the Pagan Empire, Ava, Hanthawaddy and the Shan countries were all multi-racial politics. Despite the wars, artistic synchronization continued. This period is considered a golden age for Burmese culture. Burmese literature “grew more confident, popular, and stylistically different”, and the alternate generation of Burmese law canons as well as the foremost pan-Burma chronicles surfaced.³⁶ Hanthawaddy monarchs introduced religious reforms that later spread to the rest of the country.³⁷ Numerous splendid tabernacles of Mrauk U were erected during this period.

2.2: iii. Toungoo and Colonialism

Beginning in the 1480s, Ava faced constant internal insurrections and external attacks from the Shan States and began to disintegrate. In 1510, Taungoo, located in the remote southeastern corner of the Ava area, also declared independence.³⁸ When the Confederation of Shan States conquered Ava in 1527, numerous deportees fled southeast to Taungoo, the only area in peace, and one girdled by larger hostile kingdoms. Taungoo, led by its ambitious king Tabinshwehti and his deputy general Bayinnaung, would go on to reunify the petty kingdoms that had existed since the fall of the Pagan Empire and set up the largest conglomerate in the history of Southeast Asia. First, the upstart area defeated a more important Hanthawaddy in the Taungoo- Hanthawaddy War (1534-41). Tabinshwehti moved the capital to recently captured Bago in 1539. His successor Bayinnaung went on to conquer a vast swath of

landmass in Southeast Asia including the Shan states, Lan Na, Manipur, Mong Mao, the Ayutthaya Kingdom, LanXang, and southern Arakan.³⁹ Still, the largest conglomerate in the history of Southeast Asia unravelled soon after Bayinnaung's death in 1581, fully collapsing by 1599. Ayutthaya seized Tenasserim and Lan Na, and Portuguese mercenaries established Portuguese rule at Thanlyin (Syriam). In Burma's wars with Siam during this period neither country gained an endless victory; a major result of this warfare was the depopulation of the area of lower Burma.

While the hiatus that followed the fall of the Pagan Empire lasted over 250 years (1287-1555), that following the fall of First Taungoo was fairly short-lived. One of Bayinnaung's sons, Nyaungyan Min, directly began the reunification trouble, successfully restoring central authority over Upper Burma and nearer Shan countries by 1606. His successor Anaukpetlun defeated the Portuguese at Thanlyin in 1613. He recovered the upper Tanintharyi seacoast to Dawei and Lan Na from the Siamese by 1614. He also captured the trans-Salween Shan states in 1622-26. His family Thalun rebuilt the war-torn country. He ordered the first-ever census in Burmese history in 1635, which showed that the area had about two million people. By 1650, the three suitable lords Nyaungyan, Anaukpetlun, and Thalun had successfully rebuilt a lower but far more manageable area. More importantly, the new dynasty progressed to produce a legal and political system whose introductory features would continue under the Konbaung dynasty well into the nineteenth century. The crown fully replaced the heritable chieftainships with appointed wards in the entire Irrawaddy vale and greatly reduced the heritable rights of Shan chiefs. It also reined in the nonstop growth of monastic wealth and autonomy, giving a lower tax base. Its trade and temporal supervisor reforms erected a prosperous frugality for further than 80 years. Except for a multitudinous occasional insurrection and an external war in which Burma defeated Siam's attempt to take Lan Na and Mottama in 1662-1664, the Kingdom was largely at peace for the rest of the seventeenth century.

Plate 2.3

Map of Burma in the Toungoo Empire



Source:[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Myanmar#/media/File:Map_of_Taungoo_Empire_\(1580\).png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Myanmar#/media/File:Map_of_Taungoo_Empire_(1580).png)

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the vigour of the new dynasty was spent, and Myanmar/Burma again became the centre of jarring groups. In the eighteenth century, the Kanbwan dynasty enthralled power and followed the state reform policy of the Toungoo. They established central power in the girding regions and made Burma one of the utmost important countries on the mainland of Asia. During this dynasty, Burma was at war with the neighbouring countries. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, Burma was one of the most important countries in Southeast Asia. From the 1720s onward, the area was beset with repeated Manipuri raids into Upper Myanmar and a disquieting rebellion in Lan

Na. In 1740, the Mon of Lower Myanmar Restored the Hanthawaddy Kingdom. Hanthawaddy forces sacked Ava in 1752, ending the 266-year-old Toungoo Dynasty.

After the fall of Ava, the Konbaung-Hanthawaddy War involved one resistance group under Alaungpaya defeating the Restored Hanthawaddy. By 1759, he had reunited all of Myanmar and Manipur, and driven out the French and the British, who had handed arms to Hanthawaddy.⁴⁰ By 1770, Alaungpaya's heirs at law had subdued much of Laos (1765) and fought and won the Burmese-Siamese War (1765-67) against Ayutthaya and the Sino-Burmese War (1765-69) against Qing China (1765-1769).⁴¹ With Burma preoccupied by the Chinese trouble, Ayutthaya recovered its homes by 1770 and went on to capture Lan Na by 1776. Burma and Siam went to war until 1855, but all redounded in a stalemate, swapping Tenasserim (to Burma) and Lan Na (to Ayutthaya).⁴² Faced with an important China and a resurgent Ayutthaya in the east, King Bodawpaya turned west, acquiring Arakan (1785), Manipur (1814), and Assam (1817). It was the alternate-largest empire in Burmese history but also one with a long ill-defined border with British India.⁴³

The breadth of this conglomerate was short-lived. Burma lost Arakan, Manipur, Assam, and Tenasserim to the British in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824- 1826).⁴⁴ In 1852, the British fluently seized Lower Burma in the Alternate Anglo-Burmese War.⁴⁵ King Mindon Min tried to contemporize the area, and in 1875 hardly avoided annexation by ceding the Karenni States. The British, alarmed by the consolidation of French, and Indo-China, annexed the remainder of the country in the Third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885.⁴⁶ Konbaung lords extended Restored Toungoo's executive reforms and achieved unknown situations of internal control and external expansion. For the first time in history, the Burmese language and culture came to predominate the entire Irrawaddy valley. The elaboration and growth of Burmese literature and theatre continued, backed by an extremely high adult manly knowledge rate for the period.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the extent and pace of reforms were uneven and eventually proved inadequate to stem the advance of British colonialism.

Table 2.4**Historical Periods and Dynasties of Burma**

Period	Dynasty
Before A.D. 1044	Rulers of Pagan
1044-1287	Pagan Dynasty
1298-1364	Myinsaing and Pinya
1315-1364	Sagaing
1364-1555	Ava
1486-1752	Toungoo Dynasty
1752-1885	Alaungpaya or Konbaung Dynasty
1752	Alaungpaya of Shwebo
1760	Naungdawgyi
1763	Hsinbyushin
1776	Singu Min
1781	Maung Maung and Bodawpaya
1819	Bagyidaw
1838	Tharrawaddy
1846	Pagan Min
1853	Mindon Min
1878	Thibaw

Source: Adapted from D. G. E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 1964, pp. 864-869. Also, Rameshwar P. Sinha, and Surya Dandekar (eds.), *South-East Asia People's Struggle and Political Identity*, Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 193-198.

2.3: British Colonial Rule and Burmese Politics**2.3: i. British Occupation in Burma**

British merchandisers first entered Burmese waters in the 1600s, and they soon began to exchange weapons in return for trading concessions.⁴⁸ Actually, the British adventure in Burma during the period 1587-1743 was conditional, scrupling, shifting, and largely unprofitable. This year came a watershed in the British policy towards

Burma since the two factors pressed it to change greatly. First, at this time a new dynasty was established in Upper Burma under the kingship of great Alaungpaya (1715-1760) after suppressing the Talaing national movement. Now, Burma embarked upon its expansionist drive which finally invited a reaction from the British. Second, during the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the British East India Company passed through the first phase of its metamorphosis, from a marketable to a political power. Indeed, British relations with Burma were renewed during the reign of Alaungpaya; henceforward the relations tended to be increasingly political which were absolutely commercial, in nature, prior to 1744.⁴⁹ So, it can be justifiably said that before the political predominance of Great Britain in India, the British tried to get connected to Burma, the land of fortune.

In 1755, Captain Robert Baker was transferred as an envoy of the East India Company. His account describes King Alaungpaya, notable in the world's history as having of 'impressive personality and overweening arrogance'. Before the first war between the Court of Ava (Inwa), under the leadership of Bagyidaw (1784-1846), and the British, the British Government of India was veritably concerned with the effects of the large Burman raids on its territory, for these raids occasionally drove disturbing figures of deportees into British-held Bengal.⁵⁰ However, the presumptuous military conditioning of Ava which it had been pursuing for further than half a century greatly worried the British. Not only Burmese successfully defend themselves against a redoubtable Chinese attack but they also scuffled Tenasserim from Siam, and desisted control of Arakan, Manipur, and Assam.⁵¹ Particularly, the Burmese victory of 1785 over the Kingdom of Arakan, the littoral strip that ran along the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, made armed hassle ineluctable between the two expansionist powers Burma and the British.

Through this conquest, Burma acquired a common frontier with the British in Chittagong of Bengal, a British Indian Province.⁵² The British wanted to protect their most precious territorial possession-India from both the Burmese and their natural enemy the French, who were trying to gain a military foothold in Burma. Annoyed by the frequent hostile actions on the Burma border and having suppressed all the real and potential enemies of the Empire in India, the British felt the necessity to crush the myth that Burmans were invincible. The British felt it indispensable to demonstrate their military might to the Burmese. The responsibility to teach a lesson to the

Burmese was undertaken by Lord Amherst, the then Governor-General of East India Company. On the other hand, the enthusiastic Burmese King, Bagyidaw, decided to end the long rivalry with the British, on the western border of Burma, through a war.

Thus, the First Anglo-Burmese War started in 1824. The war was initiated by the Burmese. Unfortunately, much-deified Burmese gallantry proved to be of no mileage. The technologically and strategically advanced British, who fought this war with Indian troops and fiscal coffers, came victorious. The first Anglo-Burmese war broke out but peace was restored with the Treaty of Yandabo⁵³ in 1826 under which the Burmese ceded the terrain of Arakan and the southern fiefdom of Tenasserim to the British. According to the peace convention inked in Randapo, Rakhine Dhannyawadi, and Mon Tanessarim went under British rule. Although the border disagreement was put as the cause of the First Anglo-Burma War, the British interest in the natural coffers of Burma was the main reason behind the war.⁵⁴

British intention to occupy the entire Burma came egregious when they made the alternate Anglo-Burma war in 1852 over a small disagreement between some British officers and Bhama officers. The war ended in 1853 to the advantage of the British who now enthralled the entire lower Burma which came to the rice coliseum of British India. With little trouble, the British occupied Yangon and southern Myanmar. In 1853 Mindon Min succeeded his notorious brother, Bagan Min, as king and began to modernize the Burmese state. In 1857, he transferred the seat of his government to Mandalay, which he had newly founded. After the death of Mindon Min in 1878, Thibaw became the new Burmese King and during his reign relations with the British Empire deteriorated.⁵⁵ In 1886 another trade conflict caused a military battle between the British Empire and the part of Burma not yet occupied by the British. After a short crusade (the third Anglo-Burmese war), the British occupied northern Burma and the capital Mandalay. Also, Burma went entirely under British colonial rule. Over the coming sixty years, tactfulness, raids, covenants, and negotiations continued until, after three Anglo-Burmese Wars (1824-1885), Britain placarded control over utmost of Burma.⁵⁶ British rule brought social, profitable, artistic, and executive changes. With the fall of Mandalay, all of Burma came under British rule, being adjoined on 1 January 1886. Therefore, the entire territory of Burma came under the British rule. Rangoon became the capital of British Burma and a significant port between Calcutta and Singapore.

With the above description, we can say that although the political history of this pre-colonial period suggests a record of warfare and insecurity, its social history provides a different picture. Society at the original position proved to be fairly stable. Organized under the leadership of heritable chieftains called myothugyis, the people performed the services for which they were obliged and paid their levies. During this time, no formal system of courts and no class of legalists developed to serve society. Social stability in pre-colonial Myanmar/Burma drew its main strength from the fact that nearly all Burmans and the peoples under their direct rule participated in a common religious faith-Buddhism. The monkhood served the community by providing teachers and furnishing preceptors and seminaries. Education, participation in the religious scale, and feeding the monks to earn merit for the coming revitalization all served to foster a close relationship between the people and their religion and bind the community together.⁵⁷ The teachings of the Buddha, as expressed by the peoples of Burma, place the full responsibility upon the individual to live a meritorious life in order to have a better revitalization in the coming actuality. This emphasis upon self-reliance proved precious for social stability in a country agonized with nonstop warfare.

2.3: ii. British Rule in Burma

British occupation brought all feudal nations and fiefdoms of Burma together under one important rule. This, for the first time in the history of Burma, created a common interest among the people of Burma, simply because they faced a common adversary. There appeared a common sense of concinnity in the struggle for independence. For the first time in the thousand years of contest and wars, the people of Burma started to try to sink their collective abomination and demarcation and to forge concinnity. In such an attempt, the common heritage of culture and traditions was stressed to give the feeling of oneness. The revolutionary elites of all national groups initiated this nationalistic movement.⁵⁸ Prior to the third Anglo-Burmese War, the primary interest of the British was to establish law and order. The territories under their control were governed by a centralized and bureaucratic administration that sought to negotiate its purposes as inexpensively as possible. Local government, being fairly stable, remained unchanged and met with little hindrance by the Europeans.⁵⁹ After the third war, the British were faced with a series of insurrections and organized banditry

which brought them enormous totalities of sums of money, men and material, but didn't seriously hang their rule.

However, after the British annexation of Myanmar, the British excluded the Burmese monarch and expatriated the Burman king Thibaw to India. Later, Myanmar became a fiefdom of British India. The extension of British power to Myanmar brought the whole country under one rule and controlled the territory through a combination of direct and circular rule.⁶⁰ The British also introduced a two-league system of administration: 'Ministerial Burma,' dominated by the Burman maturity, and the 'Frontier Areas,' dominated by the ethnical nonages. In Ministerial Burma, the traditional system of monarchy was destroyed and a limited form of parliamentary Home Rule was introduced. At that time, the collapse of the monarchy, and the breakdown of religion and politics, brought about a great change in the Burmese society. At the same time, the profitable system of the society dramatically changed. After the opening of the Suez Canal, the demand for Burmese rice increased. Paddy civilization was started on a lot of land. Growers were forced to adopt plutocrats from Indian Mahajans at high interest for rice cultivation. These Indian Mahajans were known as the Chatia. Growers were exhausted due to high interest rates. They were indeed expelled from the land. In utmost jobs, Indians were employed on contractual terms. While the Burmese frugality was perfecting, all power and coffers remained in the hands of British companies, Anglo-Burmese people, and Indian emigrants.⁶¹ Among the civil retainers, the maturity of the men were Anglo-Burmese and Indians. The participation of the Burmese in the military was veritably small. Despite the country's enhancement, the utmost people in Burma were deprived of their rights.⁶² During the British rule, the Anglo-Burmese population was the controller of the Burmese rule, which caused dissatisfaction with the general population.

At that time, those Burmese who attended the new schools established by the colonial government or by missionaries managed to gain admission to the pastoral grades of government service, but indeed in those lower grades, they encountered competition from the Indians. Because science courses were not available, the professions of engineering and drugs were closed to the Burmese. Those who moved to the government liberal arts college at Rangoon entered the middle grades of the civil service, while many went on to London to study law. When these youthful barristers returned to Burma, they were looked upon by the people as their new leaders. Their

visit in the liberal atmosphere of London had induced these new leaders that some measures of political independence could be recaptured by concession. The new leaders first turned their attention to the public religion, culture, and education.

On the other hand, the Burmese nationalist movement was initiated on the beginning of the twentieth century. The national movement of Burma was greatly told by its Indian counterpart. In 1908, establishing a formal political link between the peoples of India and Burma, the first branch of the Indian National Congress (INC) was established in Burma called 'The Burma Provincial Congress Committee', which worked as the sole carrier of the INC's conditioning in Burma. Latterly on, with the commencement of the twentieth century, a cultural nationalist movement began to crop from the Burma Youth Temperance League, and in 1906, the Young Men's Buddhist Associations (YMBA) was formed, modelled after the youthful Men's Christian Association (YMCA), established in 1844 in London. Owing to its religious nature, it did not invite the wrath of British authorities as the INC did in India.⁶³ The objectives of the YMBA resemble the objectives of the socio-religious movements that took place in India during the nineteenth century similar to the *Brahmo Samaj*, the *Arya Samaj*, the *Ramakrishna Mission*, and *Theosophical Society*. While the YMBA was engaged in founding Buddhist schools throughout the country, the Indian Government decided to deport some of the Indian nationalists to Burma. The members of the YMBA, with unbridled enthusiasm, took advantage of meeting these Indian leaders. The INC had always been sympathetic towards Burma.

Consequently, Burmese nationalism was converted from simply an artistic to political nationalism. In 1917, the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) changed its name to the General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA).⁶⁴ It was a broad-grounded non-religious Association with 2,000 branches spread throughout Myanmar. It was the political exertion of this organization that gave birth to future political parties. This process began in the 1930s and the foremost party was the 'Poor Man's Party', innovated by Dr. Ba Maw. It called for the reduction of taxes, mandatory education, and the protection of the growers from plutocrat lenders⁶⁵ who were substantially South Indians. An offshoot of the political party *Dohbama Asiayone* (We Burmans Association, DAA), formed in 1929 by Rangoon University students, was the Thakin Party.⁶⁶ This party called for the reanimation of Burmese-Buddhist cultural tradition, opposed the British educational system, and proffered illiberalism, inspired

by the Buddhist perception of equity and justice and also by the fact that Myanmar's frugality was in the hands of nonnatives, thereby encouraging internationalism. Thakin Aung San (1915-1947) and U Nu (1907-1995) were their prominent leaders.

Plate 2.5

Map of British Colonial Burma (1886-1942)



Source: <https://www.insideasiatours.com/blog/2015/09/24/remembering-colonial-burma/>

In early 1930s, the national movement in Burma took more concrete form as Indian freedom struggle intensified. Moreover, with the Saya San Rebellion of 1931 the nationalist movement of Burma showed obvious signs to take violent course. By 1935, the Students Union at Rangoon University was at the van of what would evolve into an active and important movement for national independence. A youthful law pupil Aung San, executive-committee member of the Students Union, surfaced as the implicit new leader of the national movement. In the years that followed, he successfully organized a series of pupil strikes at the university, gaining the support of the nation.⁶⁷ From 1923 to 1941 there was a steady growth of politics in Myanmar. In this period, the GCBA resolved to shift factions substantially over the question of participation in politics.⁶⁸ Just before the outbreak of the Second World War the Thakins, along with Dr. Ba Maw's party and other nationalist and Buddhist organizations, formed a new organization called the "Freedom Bloc".⁶⁹

At the same time, revolutionary terrorists were challenging the British in India. British authorities in India and London found it alarming, and they chose to proceed on their conventional strategy of *divide and rule*. From the first Anglo-Burmese war, the British and Indian community in Burma was in so close cooperation that frequently Indians faced the charges of being loyal supporters of British Colonialism. However, when the Indian national movement, led by the Indian National Congress, seemed to expedite its pace under the leadership of extremist nationalists and the spirit of nationalism started to infect the province of Burma, the British authorities turned their backs in this regard. As Desai writes: 'The British bureaucracy in Burma was following a definite pro-Burmese line coupled with an anti-Indian policy because of the national demand for independence in India'.⁷⁰ The question of separation from India remained the focal point of Burmese politics from 1929 to 1937 and thus needed elaborate examination.

2.3: iii. The Separation of Burma from British-India

The separation of Burma from India was first recommended by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1919; it was repeated by the Indian Statutory Commission Report (Simon Report, June 1930). On account of the nationalist pressure, agitation, and criticism in India and eyeing the forthcoming general elections at home, the British parliament having the majority of the Conservatives, appointed a Statutory

Commission, on November 7, 1927, under Sir John Simon. In 1928, the British government formed the Simon Commission, and a Round Table Conference was held with Burmese leaders. The Simon Commission visited Burma during 1929-30 and entered a memorandum from the government of Burma asking for the separation of Burma from India but not a dominion status.⁷¹ When the Simon Commission came to India and Burma, it enjoyed a significantly contrasting reception in the two countries. In India, the proposed Commission was boycotted, “at every stage and in every form”, and the Congress started a non-cooperation movement. In Burma, on the other hand, a large section of nationalist opinion actively cooperated with the Simon Commission. The Burmese Legislative Council set up a committee of seven non-official members to confer with the Simon Commission.⁷² The recommendation was given by the Simon Commission in its report that Burma be separated from India: “incontinently and that a decision to that effect be made as soon as possible.”

Minority as well as majority communities in every corner of the world had some certain instincts which led to misunderstandings between them. This attitude of Burma Indians-apparently a minority group became obvious at the time the Simon Commission visited Burma in January 1929. Apprehensive Indians tried their level best to secure their interests in Burma when they got an opportunity to be a part of the seven-member committee formed to sit with the Commission. The Indians disregarded the fact that none of the representatives of the major political parties in Burma appeared before the Commission to voice their aspirations.⁷³ The Nationalist Party refused to cooperate with the commission while the GCBA had already boycotted the election and Commission.⁷⁴ This attitude of Indians made Burmese more apprehensive towards their motives. Anti-Indian feelings began to mount in Burma with the demand for separate representation. The issue of separation proved to be a divisive issue in Burmese politics as some felt that this was a ploy to count them from any further Indian reforms. The chairman of the GCBA, U Soe Thein, opposed the proposed separation in a telegram addressed to the Prime Minister of the U.K., the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India, the Government of Burma, and the president of the Indian Round Table Conference. The Telegram read: “We are opposed to the recommendations contained in the Simon Commission’s report as a whole, particularly in reference to the Separation of Burma from India..... with reference to the question of Burma’s immediate

separation from India, it will have to be noted that the voice now current in its favor is nothing but a created or organized tune of the interested parties. The largest public is openly against it..... some parties advocated separation during the Simon Commission inquiry and confirmed it in the Burma Legislative Council by a resolution in February 1929.’’⁷⁵

Latterly, this view of India was ascertained when Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Mohamed Ali paid their visits to Burma in 1929. In 1931, Tyabji organized the Indian Association of Burma to resist the separation. Anti-Separationist League was supported by the Indian S. N. Naiji, who owned the Scandia Navigation Company. Another Anti-Separationist leader was Dr. Ba Maw. Most Burmans did not trust the British, and in the November 1932 elections, the Anti-Separationist League won 42 seats to 29 for the separationists and 9 neutrals. The GCBA leader, U Chit Hlaing, was elected speaker unanimously, but he was snappily removed for only allowing voting on two movements. In March 1933, Secretary Hoare blazoned that England was staying for Burma’s legislative council to make a decision, and in July he appertained Burma’s reforms to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which held sounds in December.⁷⁶ In any case, all the efforts to contain the separation of Burma from India proved futile when the Burma sub-Committee of the First Indian Round Table Conference (November 12, 1930, to January 19, 1931) gave its blessing to the idea and asked His Majesty’s Government to make a public proclamation regarding it.⁷⁷ In the ultimate part of the 1930s, the British Government forcefully decided that Burma should be separated from India and that in the process she should gain a more representative and liberal constitution. The new constitution, in principles and expression, was the same as that granted to India, was called the Government of Burma Act, 1935, and was enforced on April 1, 1937 (See, *Appendix I*).⁷⁸ Ultimately, Burma became a separate country, under the British Crown, and all her executive links with India were disassociated.

Plate 2.6

A commemorative 'first day' issued by Burma's postal service to mark separation from India on April 1, 1937



Source: <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/when-burma-and-india-went-their-separate-ways>

The new constitution calling for a completely elected assembly, but this proved to be a divisive issue as some Burmese felt that this was a ploy to count them from any farther Indian reforms whereas other Burmese saw any action that removed Burma from the control of India to be a positive step. Dr. Ba Maw came the first Prime Minister and Premier of Burma but he was succeeded by U Saw in 1939, who served as Prime Minister from 1940 until he was arrested on 19 January 1942. Similar leaders such as Dr. Ba Maw and U Saw made real trouble working within the frame of the constitution. The Second World War intruded on constitutional and political progress in Myanmar; but although the trial was brief, the people could look back upon nearly two decades of experience with elections, parliamentary government, and political responsibility and parties.⁷⁹

2.4: World War II and Japanese Occupation in Myanmar and Post-War Achieved Independence

When World War II erupted in Europe in 1939, the Burmese leaders wanted to bargain with the government before giving their support to the British. Some Burmese

chauvinists saw the outbreak of World War II as an occasion to wring concessions from the British in exchange for support in the war trouble. Other Burmese, similar to the Thakin movement, opposed Burma's participation in the war under any circumstances. Aung San co-founded the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) with other Thakins in August 1939.⁸⁰ Aung San also co-founded the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), renamed the Socialist Party after the World War II. He was also necessary in launching the Freedom Bloc by forging an alliance of the *Dobama*, ABSU, politically active monks and Dr. Ba Maw's Poor Man's Party. After the *Dobama* organization called for a national insurrection, an arrest leave was issued for numerous of the organization's leaders including Aung San, who escaped to China. Aung San's intention was to make contact with the Chinese Socialists but he was detected by the Japanese authorities who offered him support by forming a secret intelligence unit called the *Minami Kikan* headed by Colonel Suzuki with the ideal of closing the Burma Road and supporting a national insurrection. Aung San compactly returned to Burma to matriculate twenty-nine youthful men who went to Japan with him to admit military training on Hainan Island, China, and they came to be known as the "Thirty Comrades". When the Japanese occupied Bangkok in December 1941, Aung San blazoned the confirmation of the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in expectation of the Japanese irruption of Burma in 1942.

The BIA formed a provisional government in some areas of the country in the spring of 1942, but there were differences within the Japanese leadership over the future of Burma. While Colonel Suzuki encouraged the Thirty Comrades to form a provisional government, the Japanese Military leadership had no way formally accepted such a plan. Ultimately the Japanese Army turned to Dr. Ba Maw to form a government. During the war in 1942, the BIA had grown in an unbridled manner, and in numerous sections officers and indeed culprits appointed them to the BIA. It was reorganized as the Burma Defence Army (BDA) under the Japanese but still headed by Aung San. While the BIA had been an irregular force, the BDA was signed by selection and trained as a conventional army by Japanese preceptors. Dr. Ba Maw was latterly declared head of state, and his cabinet included both Aung San as War Minister and the Communist leader Thakin Than Tun as Minister of Land and Agriculture as well as the Socialist leaders Thakins Nu and Mya.⁸¹ When the Japanese declared Burma, in

proposition, independent in 1943, the Burma Defence Army (BDA) was renamed the Burma National Army (BNA).⁸²

A major battlefield, Burma was devastated during World War II by March 1942. Within months after they entered the war, Japanese troops had advanced to Rangoon and the British administration had collapsed. A Burmese Administrative Administration headed by Ba Maw was established by the Japanese in August 1942. Wingate's British Chindits were formed into long-range penetration groups trained to operate deep behind Japanese lines.⁸³ An analogous American unit, Merrill's Looters, followed the Chindits into the Burmese jungle in 1943. Beginning in late 1944, confederated troops launched a series of attempts that led to the end of Japanese rule in July 1945. The battles were violent with important of Burma laid waste by the fighting. Overall, the Japanese lost some 150,000 men in Burma with only 1,700 captures taken.⁸⁴ Although numerous Burmese fought originally for the Japanese as part of the Burma Independence Army, numerous Burmese, substantially from the ethnic minority, served in the British Burma Army.⁸⁵ The Burma National Army (BNA) and the Arakan National Army (ANA) fought with the Japanese from 1942 to 1944 but switched constancy to the Allied side in 1945. Under Japanese occupation, 170,000 to 250,000 civilians failed.⁸⁶

During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) as the rising sun failed to give genuine independence, Burma formed the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), a political front of the nationalists and socialists. General Aung San was the President, Thakin Nu (U Nu) was the Vice-President and Thakin Than Tun (President of the Burmese Communist Party-BCP) was the Secretary General.⁸⁷ At the end of Second World War, in agreement with the Atlantic Charter, the British Labor Government was ready to free Burma. In 1947, when General Aung San was negotiating with Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister of the British Labor Government, the question was raised as to the opinion of non-Bhama peoples-whether or not they wanted independence along with maturity Bhama. The British Government asked for sound evidence of their amenability to join the Bhama to form an independent state together.

In February 12th, 1947, an each-nation conference was held at Panglong (a city in former Shan States), to agree to take independence from British together and to form a Union of Burma conforming of individual national countries with the right to secede

after ten years if anybody wished (See, *Appendix III*). The Panglong Treaty, the foundation of the Union of Burma, was signed by the representatives of all nations in Burma on February, 1947.⁸⁸ It was included in Chapter X under the heading “Right of Secession.” February 12 is celebrated as the Union Day since then.⁸⁹ In the general election held in 9 April 1947 to form the base of a constituent assembly that would design a constitution once independence from the United Kingdom had been achieved. They were the first elections in Burma since its separation from India under the British Raj. Statistics in figure give the results of the Burmese general election of April 9, 1947.⁹⁰

Table 2.7
Results of the Burmese General Election of April 9, 1947

Name of the Political Party	Seats Won	Election Leader
Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL)	173	Aung San
Communist Party of Burma (CPB)	07	Thakin Than Tun
Karen Youth Organization (KYO)	19	Win Maung
Others	11	-----
Total	210	-----

Source: Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz and Christof Hartmann, 2001: Elections in Asia: A data handbook, Volume I, P-610. ISBN 0-19-924958-X.

General Aung San, after his triumphant return from London, formed the provisional government in preparation for independence. He avoided inclusion of the communists in his cabinet. This created a drift and dubitation between the AFPFL proper and the BCP which had been expelled from the AFPFL eventually before. In other words, Aung San negotiated the Panglong Agreement with ethnical leaders that guaranteed the independence of Myanmar as a unified state. Aung Zan Wai, Pe Khin, Bo Hmu Aung, Sir Maung Gyi, Dr. Sein Mya Maung, Myoma U Than Kywe were among the mediators of the historical Panglong Conference negotiated with Bamar leader General Aung San and other ethnical leaders in 1947. In 1947, Aung San came Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council of Myanmar, a transitional government. But in July 1947, political rivals⁹¹ assassinated Aung San and several cabinet

members.⁹² In the absence of General Aung San, U Nu formed the new government. As General Aung San had done, he too avoided including the communists in the coalition. This created irreconcilable misunderstanding between the two giant political parties. In other words, this pushed the Communists partner-architect of the independence struggle, into the path of armed insurrection. Under the U Nu-Attlee Treaty, Burma declared independence at 4 a.m. on January 4, 1948, as advised by the astrologers in view of favorable astrological signs for the birth and substance of the nation. U Nu, who has played a significant part during the Burmese pupil revolutions in the 1930s, came the first Prime Minister of the new country.⁹³ The popular sentiment to part with the British was so strong at the time that Burma unlike India or Pakistan decided not to join the Commonwealth of Nations.

With the above description we can say that after thirty years of political experience under British and Japanese rule, the people of Burma have developed the organizations, techniques and institutions which made it possible for the politically conscious section to organize, capture and hold power or influence. In their attempt to establish parties and institutions modeled on those found in the West, the political leaders have been successful in duplicating the broad forms; within the forms, however, they have created their own patterns which blending Western-type institutions with traditional concepts of leadership and government.⁹⁴ The politically aware section saw a need to work constantly among the uncrossed and uncommitted population in order to increase political participation and draw them into the political process.

2.5: Aung San and Burmese Politics

It would not be possible to present a thorough analysis of the political history of Myanmar without mentioning and emphasizing the significant part played by Aung San. He is a veritably important figure in Myanmar politics. He was a Burmese socialist and latterly a democratic politician, nationalist and revolutionary. Aung San served as the 5th Premier of the British Crown Colony of Burma from 1946 to 1947. He was the founder of the Tatmadaw (ultramodern-day Myanmar Armed Forces) and is considered as the 'Father of the Nation' of ultramodern Myanmar.

Aung San was born on the 13th of February, 1915 in Magwe, in central Burma/Myanmar. He is the son of lawyer father U Phar and mother Daw Suu. His family was well known in the Burmese resistance movement; his grandfather Bo Min Yaung fought against the British annexation of Burma in 1886 and was guillotined by the British.⁹⁵ Aung San's wife Khin Kyi, a prominent Burmese diplomat and his daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi, is a stateswoman and politician and a philanthropist of the Nobel Peace Prize. She served as State Counsellor and 20th and First Female Minister of Foreign Affairs in Win Myint's Cabinet and leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD).⁹⁶

Aung San entered his primary education at a Buddhist monastic school in Natmauk, and secondary education at Yenangyaung High School.⁹⁷ He went to Rangoon University (now the University of Yangon). After Aung San entered Rangoon University in 1933, he snappily came a pupil leader.⁹⁸ He was tagged to the executive committee of the Rangoon University Student Union (RUSU) Aung San came secretary of the student's union at Rangoon University and, with Thakins Maung (latterly U Nu), led the students strike there in February 1936. After Burma's separation from India in 1937 and his graduation in 1938, he worked for the nationalist 'We-Burmans Association'. In 1938 Aung San was tagged president of both the Rangoon University Student Union (RUSU) and the All-Burma Students Union (ABSU), formed after the strike spread to Mandalay.⁹⁹ In the same year, the government appointed him as a pupil representative on the Rangoon University Act Amendment Committee.

In October 1938, Aung San entered public politics. He was an anti-British and staunchly anti-imperialist. He came a Thakhin when he joined the 'We-Barman Association'. He acted as its general secretary until August 1940. He helped set up nationalist organization, the 'Freedom Bloc' by forming an alliance between the 'We-Barman Association', the ABSU, politically active monks and Dr. Ba Maw's 'Poor Man's Party' and came its General Secretary. He also came a founder member and the first Secretary General of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) in August 1939.¹⁰⁰ Shortly latterly he co-founded the 'People's Revolutionary Party', renamed the 'Socialist Party' after World War II. In March 1940, he attended the Indian National Congress Assembly in Ramgarh, India. While seeking foreign support for Burma's independence in 1940, Aung San was communicated in China by the Japanese. In

February 1941, Aung San returned to Burma, with an offer of arms and fiscal support from Japan. He returned compactly to Japan to admit further military training, along with the first batch of youthful revolutionaries who came to be known as the Thirty Comrades.

On 26 December 1941, with the help of the *Minami Kikan*, a secret intelligence unit that was formed to close the Burma Road and to support a national insurrection and that was headed by Suzuki Keiji, he innovated the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in Thailand. It was aligned with Japan for utmost of World War II. The Burma fell to the Japanese in March 1942. The BIA formed an administration for the country under Thakin Tun Oke that operated in resemblant with the Japanese military administration until the Japanese disbanded it. In July, the disbanded BIA was re-formed as the Burma Defense Army (BDA). Aung San was made a colonel and put in charge of the force.¹⁰¹ He was latterly invited to Japan, and was presented with the Order of the Rising Sun by Emperor Hirohito. On 1 August 1943, the Japanese declared Burma an independent nation-State of Burma under Dr. Ba Maw. Aung San was appointed War Minister, and the army was again renamed, this time as the Burma National Army (BNA). Aung San soon came doubtful about Japanese pledges of true independence and of Japan's capability to win the war. Aung San made plans to organize an insurrection in Burma and made contact with the British authorities in India, in cooperation with the Communist leaders Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Soe. On 27 March 1945, he led the BNA in a rebellion against the Japanese occupiers and helped the Abettors master the Japanese.¹⁰²

After the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945, the British sought to incorporate his forces into the regular army, but he held crucial members back, forming the 'People's Volunteer Organization'. This was presumably a staggers association interested in social service, but it was in fact a private political army designed to take the place of his Burma National Army and to be used as a major armament in the struggle for independence.¹⁰³ Having helped form the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), an underground movement of nationalists, in 1944, Aung San used that united front to come deputy chairman of Burma's Executive Council in late 1946.¹⁰⁴ In effect he was prime minister but remained subject to the British governor's proscription. After conferring with the British prime minister Clement Attlee in London, he blazoned an agreement (Jan. 27, 1947) that handed for Burma's

independence within one year. In the election for a constitutional assembly in April 1947, his AFPFL won 196 of 202 seats. Though the communists had denounced him as a “tool of British imperialism,” he supported a resolution for Burmese independence outside the British Commonwealth. On July 19, the prime minister and six colleagues, including his brother, were assassinated in the council chamber in Rangoon while the executive council was in session. His political rival, U Saw¹⁰⁵, interned in Uganda during the war, was later executed for his part in the killings.

2.6: Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Myanmar’s political institutions and culture have been influenced by the colonial power. The present chapter “Historical Background of Myanmar’s domestic politics: from pre-history to independence (1948)” has described that the nation-building process of Myanmar began in the eleventh century. During the eleventh-thirteenth centuries the ancestors of the ultramodern Burmese formed the Pagan Kingdom in which husbandry, irrigation, culture and armature reached a high position of development. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Myanmar was one of the most important countries in Southeast Asia. In 1885 Myanmar was captured by the British colonial power. But at that time, Myanmar was not directly governed by the British government; they ruled through the local elites like ethnic chiefs under British control. Colonial Burma no way had a governor-general. It was the British Government of Burma Act of 1935 which separated Burma from India in 1937. Therefore, nation-structure process of Myanmar had been told by the indigenous nation.¹⁰⁶ In this way, the British introduced new ethnical pressures to Myanmar and through their exploitative economic practices turned numerous against capitalism. However, the British did eventually introduce limited representative government, permitting elected politicians to participate in governance.

This chapter has also shown that during the British colonial period, many British people, soldiers and businessmen were stayed of the peak of the society of Myanmar. The bulk of the people of Myanmar were not satisfied with the British rule. Nonetheless, the elites were contained with western political system until the twentieth century when the anti-colonial movement grew contain. In 1942, Japan occupied Myanmar. After the prisoner of Myanmar, Japan established an indigenous administration. In 1943, Japan government gave the nominal independence to

Myanmar. During the Japanese period, Myanmar was influenced by the Japanese military ideology and fascist practice.¹⁰⁷ The nationalist nobility was influenced by similar fascist ideology whiles can be set up indeed moment in Myanmar.

Furthermore, in spite of the blame and abuse put on the British imperialists and colonialists for everything they did, their occupation and rule of Burma was not entirely without benefit to Burma. They put feudal rivalry and administration to an end. The British Government also introduced modern politics though colonial in nature. They unknowingly helped the divided feudalists to unite together to struggle against the common enemy, British-industrialists, capitalists, imperialists and colonialists. The British Government also produced a number of national heroes and great Burmese proletariat revolutionaries. Finally, they left behind a new Independent Burma which entered into the international frontiers as a Third World and Non-Aligned nation. Hence a quick glance at British Burma would not be a waste of time.¹⁰⁸ In indigenous nation everyone was loyal to their ethnic principal nevertheless; this spirit of nation was demolished when the ultramodern nation-state structure in Myanmar was established

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⁶ There are two types of Buddhism: Hinayana later known as Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada is the system of belief recorded in the ancient Pali dialect, which is felt by its adherents, as well as by many scholars of Buddhism, to represent most faithfully the original ideas and intent of its founder. Mahayana Buddhism is the beliefs and practices of the school based on the scriptures which were recorded in Sanskrit. See, T. D. Roberts, et al., (1968). *Area Handbook for Burma*, Washington D. C., Foreign Area Studies, June, p. 132. Also Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dliid=119035&year=2008#wrapper>, browsed 21 Nov 2015.

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⁸ The terms 'Burman' and 'Burmese' have no precise and accepted meanings. Such leading scholars as J. S. Furnivall and G. E. Harvey use "Burman" as a political term, identifying the citizens of Burma, and the term "Burmese" as an ethnic term, identifying a particular indigenous group. While in Burma, the writer found that the two terms were used in an opposite manner. Throughout this essay, following contemporary usages, Burman will be used in the ethnic sense and Burmese in the political, covering all the inhabitants of the country-Burmans, Chins, Kachins, Karens, Karennis (Kayah), Mons, Shans, and so on.

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Chapter- 3

Democratic Government of Myanmar (1948-1962):

Dynamics of Domestic Politics

3.1: Introduction

In the contemporary world, democracy has nearly come a widely honored form of government. And, utmost of the governments uses it as an “aura of legitimacy.” In the ultramodern sense of democracy, industrialized Europe and America democratized their politics during the first wave of democratization that started from the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ During that period, utmost corridor of Asia, Africa and Latin America were under colonial rule and accordingly they were beyond democratization process. After the Second World War, utmost of the colonized parts of the world came independent. Numerous of the nearly independent countries accepted democracy as the form of government following the model of the capitalist West and tried to democratize their political systems consequently. In this process, many countries succeeded with a veritably low performance and the rest of the countries regressed to non-democratic ruling system.

Nowadays, the world is coming rapidly under the influence of a new ‘wave of democracy’- the emphasis being more on the Third world countries. Transition from authoritarian to democratic forms of governance has been going on in countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and former communist countries of Europe.² This wave of democratization had engulfed many of the previous military and autocratic regimes. Many of the rigid regimes of Eastern Europe have given way to their people’s aspiration for a change. Former military dictators prescribed new versions of democratization³ and party conferences in Africa gently deposed their dictators and non-government bodies became the new ray of hope for a democratic awakening in the world. But Myanmar remains an exception.

Burma/Myanmar was ruled by two foreign powers Britain and Japan. Myanmar was raided by Japan which wrested it’s from Britain in 1942 and continued to control Myanmar till 1945. The irruption of Myanmar by Japan sparked the mindfulness of nationalism and independence.⁴ After the end of the Second World War, Myanmar

faced political insecurity from groups of communist revolutionists and other ethnical conflicts. But the country managed to achieve independence from British colonial power on 4th January 1948. After the independence, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (here after AFPFL) took power with elderly statesman U Nu as the Prime Minister.⁵ U Nu, also known as Thakhin Nu,⁶ was the Burmese independence leader and country's first Premier with a Shan chief, Sao Shwe Thaik, as the President. The new government espoused constitutional democracy. Myanmar experimented with democracy in the first decade from 1948 to 1958 and from 1960 to 1962 of its independence. The period from 1948 to 1958 Myanmar first experimented with full democracy.⁷

The first years of Burmese independence were marked by consecutive mutinies by different Communists groups, one of them being led by a member of the 'Thirty Comrades', the 'Revolutionary Burma Army' formed by some army revolutionists which included three members of "Thirty Comrades," Arakanese Muslims and the Karen National Union (KNU). After the Communist victory in China, some of the Kuomintang forces had entered Burma. However, the incipient state used all its coffers to attack the situation. At that time, citizens were suitable to elect their own representatives and politics were extensively battled in the Parliament as well as in independent newspapers and tea stalls. During this time, people could speak freely and expedients were high that Myanmar would prosper.⁸ In addition; U Nu remained in power after winning general elections in 1952 and 1956. By 1958, the country was largely beginning to recover economically, but was beginning to fall piecemeal politically due to a split in the AFPFL between two factions. Moreover, insurrection situation was deteriorating veritably fast.

In 1958 when the leaders got resolve in their struggle to get control of the party and government, the rivals provoked a constitutional extremity. Discontentment among the ethnic communities was growing as the U Nu administration could not keep the pledge of giving autonomy to them. The Burmese Army (now Tatmadaw) under General Ne Win had been able to earn respect of the general masses of Burma. U Nu was forced to call for military's help to restore normalcy. Thus began the journey of Burmese Military in to the affairs of state. There was no looking back for the military. Initially the military came as a 'caretaker government' for two years from 1958 to 1960.⁹ Ne Win's government successfully controlled the situation and a general

election was held in 1960. However, when elections were held in 1960, the party favored by the military suffered a ruinous defeat while its opponents, led by U Nu, returned to power. But the situation snappily deteriorated and the generals made a comeback to take power for good. The military has ever ago been in power in various forms. On the 2nd March 1962, Ne Win, with sixteen other elderly military officers, staged a coup d'état and arrested U Nu, the chief justice, and several ministers of the cabinet.¹⁰

Although U Nu was a largely reputed statesman, his government was agonized by the challenges from the socialist and ethnical-nonage rebellions, poverty, ignorance, corruption, late industrialization, profitable recession and executive inefficiency. The first civilian government had soon begun to face some major challenges. These were substantially particular battles within the ruling AFPFL government; factionalism within the Union Party (Pa Hta Sa) enactment of Buddhism as the state religion; adding demands for statehood within the union; the issue of federalism and trials to apportion state sovereignty; and the impact of Federal issue on the military. Those were the impediments to the establishment and consolidation of a democratic government in Myanmar.¹¹

With the above description, an attempt has been made in this chapter to make an in-depth analysis of Myanmar's democratic Government (1948-1958 and 1960-1962). This chapter will focus on three closely inter-related aspects of the nature and functioning of the first democratic governance and to explain the failure of the democratic system in Burma/Myanmar. First, it will examine the parliamentary democracy in independent Burma/Myanmar. Second, it will describe some important political issues which came to the fore and caused the fall of parliamentary democratic system in 1958 and again in 1962. These are: elections, political parties and factions, personal rivalries and factionalism within the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), insurrection and demand for autonomy/federalism and enactment of Buddhism as the state religion. Finally, this chapter has also tried concentrated on the factors that posed impediments to the establishment and consolidation of a democratic system in Myanmar.

3.2: Parliamentary Democracy and Myanmar

Liberal democracy is the order of the present age. It has gained ground around the globe. After thirty years of political experience under British and Japanese rule, the

people of Burma/Myanmar have developed the organizations, techniques and institutions which make it possible for the politically conscious section of the Burmese population to organize, capture and hold power or influence.¹² After independence, they introduced westminster type of government under the constitution of 1947. A primary thing of the founders of independent Burma/Myanmar was to create a government blending the values and ideas of liberal democracy inherited from the British with the socialist values and pretensions expressed in Western Socialism.¹³

The leaders of the post-independent Myanmar embraced parliamentary democracy 'as the top political system' but, continued their seductiveness with socialistic principles as a base for indifferent economic development. The political system displayed competitive party politics in a democratic setting; state intervention in the economic system was characterized by an indigenous interpretation of economic nationalism with socialistic leanings.¹⁴ The Constitution also sought to break the major problems facing the nation, of constructing a Union in which formerly separate people could join together to profit from concinnity, while retaining a nominal degree of autonomy.¹⁵ The AFPFL dominated Myanmar's politics for further than a decade after independence. The people were eager for democratic system in the country.

During the independence struggle of Myanmar, a conflict arose between aged leaders of the pre-war period and the youthful leaders who had formed the Coalition of Nationalist Party, AFPFL. Elderly leaders were allowing of following the British frame, but youthful leaders were choosing a new frame. The founders of the Myanmar Constitution set up three options for framing the new Constitution.¹⁶

Option 1: They could either bring back some form of monarchy which was before British subjection of Burma.

Option 2: They could produce a bureaucratic authoritarian system, after the British model.

Option 3: They had a third model which is the parliamentary democratic form of government and they espoused it.

Myanmar's first democratic government established a multi-party bicameral legislature (Pyidaungus Hluttaw). The lower house was the Chamber of Deputies (the Pyithu Hluttaw), representing the population as a whole, and the upper house, the Chamber of Nationalities (the Amyotha Hluttaw) which gave nonages a clear voice in the government.¹⁷ The Chamber of Deputies comported of about 250 members who

were to be elected for 4 years by universal adult ballot. Every citizen who has completed the age of 18 years and who is not disqualified by law on the ground of bankruptcy, illness of mind or proven crime, had the right to vote. On the other hand, the Chamber of Nationalities comported of 125 members. 25 seats were distributed to the Shan State, 12 to the Kachin State, 8 to the special division of the Chins, 3 to the Karenni State, 24 to the Karens and the remaining 53 to the rest of the Union. All the representatives from the Shan State and Karenni State are elected by the chiefs of those countries but they themselves cannot sit in the Chamber of Deputies.¹⁸ It's divided into central and state government. Judiciary is composed of Supreme Court and High Court.

This system was grounded on British heritage of representative system. An aged heritage, however, was the relationship among the country's multitudinous ethnical groups and the maturity Burmans. Although, the new Constitution recognized the rights of the ethnical nonages it, nonetheless, emphasized on a single centralized government. Heavily influenced by Socialism, the constitution also established a weal state furnishing for individual rights to education, employment, health care and support for the senior people.¹⁹ Element units of the Union included the Shan, Karen, Kachin, Kayak (formerly Karenina) states. Special divisions of the Chins were the Chin Hill District and Arakan Hill Tracts for the Arakan or Rakhine. The Union of Myanmar, consequently, was established as a quasi-federal state.²⁰ The ministries of the government and party lapped to such an extent that the two sounded to be indistinguishable at times.

3.3: Myanmar's Democratic Government and Domestic Politics

3.3: i. Elections and Myanmar's Domestic Politics

Election is one of the introductory pillars of strong democracy and central to the process of democratic political participation. In the early stage of her independence, particularly, during the period of the provisional government still 1952,²¹ the ruling AFPFL of Myanmar/Burma had no real opposition. Between 1950 and 1956 the only real opposition was the press. At that time, the government progressed with its business as if there was no parliamentary opposition. Although, an opposition political party is a part and parcel of a democratic system. However, since independence, Myanmar held three multi-party national elections.

The first Parliamentary elections were held between June 1951 and April 1952. Major contenders for seats were the AFPFL, the Marxist Burma Workers and Peasants Party (BWPP), the Independent Arakanese Parliamentary Group (IAPG) and some minor parties which ultimately gravitated to the BWPP. As anticipated, the AFPFL won the election. Out of 239 seats queried, the AFPFL itself won 147 and 200 if its cells were included. The opposition won only 30 seats and the remaining seats went to Independents.²² Ba U was elected president by the parliament on March 12, 1952. The election results revealed two intriguing aspects of Myanmar's politics. The use of the single-member constituency assured that there was no splitting of the vote; the winner took each, indeed with a plurality of one. Myanmar's electoral system, like the British system, did not demand that a seeker be an occupant in his constituency.

The parties were suitable to elect the seeker and give him with fiscal backing. Therefore, he was obliged to the party rather than the voter, and party solidarity was assured. The AFPFL won three fourth of the seats in the legislature and despite some charges of irregularities, the result seems to have been a fair approximation to the factual state of public opinion.²³ The scenario, however, changed during the second general election held in April 1956. The U Nu government was gradually losing its popularity because of its failure to curb the severe insurrectionary problem and improve Myanmar's deteriorating economic condition. The voters were not satisfied with the working of the government. Consequently, in this election, the ruling party could not maintain its absolute dominance.

In the alternate parliamentary elections held on April 27, 1956, the AFPFL ran against the communist-dominated National United Front (NUF) and several small conservative groups. The NUF was a left-wing Socialist faction of the AFPFL which left the party (AFPFL) in 1950. It called itself the Burma Workers and Peasants Party (BWPP) and came a frontal organization of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). The AFPFL had advantages owing to its well-developed party machine and its control of government finances. In malignancy of this, the opposition did a lot better than had been anticipated, especially, in the pastoral areas. Of the 241 seats queried, the AFPFL alone won 148 seats, the NUF 48, the Arakanese National United Organization (ANUO) 6, affiliates of the NUF 2 and independents 9; the remaining 28 seats went to the affiliates of the AFPFL.²⁴ Again, the use of the single-member district system produced some intriguing results.

For case, the Burma Democratic Party (BDP) which gained the third largest votes in Myanmar proper, failed to win a single seat. The Burma Nationalist Bloc (BNB), on the other hand, polled roughly 40,000 lower votes than the BDP but managed to win one seat. The vote against the AFPFL affiliates in countries other than Myanmar proper and the continuing disgruntlement in Arakan with the AFPFL's leadership contributed to the reduced maturity of the AFPFL. Table 3.1 provides the results of the 1956 election. The AFPFL entered into the fray as a single party. In both houses of parliament, the AFPFL won a landslide, with an aggregate of 162 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and 85 seats in the Chamber of Nationalities (upper house).

Table 3.1

Burma/Myanmar National Election 1956 (Results for Both Houses)

Chamber of Deputies (Pyithu Hluttaw)		Chamber of Nationalities (Amyotha Hluttaw)	
Political party	Seats Won	Political party	Seats Won
Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) and Allies	162	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) and Allies	85
National United Front (NUF)	48	Shan Sawbwas	25
United Hill People's Congress	14	Kachin National Congress	04
Arakanese National United Organization (ANUO)	06	Peoples Economic and Cultural Development Organization	02
Others	20	Others	09
Total	250	Total	125

Source: Silverstein, Josef, "Politics, Parties and the National Election in Burma", *Far Eastern Survey*, XXV (1956), pp. 177-184. Also, Geoffrey Fairbairn "Some Minority Problems in Burma", *Pacific Affairs*, 30(4), 1957, pp. 301-302.

The first real parliamentary opposition surfaced only after the 1956 elections. Composed substantially of the NUF and ANUO it was well led. With the split in the AFPFL in 1958, a section of the NUF and utmost of the ANUO moved over to support the government while the opposition seats were sewed up by the Stable

AFPFL and its affiliates from the countries. During the caretaker government from 1958 to 1960, the part of the opposition changed. Since both wings of the AFPFL originally pledged their support for the military-let caretaker government of General Ne Win, neither could play the traditional opposition part. Therefore, for eighteen months an opposition was, but it concentrated its efforts on censuring outside the parliament and working to build public support for the coming election.²⁵ Between 1960 and the coup of March 1962, the AFPFL was the main parliamentary opposition. It took the attitude that its task had to be formative and responsible in its review and to give the public with a reasonable set of druthers in terms of policy and leadership.²⁶

The third parliamentary elections were held on 6th February, 1960 under the military-led caretaker government. Law and order were re-established over utmost of the country, and it was considered the first truly free and fair election. In Myanmar proper, the Clean AFPFL (Pyidaungsu) won 156 seats with 56% of the vote. The Stable AFPFL won 34 seats with 30.6% of the vote. The ANUO won 8 seats with 0.9% of the vote; and the NUF was reduced to 4 seats and 5.9% of the votes.²⁷ Statistics in Table 3.2 give the results of the 1960 election.

Table 3.2

Burma/Myanmar National Election 1960 (Results for Both Houses)

Chamber of Deputies (Pyithu Hluttaw)		Chamber of Nationalities (Amyotha Hluttaw)	
Political Party	Seats Won	Political Party	Seats Won
Clean AFPFL and Allies	158	Clean AFPFL	53
Stable AFPFL and Allies	41	Stable AFPFL	29
National United Front (NUF)	04	Minority parties	43
United Hill People's Congress	06	Total	125
Arakanese National United Organization (ANUO)	06
Others	35
Total	250

Source: Lee S Bigelow, “The 1960 Elections in Burma”, *Far Eastern Survey*, 29(5), 1960, pp. 70-74. Also, Richard Butwell; von der Mehden, Fred, “The 1960 Elections in Burma”, *Pacific Affairs*, 33(2), 1960, pp. 144-157.

Despite the efforts of the military and democratic governments to hold a fair election, fifty-seven expostulations were lodged with the election bench. Utmost was, still, withdrawn or thrown out after the heat of the crusade and election had cooled down. The election gave several new perceptivities into Burmese politics. The victory of U Nu's faction of AFPFL Clean/Union Party resulted primarily from his party's disassociation from General Ne Win's military-led caretaker government and public's faith that U Nu would give strong leadership and carry out his pledges to make Buddhism as the state religion and to deal fairly with the minorities.²⁸

Although, on the base of the experience of third national elections, the Clean AFPFL/Union Party (Pyidaungsu) government moved in 1961 to amend the constitution in order to produce an independent Election Commission with power and responsibility for holding unprejudiced and honest elections. But this time around, religion played an important part in the failure of democratic government and Myanmar fell into long-term military dictatorship in 1962. In retrospect, though we know very little about these elections, they are now help up as models for the future of the country's politics. An assessment of their importance and meaning was made by a Burmese student of the party game in 1963:

Undoubtedly, Burma's three general elections were major achievements. It was a tremendous task to prepare election rolls and conduct elections. Complete accuracy in the rolls was not achieved but great care was taken to register every qualified voter. Much of the rural population was politically apathetic, yet, many voted in accordance with instructions and material assistance received from local party leaders. But it did not really matter because the AFPFL would have won anyway, for its was the best organized political institution in Burma. Further, the Opposition was hopelessly divided and was unable to produce any outstanding personality.²⁹

The student notes, citing a foreign source that "the styles employed during the elections were a far-cry from Western norms; (in as important as) there was firing, hijacking of campaigners, intimidation falsification, bribery and other tactics."³⁰ This description of electoral behavior is veritably analogous to accounts of elections and local leadership in the 1930s.³¹

Although, on the base of the experience of third national elections, the Clean AFPFL/Union Party (Pyidaungsu) government moved in 1961 to amend the constitution in order to produce an independent Election Commission with power and

responsibility for holding unprejudiced and honest elections. But this time around, religion played an important part in the failure of democratic government and Myanmar fell into long-term military dictatorship in 1962. In retrospect, though we know very little about these elections, they are now help up as models for the future of the country's politics. An assessment of their importance and meaning was made by a Burmese student of the party game in 1963:

Undoubtedly, Burma's three general elections were major achievements. It was a tremendous task to prepare election rolls and conduct elections. Complete accuracy in the rolls was not achieved but great care was taken to register every qualified voter. Much of the rural population was politically apathetic, yet, many voted in accordance with instructions and material assistance received from local party leaders. But it did not really matter because the AFPFL would have won anyway, for its was the best organized political institution in Burma. Further, the Opposition was hopelessly divided and was unable to produce any outstanding personality.³²

The pupil notes, citing a foreign source that "the styles employed during the elections were a far-cry from Western norms; (in as important as) there was firing, hijacking of campaigners, intimidation falsification, bribery and other tactics."³³ This description of electoral behavior is veritably analogous to accounts of elections and local leadership in the 1930s.³⁴

3.2: ii. Political Parties and Factions

Political parties have special significance in democracy. Political parties produce the spirit of organization and discipline among the people. But Myanmar's political parties were not veritably strong. The AFPFL was a political coalition in Myanmar from 1945 to 1958. It was innovated by the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) led by Thakhin Than Tun and Thakhin Soe, the Burma National Army (BNA) led by General Aung San and the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) led by U Ba Swe and W Kyaw Nyein at a meeting held during 1-3 March, 1945 as a reorganized interpretation of the then Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO), formed to repel the Japanese occupation. There were two primary objects of this party. They were:

- (a) dismissal of the Japanese from Myanmar soil; and
- (b) construction of an independent Myanmar.³⁵

However, after the independence of Myanmar, the AFPFL, the strongest political force, formed the first democratic government. Between 1948 and 1962, Myanmar, in effect, had one-party AFPFL-dominated rule within a democratic frame. But, the AFPFL itself was not a united total as it was only by means of organizing various mass groups that the AFPFL came the dominant political organization. Within the AFPFL itself, the abuse of power and distrust among the leaders had begun to come to the fore since 1958.³⁶ The AFPFL and the government also suffered in popular regard from the blights of the power so applied.

Table 3.3

Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL)

Political Party	Pioneer Leader	President
Communist Party of Burma (CPB)	Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Soe	Thakin Soe (1944- 1945)
Burma National Army (BNA: later renamed BIA)	Aung San	Aung San (1945-1947)
People's Revolutionary Party (PRP: later renamed as the Socialist Party)	U Ba Swe, Thakin Chit and W Kyaw Nyein	U Nu (1947-1958)

Source: U Maung Maung, 1990. *Burmese Nationalist Movements 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 120-122.

During the first decade (1948-1958) an enduring revolution kept the country in a state of semi-war. There were particularly three groups, videlicet, the Communists, Peoples Voluntary Organization (PVO), Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) who were involved in the insurgent conditioning.³⁷ The communists were the first to rebellion. The leadership of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) called the new government an agent of imperialism. In March 1948, three months after Myanmar had won independence collective hostility got boosted to a still greater extent. The CPB resolve into two factions, one being the White Flag Communists led by Thakhin Than Tun and the other being Red Flag Communists led by Thakhin Soe.³⁸ Both groups had gone underground and launched anti-government insurrection. Determined to institute

a Communist state through a fortified revolution, both groups set up their bases in the jungle. They hid themselves in their jungle fortresses and lairs and sought to rally local populations on the issue of land reform.

On the other hand, the People's Volunteer Organization (PVO) was formed by General Aung San from the Burmese soldiers who were not taken into the new army, as a home guard to help maintain law and order in the country.³⁹ But its real charge was political: to give the AFPFL a vehicle by which to intimidate the colonial autocrats in the growing struggle for independence.⁴⁰ Similar forces were in the 1930s and were nothing new for Burma. Since the PVO members participated in the ideas and values of and had close particular ties to the leaders and men in the new army and the rival political parties in and out of the AFPFL- the communists and socialists- doubts were raised in numerous minds as to whether there was a real separation between the professional army, the political army and the parties. So, as long as Aung San remained alive, the PVO remained united and pious to Aung San, and the AFPFL. Aung San's assassination in 1947 left the PVO leaderless and subject to the persuasions of rival political groups seeking to lead the nation. The socialists-initiated rebellion on 28 March 1948 to institute a 'Communist State' through a fortified revolution. During this time the PVO split and the dissent group joined the Communists in revolt. The army also began to come apart.⁴¹

Later, the insurrection gathered instigation nearly resembling with the spread of separatist revolution by a section of the Karen people who were incited by the British imperialist circles, and the intervention of the Kuomintang forces in the northeastern regions of the Union of Myanmar, which would have been insolvable without the stimulant of the US imperialists.⁴² U Nu as well as his colleagues no way compromised regarding their anti-Communist station. In U Nu's words, the Communists were adversaries of religion and made the Communist Parties illegal. While the U Nu government tried to control some municipalities, the revolutionists dominated the country. The durability of insurrections was understandably regarded as dangerous pitfalls to national unity.⁴³

In January 1949, Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) went against the government, backed by some defectors of the government's own Karen military and police units. These units occupied Bassen Lower Irrawaddy, the city of Insein only fifteen miles from Rangoon and Toungoo in the Salween valley where they marginally collaborated with the communists.⁴⁴ Geographically, with the exception of Rangoon,

by far the most important part, all were in the hands of the rebels.⁴⁵ In the early 1950s, the Shan's formed ad-hoc alliance with than and fought against the government.⁴⁶ And, in the midst of these crises, there was the strike of the Ministerial Services Union of the civil servants in February 1949 protesting against the imposed salary cut. The cut was mainly to supplement the source of government revenue caused by the non-payment of taxes from rebel occupied areas.

In fact, the strike during the period of rebellion nearly paralyzed the working of the U Nu government. There were fighting's, lootings, destruction of townlets, burning of schools and places of deification and great loss of lives throughout the country. The fiercest and bloodiest clash was with the Karen's.⁴⁷ Complete lawlessness prevailed in the political life. The insurgent conditioning spread fleetly throughout the country. Combined with the dissension and division which had begun to show its face within the AFPFL, the U Nu government was on the verge of collapse. However, taking advantage of the schism and lack of collaboration among the revolution army groups, U Nu with the help of the army chief, General Ne Win, was suitable to bring it under control by 1952. His government officially banned the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) in 1953. However, inter-fighting in the party continued with no solution in sight.

3.3: iii. Personal Rivalries and Factionalism within the AFPFL Government

As the AFPFL was a coalition of mass organizations, ethnic groups, independent members and socialist party, the dissensions within the AFPFL arose incompletely from different ideologies but substantially from particular battles and envy. The dissensions could no longer be concealed and erupted openly on 27 April 1958, when U Nu told U Kyaw Nyein and his colleagues that it was no longer possible to string along together and that it would be stylish to part peacefully. U Nu laid down a 7-point formula by which the peaceful split of the AFPFL was to be made. He sided with the Thakhin Tin and Thakhin Kyaw Tun group. Ba Swe joined with the Kyaw Nyein faction. The Nu-Tin faction came the "Clean" AFPFL while the Swe-Nyein faction was named the "Stable" AFPFL.⁴⁸ The underpinning causes were:

- (a) The AFPFL's expatriation of the pro-Soviet group from the party in 1950 because it blamed Myanmar's policy during the Korean War. This group

renamed itself as the Burma Workers Peasants Party (BWPP) and assumed the role of opposition in Parliament; and

- (b) U Nu's attempt to reunite the rival leaders of the AFPFL. The beginning reason was that each suspected the other of interesting to oust him from his position of power in the party and the government.⁴⁹

Ideology played little or no role in the split, as all were committed to vague socialist pretensions. The Clean and Stable factions of the AFPFL contended with one another for supremacy in the parliament and their contest had ripple effects on the countries as the leaders of both sides asked the leaders of the countries. As U Nu had promised to fulfill the requirements of the countries, the leaders of the Shan, Kayah, and Kachin states expressed their support for U Nu-led Clean AFPFL. When the split ultimately took place within the AFPFL, one or two organizations supported the Clean; the rest sided with the Stable. The campaigns for the control of Parliament were fought plaintively, with charges, counter charges and abuse hurled from the platform or splashed across the columns of newspapers.⁵⁰

On 4 June 1958, all the ministers and parliamentary secretaries of the Swe-Nyein faction abnegated from office. On 9 June they introduced a *no-confidence motion* in the lower House of the Parliament against the government headed by U Nu. But the motion was defeated by 8 votes (119 votes for and 127 votes against).⁵¹ This was made possible only by the extreme left bloc, the National Unity Front (NUF) as it abandoned its opposition part and supported U Nu. U Nu had to endeavor to broaden the base of his political support and he made such an egregious shot for backing from the left wing. It had been seen that numerous of those who came to occupy government posts during the Nu-Tin's Clean AFPFL period were persons U Nu would have called bad headdresses in the history. Therefore, numerous of the programs of the Clean AFPFL government were nebulous. Since U Nu had slightly won the no-confidence vote of June 9 by only eight votes, the security of his support in the Chamber of Deputies led directly to a major constitutional wrangle in August 1958.

On the other hand, as Myanmar's sanctioned financial year approached its end, U Nu demanded a new budget, but defeat in the legislature on one or further sections of his budget would not serve U Nu or his party well in the awaited elections. The National Unity Front that wished U Nu's dependence on its support tried to avoid dissolution

of the Parliament and proposed an each-party concession budget. On 28 July 1958, U Nu made a surprise advertisement that the Chamber of Deputies would meet in budget session on August 28, and the Chamber of Nationalities, the less important Upper house, on September 15.⁵² Indeed more unexpectedly, he declared on August 19 that the budget session had been cancelled and that the budget would be passed by presidential ordinance.⁵³ It easily showed U Nu's feeling of uncertainty about getting to pass the budget through the parliamentary.

On September 22, U Nu blazoned that the Parliament would be dissolved on September 29, the budget was placarded by ordinance on September 30, and elections held in November 1958.⁵⁴ Although the Stable AFPFL charged his conduct as unconstitutional, these were presumably constitutional, despite conceivably not in keeping with the democratic spirit of Myanmar's introductory law. Therefore, U Nu really risked the values he cherished for his political survival. The AFPFL split had strong impacts on the "Tatmadaw". Except for General Ne Win, utmost of the high-ranking military officers and commanders were said to have sided with the Swe-Nyein faction.⁵⁵ This particular faithfulness for U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein and political sympathies for the Stable AFPFL made them suspicious of every move of the Clean AFPFL which they demonstrated as way to strength and stabile clean AFPFL of U Nu.

U Nu remained anti-communist, and the anti-communist army leaders realized this. Still, numerous top military numbers suspected the wisdom of U Nu's programs toward the socialists. Numerous army labor force believed that U Nu's concessions to the mutineers only encouraged the socialists to demand further concessions.⁵⁶ It was an open secret in Yangon that the army was disturbed by the latitude of the remittal order of 1 August 1958. The army's mounting mistrust of U Nu's station toward the National Unity Front (NUF), the People's Comrade Party of surrendering revolutionists, and the Communist mutineers following the AFPFL split were matched by the growing fear on the part of the Clean AFPFL that the military leaders were sympathetic to its rival, Stable the AFPFL. The alternate stratum of leaders of the Clean AFPFL easily sneaked by some individualities with communist leanings, sought actively to discredit the military in order both to reduce the significance of an alleged 'Stable' supporter and to increase the liability that some of their political backers still in rebellion would recapture legal status.

Indeed, the army was labeled “Public Enemy Number One” at a Clean Convention in U Nu's sanctioned emulsion in early September 1958a marker that U Nu latterly denied in a radio broadcast. The Swe-Nyein faction was declared “Public Enemy Number Two” and the mutineers as a poor third.⁵⁷ In response to the complaint of the army leaders, U Nu gave an explanation speech on the air on 4 September 1958 to the people of Myanmar. Still, the relations between the army and the Clean AFPFL politicians ultimately turned from bad to worse. On the other hand, Bo Min Gaung and Thakhin Pan Myaing of the Nu-Tin faction came suspicious of the true intentions of the Swe- Nyein faction's alliance with certain high-ranking military officers. The political situation deteriorated nearly diurnal throughout September 1958, reaching putatively explosive proportions.

The pressure increased when the pro-clean units of the Para-military Union Military Police (UMP) were transferred from Mandalay to Yangon while U Nu himself was significantly on stint of Upper Myanmar.⁵⁸ The UMP rudiments fell within the governance of the ambitious Bo Min Gaung, and he was primarily responsible for the troop movements. By mid-September, the Army was visibly more partial to the Stable party and Bo Min Gaung and some other alternate-line leaders wanted pro-Clean fortified labor force in the *Yangon* area.⁵⁹ On September 28, 1958 the megacity of *Yangon* was nearly fully encircled by army units and in turn they were surrounded by pro-clean units of the UMP. And also, a formal exchange of letters between U Nu and General Ne Win took place and that evening U Nu made a public advertisement of the transfer of authority to a caretaker government under General Ne Win, Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar's Armed forces.⁶⁰ In this way, the life of the Clean AFPFL government was terminated at 3 months and 17 days and General Ne Win's Caretaker Government stepped in and remained in power for further than one year, apparently to "clean the mess" in the country.

The military led caretaker government was assumed to remain in office until the election could be held occasionally before April 1959.⁶¹ With the split of the AFPFL, and hence the cabinet, U Nu was no longer in a position to remain in power. Therefore, he peacefully handed over power to General Ne Win. Latterly, caretaker government was formed which ruled Myanmar from 1958 to 1960. The caretaker government originally appeared to be interested in erecting state capacity. It reduced corruption and bettered bureaucratic effectiveness.⁶² In 1960, the military blazoned to

hold elections. The 1960 parliamentary elections saw the return of the U Nu's clean faction of AFPFL, recently named Union Party, to power with U Nu as the Premier. But factionalism, that had begun in the AFPFL and survived through the period of the Clean AFPFL, was carried over into the Union party.

The Union party was composed of three groups: the Thakhins, the Bo's, and the U's. The Thakhins, who took their name from *the Dobama Asi-ayone* of the 1930s, were the professional politicians and the least educated section of the party. They were greatly influenced by Marxist literature and utmost of them were either leftists or had left leanings in politics.⁶³ The Bo's were the political survivors of the "Thirty Comrades" and those who had latterly associated themselves with the one-time resistance fighters and their heirs at law. The U's included utmost of the professional persons among the top party leaders, and were, on the whole, the most administratively experienced rudiments. All these different groups were inherited by the Union party.⁶⁴

In this way, although the Union Party was no longer a confederation of mass organizations, it was still easily a coalition of different and conformed personalities and interests. This essential diversity in the composition of the Clean AFPFL, with each group assuming a different nature and background, and embracing a different political ideology and station, was the root cause of the split into the U, Bo and Thakhin factions in the Union Party. The split at the party headquarters came more apparent as the party came to assume further and further of the characteristics of a people's party in its political philosophy, introductory organization and structure. The democratic nature of the party constitution also encouraged battles and conflicts among the party leaders. Factional strife and struggle for positional advantage weakened the party and the government. Consequently, this government also failed to manage up with the situation, and U Nu failed to adapt democracy during the democratic governance in Myanmar.

3.3: iV. Insurgency and Demand for Autonomy/Federalism

It is believed that a country which is deeply divided along ethnic, religious, or verbal lines faces difficulties in establishing a working democracy. Myanmar is a multicultural, multiracial and multi-religious society. It is a country of ethnical diversity. It has 135 different ethnical groups. Different ethnical groups are distributed

under the eight major groups- Arakanese (Rakhine), Burman (Bamar), Chin, Kachin, Karen (Kayin), Karenni (Kayah), Mon and Shan.⁶⁵ Of these groups, Burmese/Burmans are the dominant groups which constitute 69% of the total population. Many of the ethnical minorities within the races have their own culture, language, flag and armed group.⁶⁶

Myanmar's ethnic composition is one of the most complex composites in the world with over 100 languages and dialects. Ethnic composition is veritably essential for understanding Burmese political problems. So, some scholars suppose that the recent uneasiness in Myanmar is not only for democracy but it also has historical and ethnical dimensions.⁶⁷ Over 75 years have passed since independence, but the stewing pressure between ethnical nonages and the ethnical Burman-led central government continues. A source, book, 'Basic Facts about Myanmar,' gives an account of various ethnical communities in Myanmar as follows:

Table 3.4

Major Ethnic Groups and Their Respective Compositions

8 Major National Races	Composition of 135 Ethnic Group
Kachin	12
Kayah	09
Kayin	11
Chin	53
Mon	01
Burman or Bamar	09
Rakhine	07
Shan	33
Total	135

Source: "Basic Facts about Myanmar," [http://: www.myanmar=embassy-tokyo.net/about.htm](http://www.myanmar=embassy-tokyo.net/about.htm). Accessed on 25th May 2018.

The First Panglong Conference was held in March 1946 and brought together leaders of the Shan, Chin, Kachin, and Karen in what was primarily a festivity of ethnical

diversity.⁶⁸ The representatives were there to discuss possible conformation of a union. The frontier leaders were suspicious about the motives of the Burman leaders. In an attempt to convert the frontier leaders to join the Union of Burma, ethnical Burman leaders proposed the idea of granting autonomy, which means that the Burmans would not intrude, among others, with the customs and religious practices of the Frontier Areas (ethnical nonages). Despite the proposition, leaders of the Shan, Chin and Kachin refused to take part in the conformation of the Union of Burma. Rather, they discussed the idea of establishing a “Frontier Areas Federation.”⁶⁹

The year 1947 was a crucial one for ethnical nonages because they were to decide on their future, that is, whether to join the Union of Burma or not. Some frontier leaders were ready to trust the Burman leaders, but some were still reticent to do so, stewing that they may lose their identity, culture and freedom to the maturity Burmans. Utmost frontier leaders had a moping fear about possible domination by the Burmans. Despite dubitation and anxiety, some frontier leaders (the Shan’s, the Chins and the Kachin’s) decided to participate at Panglong conference. When these frontier leaders were invited to write the constitution of the Union of Burma, they were still uncertain about their future.⁷⁰ There were dubieties in the minds of the frontier leaders and the British as to whether or not the Burmans would treat all ethnical nationalities inversely in the post-independence period.

To relieve the moping enterprises, General Aung San made a major statement that reads, “If Burma receives one kyat, and you'll also get one kyat”. This was an assurance that every ethnical group within the Union of Burma would admit equal treatment. Similar reassuring reflections from a prominent Burman leader like General Aung San converted representatives from the Shan countries, the Chin Hills and the Kachin Hills to cooperate with the interim Burmese government.⁷¹ Latterly, on February 12th 1947, the Panglong Conference was an action led by Aung San between equal, separate and distinct political realities British Burma, Federated Shan States, Kachin Hills and Chin Hills-to agree to cooperate to form a new nation and seek independence from Britain.

In this conference, the Karen, Mon, Rakhine and several other ethnical nonage groups weren't represented, and the Shan and karenni were given the voluntary right of secession after ten-time trial period.⁷² The Panglong Treaty, the foundation of the

Union of Burma, was inked by the 22 representatives (13 from the Shan States, 6 from the Kachin Hills and 3 from the Chin Hills) of all races in Burma. It was included in Chapter X of the constitution under the title, “Right of Secession.” February 12 is celebrated as the Union Day since also. But Myanmar’s nationalists, in their attempt to forge concinnity among its people, denied the actuality of separate ethnical, cultural and territorial divisions among the different people in Myanmar by stating that it was the British who had made these artificial distinctions.

Myanmar, since its independence in 1948, has been agonized by ethnical conflict and insurrection problems.⁷³ Under the 1947 Constitution Burma came a republic known as the Union of the Burma. In the main, the Constitution was bourgeois-democratic in character and contained concessions to the feudal tycoons of the national nonages in the devious areas, which had joined the union as autonomous countries (Shan, Kachin and other states).⁷⁴ At that time, the challenges of political integration which the government of Myanmar’s first premier, U Nu had to face were redoubtable. The Union government was unfit to completely integrate different ethnical nonages, numerous of whom didn't want to join the Union of Myanmar in the first place. Indeed, the nonages who inked the Panglong agreement were suspicious about the sincerity of the ethnical Burmans. The nonages demanded a federal government in which each nation would enjoy autonomy/ federalism.⁷⁵

The rise of different insurrection problem was a constant headache for the civilian government. Insurrectionary organizations similar as Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO), Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) and Mujahids in Arakan/ Rakhine fought against the central government. The Karen insurrection movement was so influential that the Karen members in the government army began to desert in January-February, 1949.⁷⁶ In a different society like Myanmar where race plays an important part in politics, taking up arms is one way of expressing political demands. Depending on the environment and nature of the government, a fortified struggle may occasionally lead to dialogue and peaceful political agreement. It may also number the government to exclude a fortified movement by using force.

Although during the first decade of independence, the democratic governments made sincere efforts to apply the Panglong agreement, the non-Burman groups considered the changes as mischievous Burmanisation policy (to impose ethnical Burman culture

and religion on nonages) by the Burman maturity. Relinquishment of these programs made the ethnical nonages concerned that they might lose their culture, language, religious freedom and tradition. Accordingly, on the question of the problems of insurrection, Myanmar couldn't make public integration. It also came a problem for the establishment of stable democracy. Still, in June 1961, the leaders of the nonages attended a conference at Taunggyi where they agreed to press the Government to amend the Constitution in such a way as to give for an equal status between Burma proper and the other States. U Nu placed those proposals before the Consultative Committee of the Government. In February 1962, he held a National Seminar on Federalism to discuss the various aspects of the problem. When General Ne Win took over in March 1962, he declared that one of the reasons of the coup was that the Union was threatened the country with disintegration due to the demand of the minorities for federalism.⁷⁷

3.3: V. Enactment of Buddhism as the State Religion

Myanmar is a multi-religious country. Presently, there is no sanctioned state religion. However, Buddhism is deeply bedded in Burmese culture and has come associated with the national identity of the Bamar.⁷⁸ The prominent form of Buddhism rehearsed in Myanmar is Theravada Buddhism. Government shows preference to the Theravada Buddhism,⁷⁹ which is the religion of the maturity people. Officially, it is estimated that 85% of Myanmar population practice Theravada Buddhism.⁸⁰ Although, the new constitution provides for the freedom of religion; however, it also grants broad exceptions that allow the governance to circumscribe these rights at will.⁸¹ Utmost other ethnical groups similar as Shan, Mon, Palaung and Pao Karen also exercise Buddhist rudiments in all the socio-cultural life of the other indigenous ethnic groups. Religion and politics were combined with one another in Burma during the period under review and presented a united front against the political and economic domination of the British and the Indians. Buddhism had indeed been nearly associated with the traditional Burmese national identity: “To be a Burman is to be a Buddhist.”⁸² The ‘Father of the Nation’ General Aung San was a secular nationalist leader. Aung San declared in 1946: “we must draw a clear line between politics and religion, because the two are not one and the same thing. If we mix religion with politics, then we offend the spirit of religion itself.”⁸³ As in the days of Aung San’s premiership, religion was again to be a private matter and the state was to be secular.

The first draft of Burma's Constitution was the work of 'Constituent Assembly' in May 1947, some of the further rightist leaders especially, U Ba Choe pressed for the constitutional recognition of Buddhism. These wanted to declare Buddhism as the state religion. The offer was vehemently rejected by Bogyoke Aung San, who was induced that such a provision would seriously vitiate national concinnity.⁸⁴ The pressure for the constitutional recognition of Buddhism as state religion however, continued. The question was still under discussion when Aung San, U Ba Choe and five of their colleagues of the executive council were assassinated on July 19 1947.⁸⁵ Two months after the assassinations the 'Constituent Assembly' espoused the Constitution containing this concession formula. The following constitutional vittles describe the state-religion relationship in Myanmar.

Section 21. (1) The state recognizes the special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great maturity of the citizens of the Union.

(2) The state also recognizes Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and animism as some of the persuasions being in the Union at the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution.⁸⁶

When Myanmar achieved independence in 1948, the 'Aung San nationalist tradition' was so fully dominant that there was little mindfulness of the aged Buddhist-acquainted nationalism. Still, independent Myanmar's first Premier U Nu was a deeply religious man. Any analysis of the sanctioned creation of Buddhism in Burma must start with this introductory fact. During his years in office, U Nu sought to make a neutral state. He also sought to provide a traditional, integrationist base for the heterogeneous state by elevating Buddhism as state religion. Historically, Buddhism had played a pivotal part in binding together the different ethnical groups of the country. In Professor Cady's words "The most important positive base on which popular constancy to the king was conceded by the leading ethnical peoples of Burma (the Burmans, Mons, Shan's and Arakanese) was that kingliness worked as the protagonist and protector of the Buddhist faith."⁸⁷

Under Prime Minister U Nu, the sanctioned creation of Buddhism really exercised an analogous integrative influence to some extent. In the pivotal period antedating the relinquishment of Buddhism as the state religion, Still, the two issues (state religion and ethnical nonage demands) were related in a veritably different manner. U Nu had

promised separate countries for the Mons, the Arakanese and the Kayahs for a form of federalism in which the countries would have greatly increased power.⁸⁸ The political tranquility was also seriously disturbed when the Prime Minister tried to make Buddhism the state religion in 1960. After the AFPFL split, the All-Myanmar Clean AFPFL Conference was held Kaba-Aye from August 31 to September 2, 1958. In that Conference, U Nu promised intimately on behalf of the Clean AFPFL that if the Clean should return to power, he'd continue to apply the pledge he'd made for the first time as President of the AFPFL and as Prime Minister before 2500 monks and a huge crowd of amateurs convened to celebrate the successful completion of the Sixth Great Buddhist Council and the 2500th Anniversary of the Sasana.⁸⁹

During the crusade, the color of his ballot box was unheroic, the shade of monks' blankets. On 4 April 1960, when he returned to power, in keeping with that pledge, U Nu formed the State Religion Advisory Commission to advise in order to make Buddhism the state religion.⁹⁰ This created important dissension among the members of other persuasions. On 5 May 1960, the Islamic Religious Affairs Council stated a protestation in which the Council raised its expostulation to the state religion offer. The most vital expostulation to the offer was that it would lead to the creation of two classes of Myanmar citizen's first-class Buddhist citizens and alternate-class non-Buddhist citizens. Although the rights of non-Buddhist citizens were defended by law, in reality, they allowed that there would be demarcation in profitable, political, and religious matters.

Moreover, this long- engaged state religion action gave rise to important reservations and dissensions within some of the nonage groups, especially the Christian Kachins. Unlike the Karens, Karennis, Paos, Mons and Rakhines who had been in rebellion nearly since independence in 1948, the Kachins and Shans were signatories to and keen sympathizers of the Panglong Agreement. In 1961, this state religion issue really served as a rallying cry for the Kachin Independence Organization cause. Therefore, the KIO's demand for secession came a veritably popular cause at that time. Demonstrations also passed in the Chin Hills. In December 1960, the Chin Affairs Council unanimously approved the offer opposing the government's move to make Buddhism the state religion.⁹¹ The state religion problem further disgruntled others similar as the Karens. It intensely poisoned the ethnical and religious nonages. There arose possible deals that if the Kachins, Chins, and Karens supported absolutely

for the confederation offer of the Shan's in Parliament, the Shan's and Kayahs would join in opposing state religion bill.⁹²

In order to cover these deals, U Nu declared in a cabinet meeting that if the Rakhine and Mon representatives in parliament had opposed the state religion bill, he'd drop his pledge of separate statehood for them. And if the Shan's and Kayahs used the state religion issue as an instrument of logrolling to achieve their ends for federalism, the government would not consider the federalism offer any farther.⁹³ In this way, U Nu's programmed of making Buddhism the state religion had paved the way for political confusions in the country. On 17 August 1961, the Prime Minister proposed the motion of *the Third Constitutional Amendment Bill* "Promulgation of Buddhism as the State Religion" in the Chamber of Deputies (See, *Appendix IV*).⁹⁴ Pressures gradationally mounted and when Parliament assembled to vote on the constitutional amendment, heavy security measures had to be taken in the megacity and around the chambers. The Bill, still, was passed independently by both Houses of Parliament with inviting maturity.⁹⁵

The act was only an emblematic protestation of reality as Buddhism was formerly the religion of 85% of the population and U Nu personally was tolerant of all persuasions. also, in the Chapter II, Paragraph 21 (a) of the *1947 Constitution* of the Union of Myanmar it had been conceded that "The state honored the special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great maturity of the citizens of the Union." The relinquishment of Buddhism as the state religion didn't mark the end of religious contestation. To gain the confidence of the religious nonages, U Nu made efforts to push through *the Constitution Fourth Amendment Bill*. It was intended to establish new legal safeguards for non-Buddhists in the form of *the Constitution fourth Amendment Act, 1961*.⁹⁶ In reality, in Chapter II, paragraph 20 of *the 1947 constitution of the Union of Myanmar* it was formerly stated that: "All persons were inversely entitled to freedom of heart and the right to freely profess and exercise religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of the Chapter II of the constitution."⁹⁷

Despite the vigorous opposition of the Buddhist monks, the amendment was passed in both Houses of the Parliament by an amicable vote on September 25, 1961. In the coming month, a more forceful demonstration of the monks' enmity toward the

government and the nonages was shown. On 29 October 1961, serious anti-Muslim screams passed in Yangon. Latterly, 1500 monks demonstrated against the detention of the arrested persons and U Nu was indicted of being a bogus Buddhist and prompted to abdicate.⁹⁸ Each amendment created an oral opposition and trouble multiplied. It showed the confines of the divisive force U Nu had created by backing the cause of the state religion.

3.4: Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Myanmar, destroyed by the Second World War and revolution ridden after independence, faced with poverty, slow pace of industrialization, profitable recession, and ignorance. Cultural traits including the strength of traditional religious and ethnical bases of identity had negative impact on political system. Democratization had embarked on fairly suddenly with little medication on the process. The present chapter “Democratic Government of Myanmar (1948-1962): Dynamics of Domestic Politics” has described the aforesaid political development. It clearly shows that a number of serious issues threatened the practice of democracy during U Nu’s rule. However, during the period from 1948 to 1958, there was practice of full parliamentary democracy in Myanmar. Freedom of speech, press and assembly were widely respected, Judiciary was independent. Politics was dominated by the AFPFL which received wide and popular support because of its historical role in the struggle for independence. This trend continued even during the period from 1960 to 1962.

This chapter has also shown that during U Nu’s first democratic government arranged three multi-party national elections. These elections were free and fair and the factual state of public opinion was astronomically reflected in those elections. However, some individual personalities dominated parties, and party organizations were generally weak due to factionalism. There was wide dissatisfaction with the politicians. The political leadership fell into corruption and disharmony. In 1958, the AFPFL resolve into two factions; ‘Clean’ and ‘Stable’ rivals which were followed by enterprises about a possible coup. In order to settle the situation in 1958, U Nu invited the military to form caretaker government to hold election and transfer power to the elected body. Latterly, caretaker government held the election in 1960. In that

election, U Nu returned to power. But this government also failed to manage with the situation and took a number of ways which only made effects worse.

Furthermore, when we look back at the conditions leading to the fall of parliamentary democracy in 1962, some factors come to the fore. They are the lack of experience in the working of multi-party democracy, inordinate attachments with a certain political party, ideology, or racial group, and the lust and struggle for power and self-interests of the politicians. First democratic government's intention of establishing Buddhism as the state religion led to wide demurrers by the non-Buddhist minorities. The democratic government failed to forge a common group among these clashing nonages groups. In this way, taking advantage of this lawless situation, an important and influential section of the fortified forces led by General Ne Win which was against the return of the parliamentary democracy, took over in 1962 and ended the trial with the democratic political system in Myanmar.

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Chapter- 4

The Post Military Coup (1962-1988) Compulsions of Domestic Politics in Myanmar

4.1: Introduction

After independence, most of the new countries of the Third World started their political career with parliamentary democracy. The leaders, who van guarded the nationalist movements, accepted many of the rules of the game of politics that the former colonial rulers had adopted for administering the ex-colonies.¹ But very few of them succeeded in continuing with the parliamentary democratic set-up. In some cases, the civilian leaders themselves scrapped parliamentary democratic system and replaced by the military leaders who thereafter established a complete control over politics of these states. Thus, the liberal democratic system of the new states has either been interrupted by military takeover or is facing a very hard test.

It is further observed that breakdown of the democratic system gave rise to the authoritarian system in most of the Third World countries as an “alternative.” The increasing tendency of the military to intervene in the civilian affairs has all the more compounded the problems of establishing democracy in these countries. The military regimes established authoritarian systems under civil-military partnership which in most cases were later subjected to both external pressures and internally more vigorous authoritarian tendencies under direct military rule.² Thereafter, they played a crucial role in the country’s decision-making process. The military leaders, in one form or another, began to control the politics of many of the new states. Although, Asian and South-east Asian politics evolved within the same colonial experience there have been marked differences in the operation of democracy in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar-began with a democratic set up. India, in most part, succeeded with democracy but Bangladesh and Myanmar have failed.

Myanmar won her political independence on 4 January 1948 from the United Kingdom under the leadership of General Aung San (the father of Burmese independence) of the Burma National Army (BNA). In July 1947, Aung San was

assassinated by rivals under the leadership of U Saw, but achieved independence under Aung San assistant U Nu. Since its struggle for independence, the armed forces known as the “Tatmadaw” played an important role in gaining independence and it was under the Burmese Independence Army (BIA) that Myanmar got its independence. The Army in Myanmar had gained respect in independent Myanmar at the original stage and perceived as the protection of the country. The military claims itself as the founder of the Union of Burma, and the main force that held the country together during the civil war and also claimed that it has averted the country from disintegrating.³

After independence, Myanmar too, like numerous other new countries of the Third World, espoused to the parliamentary democratic system as its model of government. But the recently formed civilian government of U Nu, set up it extremely delicate to maintain the concinnity of the country. Myanmar was face with domestic problems such as: economic recession and ignorance, slow pace of industrialization, ethnical issues, insurrection, corruption, mismanagement, and the ethnical mutinies which took up arms against each other. In 1958, the ruling Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (here after AFPFL) party split into two factions- the Clean (led by U Nu and Thakin Tin) and the Stable (led by Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein). This split within the AFPFL provoked a coup by field officers. In order to attack the situation, U Nu invited the military to form a caretaker government.⁴ In 1958-60, the “caretaker government” under the army chief General Ne Win was formed.⁵ The caretaker government originally appeared to be interested in erecting state capacity. It reduced corruption, bettered bureaucratic effectiveness, and managed to deal with the fund armies.⁶

The military junta announced to hold an election in February 1960. After the election, Ne Win handed over power reverse to the victorious U Nu on 4 April 1960. Later, U Nu's party (AFPFL Clean/Union Party) formed a civilian government. But the civilian government under U Nu couldn't break the problem and ameliorate the situation. Rather, hovered the national integration of the country was hovered. The situation led to the coup on March 2, 1962 under General Ne Win. After the coup, Ne Win with sixteen other elderly military officers arrested U Nu along with several other political leaders, suspended the constitution, and appointed a Revolutionary Council (here after RC) to govern Myanmar by decree.⁷ Still, this coup led to the end of democratic form

of government and steered in the beginning of military rule in Myanmar. During the period of military rule under General Ne Win (now U Ne Win),⁸ concentrated power to the RC. It was composed entirely of military officers pious to him and declared military as the supreme authority. It also barred former civilian political leaders from participation in political processes.

The RC suspended the Constitution and controlled the country through Burma Socialist Programme Party (here after BSPP). Latterly, Ne Win snappily rescinded U Nu's protestation of Buddhism as the state religion and introduced what he described as 'Burmese Way to Socialism' abandoning Aung San's 'Unity in Diversity' and the federal structure of the 1947 Constitution. The military governance also assessed a government-controlled Burmese-language curriculum. Political parties were banned, and only BSPP formed by the military was declared legal. Independent trade unions were also outlawed. The military also brought all aspects of governance including economy under its control. In March 1964, Ne Win demonetized 50 kyat and 100 kyat leading to huge economic impact on the people. By 1966, the economy of the country was getting worse and worse. Corruption increased and black market came a serious problem.⁹ Rice product dropped. By 1967, the country faced wide deficit of rice, cooking oil painting and other introductory goods. These led to huge review against the military governance led by Ne Win. This impelled the military junta to take up some way for political liberalization. The military government of Ne Win released several hundred captures including political captures.

In July 1971, the military junta blazoned its intention to draft a new Constitution and blazoned that election will be held according to the new Constitution. It further promised that the power will be transferred to the elected civilian government after the election. In the same year, BSPP converted itself into a mass party in the sense that it was made open to all the people, and no longer exclusive remained limited to the military. In April 1972, Ne Win and 20 other elderly commanders retired from the army and came civilian members of the government. Ne Win came Prime Minister, heading a cabinet of nine retired officers, three serving officers and two civilians. It marked the end of the 'Revolutionary' Government and its replacement by the Government of the Union of Burma. In December 1973, the blessing of a national referendum, the 1974 constitution was to be written. It was espoused on 3 January

1974. It created a unicameral legislature called the People's Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw), represented by members of the BSPP.¹⁰

The new Constitution, with a view to transform Myanmar into a more democratic socialist state was approved. In 27 January and 10 February 1974, the first general elections to a legislative People's Assembly were held. The BSPP won all 451 seats in the People's Assembly.¹¹ After the election, Ne Win was tagged President by the recently created State Council (here after SC) and transferred power to the recently tagged government i.e., from General Ne Win to Ne Win himself.¹² Latterly, a new Constitution known as the 'new basic law' came into effect. The Constitution also verified the BSPP as the sole authorized political party. In March, RC was dissolved and this led to the end of Ne Win's direct military rule which started after the coup in February 1962. This also marked the beginning of a new phase of constitutional dictatorship, and the military ruled the country laterally till the coup in 1988. In December 1974, screams broke out over food deficit, corruption, and declining economy.¹³ In 1976, demonstration also broke out by the students against the being socio-economic and political problems.

In January 1978, general election was held for the unicameral People's Assembly. In the election, the BSPP alone queried as it was the only legal party in the country. The BSPP formed the government and gave Ne Win power to rule the country for four further years, and he was re-elected Chairman of the State Council. So, the election did not change the nature of the political system, national leadership and its programs. The situation remained unstable and people demanded for democratic government. It is important to note then that towards the end of the 1980s, Myanmar faced severe economic extremity. In 1987, the military made the currency notes of 25, 35 and 75 kyat illegal to save the economy and combat the black marketing, and brought out 45 and 90-kyat notes. Still, this action led to public fury and provoked the students and the millions to carryout demonstrations in the country. In July 1988, Ne Win decided to abdicate and ended 26 years of military governance.¹⁴ But, during this period, there was some democratic landscape in the form of giving rights to the citizen to handpick and to stand for election.¹⁵ Nonetheless, for utmost of its independent years, the autonomous state endured in rampant ethnical strife and its myriad ethnical groups have been involved in one of the world's longest-running ongoing civil wars.

During this time, the United Nations and several other organizations have reported harmonious and systematic human rights violations in the country.¹⁶

With the above description, an attempt has been made in this chapter to make an in-depth analysis of Myanmar's military Government (1962-1988) and its impact on domestic politics. This chapter will concentrate on six closely inter-related aspects of the nature and functioning of the first military governance. First, it will examine the military of Myanmar in the pre-Independence politics. Second, it will describe the military and post-Independence politics in Myanmar. Third, it will highlight the Ne Win Government and Myanmar's role in domestic politics. The period from 1962-1988 can be divided into two phases. The first phase is direct military rule from 1962 to 1974 and the alternate phase is circular military rule in the Constitutional Dictatorship phase from 1974 to 1988. Fourth, it will describe the challenges of Ne Win government and impact of domestic politics. Fifth, it will highlight the foreign policy under the military rule during 1962-1988. Eventually, attempt has also been made to concentrate in this chapter on the Ne Win governance: impact on democratic landscape in Myanmar.

4.2: Military of Myanmar in the Pre-Independence Politics

The key to a contemporary understanding of the prospects for democratization lies in the understanding of the part of the military in politics at various junctures of institutional changes in Myanmar.¹⁷ The ultramodern military in Myanmar began as part of the independence struggle in the 1930s. On the dusk of World War II, the Burmese army was further of a personification of British colonial attitudes than of Burmese reality. Until the 1930s, British policy barred Burmans from the armed forces.¹⁸ They were thought to be “unreliable, insubordinate and unfitted generally for military service.”¹⁹ Put another way, the Burman troops might align themselves with the Burman population and it was the Burmans with whom the British forces had to fight. Thus, the British, basing their administration on an Indian model, recruited from the ‘martial races’ of the hills. By keeping the ethnic minorities of the hills and the people in the plains divided, it was easier for the Britishers to maintain control.²⁰

The Burmans comprised only 12.3 percent of the armed forces in the early 1940s, whereas the largest groups in the military were the ethnic Karen (27.8 percent),

Kachin (22.9 percent), and Chin (22.6 percent). The remainders were British, Anglo-Burmese and others.²¹ On the other hand, in 1940 the Thakins, the political movement of the students and youthful clerisy, intimately transferred one of their leaders, Aung San, to China to seek aid for their rebellion.²² Picked up by the Japanese in Amoy, he was taken to Tokyo. There, he met leaders of the Japanese Army command who were apprehensive of the independence aspirations of the Thakins. Aung San entered into an agreement with them. It was agreed that Japan would help Burma to gain her independence by supplying her with necessary arms. At the same time, an underground revolutionary movement began to be organized inside Burma in preparation for the anticipated insurrection against the British.

Aung San returned in 1941 and signed twenty-nine Burmans to go intimately with him to Hainan Island where they would be given military training by the Japanese. These 'Thirty Heroes' formed the nexus of the Burma Independence Army (BIA).²³ The army, therefore, was organized as a "political force first and a military force, second the officer corps seeing themselves as freedom fighters, not professional soldiers."²⁴ When the Pacific War broke out, they returned to Thailand, inked the first members of the Burma Independence Army (BIA) and followed the Japanese into Burma. Some of their units fought the British, experience of which gave them pride and confidence. During the four years of occupation, the Japanese did not succeed also in bringing the aggregate of Burma under their control or in winning the universal support of the people. Faced with draining tactics by the Abettors and the trouble of incursion, the Japanese tried to gain support from the Burmese only by pledges of freedom.²⁵

During the war, the army's name was changed, first to the Burma Defense Army (BDA) in 1942, also the Burma National Army (BNA) and at war's end in 1943, to the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF). On 27 March 1945, it revolted against the Japanese and joined with the Abettors in their final phase of the war against the Japanese.²⁶ Aung San negotiated with the British to organize the military on a "class company basis," keeping ethnic separation within the military intact. He felt that such organization would enable an independent Burma to cope more successfully with its growing minority problems.²⁷ In 1947, the Burma army was composed of fifteen regular battalions, fifteen military police battalions and some irregular troops, a very

small force with which to face the diverse rebellions that erupted soon after the birth of the new state.²⁸

4.3: Military and Post-Independence Politics in Myanmar

At the time of Myanmar's independence in 1948, the Tatmadaw was weak, small and disunited. Cracks appeared along the lines of ethnic background, political cooperation, organizational origin and different services. The most serious problem was the pressure between Karen officers, coming from the British Burma Army and Burmese officers, coming from the Patriotic Burmese Force (PBF). In accordance with the agreement reached at the Kandy Conference in September 1945, the *Tatmadaw* was reorganized by incorporating the British Burma Army and the Patriotic Burmese Force (PBF). On 1 January 1956, the War Office was officially renamed as the Ministry of Defence. General Ne Win came the first Chief of Staff of the Tatmadaw to command all three services-Army, Navy and Air Force under a single unified command for the first time.

Due to deteriorating political situations in 1957, the also Premier of Burma, U Nu invited General Ne Win to form a "Caretaker Government" and handed over power on 28 October 1958. Under the Military-led Caretaker Government, known as *Bogyoke* (General's) Government, Ne Win achieved several successes.²⁹ There were three main objects of military control to re-establish law and order, to combat economic revolutionaries, and to prepare for civilian elections.³⁰ On the eve of the conformation of the caretaker government the military leaders held a conference at which they defined the national ideology, as they understood it, and their role in upholding it, declaring that so long as their strength remained, 'the Constitution shall remain pure'. They held that the nation's goal was to make a political-economic system on the principles of justice, liberty and equality and to construct a democratic society predicated on socialist economy.

In the 'National Ideology and the Role of Defense Services', published in 1960, three main objects were set out: the restoration of peace and rule of law; the consolidation of democracy; and the establishment of a socialist economy.³¹ They pledged to pursue the points of national politics as distinct from party politics. The Caretaker Government gave Ne Win a chance to put the army's ideology and propositions into practice. As mooted ahead, while he followed the constitution in letter, he violated its

spirit.³² The military-led caretaker government sought to clean up the cities which were filled with squatters. Huts lined-up throughout the thoroughfares and covered vacant lots.³³ Ne Win kept the food prices low and moved the squatter communities to newly established satellite towns.³⁴ The economic activities of the military led caretaker government were of greatest importance because of the attitudes they created within the military. The Defense Services Institute (DSI) was vastly expanded. Its main objective was development of national economy; lowering of prices; expansion of new economic fields and propagation of the industrial and commercial knowledge. The military further perceived the DSI as to play a significant part in the process of Burmanization.³⁵

The military-led caretaker administration's most important legacy was the continued development of a national political identity for the *Tatmadaw* under General Ne Win.³⁶ In its trouble to deal more effectively with revolution and lawlessness in the country, the caretaker government formed security and superintendent panels composed representatives from the army, police and administration to coordinate and cooperate in establishing or restoring law and order. The Frontier Areas Administration assumed direct governance over remote border areas and took responsibility for security and improvement in services to the people in those areas. As a result of these changes, a more centralized administration developed throughout the nation, and internal security was bettered.³⁷ The Caretaker government, further, led to the integration of the frontier areas and local chiefs with the Union.

The government brought pressure on the Chiefs in the Shan and Kayah states to surrender their major rights and transfer administration to elected leaders.³⁸ A constitutional amendment, passed in 1959, confirmed these changes and was hailed as an important step in the democratization of the frontier areas. But the change did not bring peace to these troubled states. The destruction of the traditional political and economic hierarchy has been a factor in increasing Shan state resistance to the Union government.³⁹ In the caretaker government, AFPFL-Stable formed the key component of the military.⁴⁰ General Ne Win complied with the election date which was set for February 1960. The military leaders hoped to influence the outcome of the election and the AFPFL-Stable faction flaunted their connection with the high-ranking officers.⁴¹ Backed by elderly military leaders, the AFPFL-Stable leaders appeared confident of their electoral palm. They believed that their sympathizers in the military

would do everything to undermine the position of the AFPFL-Clean in the election. The outgrowth of the election was, still, contrary to the prospects of the AFPFL-Stable because a large number of people, especially, the business elite, who suffered due to caretaker government's nonsupervisory measures were displeased and acted up on this enmity by whole heartedly supporting the AFPFL-Clean.⁴²

Therefore, when the third national election was held in February 1960, the Clean AFPFL won an overwhelming majority (203 out of 250) of the seats. In this election, U Nu back was to power as the Prime Minister and Pyidaungsu Party (Union Party)-led civilian government capsule control of the country. The restoration of constitutional democracy was supposed to remove all the problems that Myanmar faced- ethnical, economic, social and political. However, it was quite the contrary. U Nu intention of establishing Buddhism as the state religion led to wide demurrers by the non-Buddhists nonages. Crime rate increased as the law came lax and the ruling party hovered to resolve as conflict of opinion and ambition surfaced. Taking advantage of this lawless situation an important and influential section of the army forces, which was against the return of the parliamentary democracy, took over in 1962.⁴³

On 2 March 1962, the also Chief of Staff of Armed Forces, General Ne Win offered a coup d'état and formed the "Union Revolutionary Council."⁴⁴ Around night the troops began to move into Yangon to take up strategic positions. Premier U Nu and his cabinet ministers were taken into defensive guardianship. At 8:50 am, General Ne Win announced the coup over the radio. He said " I've to inform you, citizens of the Union that Armed Forces have taken over the responsibility and the task of keeping the country's safety, owing to the greatly deteriorating conditions of the Union."⁴⁵

4.4: Ne Win Government and Myanmar's Domestic Politics

The reason for military coup of 1962, according to Maung,⁴⁶ was that the country under civilian government had not only come 'factionalized' and 'ultranationalist', but it had veered down from the principles of socialism, which General Aung San always stood for. As a 'patriotic soldier', Ne Win felt that it was his moral duty to cover the country from farther deterioration. The military claimed that the coup was necessary to subdue ethnical insurrection and to help the country from

decomposition.⁴⁷ This coup was accepted unchallenged; in fact, the people accepted the change calmly. Several reasons can be attributed to this. They are as follows:

First, Myanmar had begun its trip as an independent country with a political army which played a veritably important part in the independence movement. They included the “Thirty Heroes”⁴⁸ trained by the Japanese and latterly on they had helped to form the Burma National Army and also to form Myanmar’s first systematized political group. General Ne Win was one of the “Thirty Heroes” and he too had played a significant role, along with others, to win independence. Therefore, Ne win was not unfamiliar to the people.

Second, the first democratic government of U Nu alienated many of its supporters by implementing policies that were interpreted by the people and particularly the armed forces as not being conducive to Myanmar’s security. His policy of catering to the ethnic minorities by giving them political concessions is cited as an example. According to the 1947 Constitution of Myanmar the Shan and Kayah ethnical nonages were given the right to secede if they had wished to do so after ten years.⁴⁹ In early 1962, U Nu actually entered into negotiations with those ethnic minorities who wished for secession. In fact, one of the principal causes for the coup of 1962 was the Shan’s threat to secede.

Third, the image of Ne Win was bolstered immensely because of the smooth and efficient functioning of the caretaker government installed in 1958 for a brief period of 16 months.⁵⁰ The coup on 2 March 1962 led the end of democratic form of government and the beginning of military rule in Myanmar. The period from 1962-1988 can be divided into two phases. The first phase is the period of direct military rule from 1962 to 1974 and the Constitutional Dictatorship phase from 1974 to 1988.

4.4: i. Direct Military Rule in Myanmar 1962-1974

The period from 1962 to 1974 is the period of direct military rule. In 1962 General Ne Win offered military coup and overthrew the civilian government and captured power. After the coup the military government established Revolutionary Council (here after RC) which composed entirely of military officers pious to him. This coup in 1962 marked the end of constitutional democracy and the beginning of direct military rule

in Myanmar. The main reasons for the coup were a blend of political dissension, policy deadlock, multiple mutinies on a massive scale and a declining economy.

After the coup in 1962 General Ne Win came head of state as Chairman of the Union Revolutionary Council and also Prime Minister. The coup was characterized as “bloodless” by the world’s media. Declaring that “parliamentary democracy was not suitable for Burma,” the new governance suspended the 1947 Constitution and dissolved the legislature.⁵¹ Ne Win under the RC assessed order and universities were one of the first targets. The people took no part in the coup. But it cannot be assessed simply as a military putsch carried out to attain narrow group objectives. The RC began to steer the country along a new road of development. It advanced a programme of broad reforms, envisaging a progressive transformation of the Burmese society and the ultimate achievement of socialism. This programme was formulated in the political protestation of the Burmese Way to Socialism, espoused by the Revolutionary Council on April 30, 1962.

The initiative of the RC proved that the Burmese Army, formed at the beginning of the forties as an army of Burma’s liberation from colonialism, still included influential patriotic and revolutionary forces, which had the interests of the country and people at heart. General Ne Win himself was a stager of the national liberation struggle and Aung San’s associate in the fight against the Japanese occupation forces. Needless to say, the military form of development has its negative aspects since the form influences the content. Conceding this, the Burmese leadership pointed out that it had no alternative in 1962, and that it was working to form a political vanguard of the revolution-a revolutionary party.⁵²

Thereafter, General Ne Win snappily rescinded U Nu’s protestation of Buddhism as the state religion. The democratic institutions were disassembled and concentrated powers in the hands of RC composed of group elderly officers under General Ne Win.⁵³ The Constitution was suspended and was made inoperative in areas where the RC issued rulings and announced orders.⁵⁴ In form and proposition, Myanmar remained a federal state but in practice the military junta treated the country as a unitary state.⁵⁵ The RC ruled the country with a strong anti-Communist and anti-Western nationalistic ideology. This could be set up in two of the documents brought out by the RC viz.; “The Burmese Way to Socialism” (here after BWS), issued on 30

April 1962 and “The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment” (SCME), issued on 17 January 1963.

The BWS, a mixture of militarism, socialism and Buddhism was the explicit ideological base of the RC whereas the SCME acted as its philosophical underpinning.⁵⁶ According to the SCME ideology rests on three basic principles: change, revolution and socialism. The RC sought to establish a democratic socialist state through its Burmese Way to Socialism. On April 30, 1962 the RC under Ne Win blazoned a new national ideology called ‘The Burmese Way to Socialism’ to guide the country.⁵⁷ The BWS programme is the main document of the new stage of development. It rejects the system of exploitation of man by man and the road of bourgeois democracy and set forth a plan of reforms designed to lead towards socialism. According to the programme, state and united property are the economic foundation of socialism and the peasants and workers, the working masses are the socio-political mainstay of the socialist state.⁵⁸

However, we should be free from the misconception regarding the term ‘democratic’ used here. The concept of ‘democratic’ used by RC was quite different from what is actually meant in Western sense. In fact, the new military government had gradually removed most of the institutions, norms and ideas symbolizing Western democratic values. On the other hand, the military government gradationally suspended the constitution, dissolved the parliament, and abolished the Supreme Court, the High Courts and the Secretariat. At the same time, it tried to form a united political party as it explosively felt that the intra-party fight within the also ruling AFPFL was largely responsible for the process of national decomposition during U Nu’s governance. When it failed to form such a political party with the support of other parties for executing policies and programmers, the RC formed its own political party.

In June 1962, RC under Ne Win formed a cadre party named Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) to reshape Myanmar into one-party state and remake Burmese politics and society into a socialist earth guided by an ideology known as the BWS, which consists of Buddhism, Nationalism and Marxist philosophy.⁵⁹ At the beginning of the conformation of BSPP, membership was confined only to military labor force. But in the 1970s party membership was open to all and not joining carried negative consequences. It was the only legal party allowed to serve as similar.

Therefore, an age of one-party rule was inaugurated for the first time. During 1962-1974, the country was converted into a socialist one-party state under the leadership of General Ne Win's and military was declared as the supreme authority.

Now, the RC government spoke for decentralization of power though in practice it was not so. It took over all the power given in the constitution. The Chairman as the head has the absolute legislative, executive and judicial powers. The whole administration was run in the name of the Chairman of the RC. Everything under the government was on the personal whims of Ne Win as the leader. Unrestricted by the challenges that could have been posed by a constitution, a legislature, or an electorate, this government governed by decrees and proclamations. All its pronouncements had the force of law and remained on effect until they were withdrawn or replaced.⁶⁰ However, all these did not mean that the RC government in particular and the country as a whole, in general, was free from all sorts of political vices. It is a fact, no doubt that the magnitude was slightly low in this period as compared with those in later stages. For, instance of the beginning of this period, the people as well as the officials were generally not very clear with the motives and nature of the new government.

But the most serious problem for the military regime⁶¹ which resulted in political crisis in the later stages was that the entire responsibility of running the government was given exclusively to the army officers. These officers knew next to nothing about education, welfare programmes, economics, politics and international relations. Here the tragedy was that the RC did not trust civilians to be professional bureaucrats.⁶² Experts known in different fields were completely ignored. Loyalty to General Ne Win was the sole criteria for appointment of these military officers. Ultimately, most of the problems during this period cropped up from the inability and inefficiency of the officials holding responsible posts in the government set up.

General Ne Win had tried to justify the coup as well as the conformation of the RC on the rationale of keeping the territorial integrity of the country complete; however numerous leaders from nonage groups were not ready to accept it. He had also justified the legalization of one-party rule on the ground of speeding up the achievement of the ideological pretensions given in the 'Burmese Way to Socialism' and to take the country towards rapid-fire development and progress. But the real motive behind all these was to concentrate power. "With the armed forces as its

power base, party apparatus such as mass elite communication conveyor belts and control mechanisms and administrative apparatus as the guiding and goading instruments, Ne Win had everything to check in for a power monopoly.”⁶³ This does not, however, mean that he had total control over the political conditions and affairs of the country.

On the other hand, the military Junta espoused Burmanization policy, nationalized land, Banking sector, oil wells, foreign trade, the insurance sector, shipping, noncommercial trade, etc. Private schools, bank, diligence and large shops were nationalized. Land and wealth were also redistributed. By taking state control, the military also redistributed the business run by Indians and Chinese to the indigenous Burmese. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Indians and Chinese left the country and this policy, on the other hand, affected the country’s economy negatively. The military brought all aspects of governance including economy under its control. In March 1964, General Ne Win under RC demonetized 50 kyat and 100-kyat bills leading to huge economic impact on the people and made the people poor. The military governance also assessed a government controlled Burmese language curriculum. Even, foreign missionaries, scholars and western foundations were forced to leave.

Ne Win’s model of state-led development ruined the economy. Ne Win government faced with huge review. But at the beginning of 1967 showed some efforts from the military junta for political liberalization. The junta released several hundred political captures including U Nu. By 1967, the country faced with wide deficit rice, cooking oil and other introductory goods leading to the rise of black marketing and corruption.⁶⁴ As the first decade of the Burmese Way to Socialism was nearing its end, the Ne Win government introduced a broad institutional change designed to accelerate the revolutionary metamorphosis of Myanmar and reduce the gap that continued to live between the military autocrats and Myanmar’s polity.⁶⁵ In 1971, following the First BSPP Congress, the party was also converted from a cadre one to mass organization. It was directed to look to the architecture of a new constitution. The working of the Revolutionary Government,⁶⁶ under the RC came to an end. It was placed with the Government of the Union of Myanmar while utmost of the members remained the same.

A new council of Ministers was constituted with Ne Win still as the head. The sign of change, in fact, in the government came clear when twenty elderly officers including General Ne Win retired from armed forces and “transformed themselves” into “civilian” leaders. They appeared civilians as they dropped military titles in favor of traditional civilian prefixes.⁶⁷ However, the fact remained that though General Ne Win and his followers had exfoliated their military species in 1972, yet, it was not until 1974 that the whole military- grounded RC was formally dissolved. And with it came the end of the first phase of military rule. That year marked the end of direct military rule and the beginning of the phase of constitutional dictatorship in Myanmar.

4.4: ii. Constitutional Dictatorship in Myanmar 1974-1988

A new phase of military rule under General Ne Win started in 1974, twelve years after the military coup, with the new constitution. After the blessing of a national referendum in December 1973,⁶⁸ the new constitution, generally known as the 1974 constitution, was espoused on 3 January 1974. The country got a new name- ‘the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma’, and a new flag. It also got a unicameral legislature, the *Pyithu Hluttaw* (People’s Assembly), with a single legal political party. Further, the country was divided into fourteen political units comprising seven states and seven divisions. And from 27 January to 10 February in 1974, elections were held for the new supreme constitutional body, the *Pyithu Hluttaw*. Consequently, on the twelfth anniversary of the military coup on the 2nd of March 1974, the Revolutionary Council was formally dissolved and the new government was officially installed.⁶⁹

The assembly elected a Council of State, which was the top decision-making body of the government. A Council of Ministers with Sein Win as Prime Minister was also elected. General Ne Win was chosen the Chairman of this important Council of State with 29 members. Under the constitution he automatically came the President of the Socialist Republic as well. Active and retired military officers dominated the cabinets and rubber stamp parliaments.⁷⁰ Under the new constitution, the legislative powers were delegated to the “central and local organs of state power”, which in their turn were to be controlled by the Council of State. Eventually, in reality, the power was with the Council, which in turn was in the hands of the strong man, Ne Win.

Therefore, began the second phase of military rule with Ne Win formerly again at the helm of power. The new phase or second phase of the military rule was a period of constitutional dictatorship. There still remained the trace of a strong authoritarian nature behind the façade of constitutionalism and civilian rule. Force and fear were still the important means of ruling.

Three national elections were held in 1974, 1978 and 1981 under the new constitutions. The first general election under General Ne Win was held in Burma between 27 January and 10 February 1974. They were the first under the new constitution approved in a referendum in 1973. This had made the country a one-party state with the Burma Socialist Programme Party as the sole legal party.⁷¹ It won all 451 seats in the People's Assembly. Voter turnout was reported to be 94.6%. Later, the second general elections under General Ne Win were held in Burma between 1 and 15 January 1978 and the BSPP won all 464 seats and voter turnout was reported to be 93.3%. And the third general elections were held between 4 and 18 October 1981 which same the BSPP wining all 475 seats in People's Assembly.⁷² Statistics in Table 1 provides the results of Myanmar's general elections in 1974, 1978 and 1981 led by General Ne Win.

Table 4.1
Results of the General Elections in Myanmar under General Ne Win

Election	Political Party	%	Seats
1974	Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)	94.61	451
1978	Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)	93.33	464
1981	Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)	94.38	475

Source: Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz & Christof Hartmann, 2001. *Elections in Asia: A data handbook, Volume I*, p. 614. ISBN 0-19-924958-X

After the first election in 1974, military junta fulfilled the pledge of handing over power to the elected representatives and therefore transferred power to the recently elected government. Actually, the transfer of power was only from General Ne Win to

U Ne Win i.e., to himself. General Ne Win, 1974 constitution and the new structure of government made no alternations at each in the introductory realities of Myanmar's politics.⁷³ The military continued to rule the country fairly and so concentrated all the power under military party, BSPP. Ne Win continued to hold the Chairmanship of the each important BSPP retaining the power to pull the strings in the country's political set up. As Chairman of the BSPP, the power of decision-making remained with him. Therefore, the constitution was 'of the BSPP, by the BSPP and for the BSPP.'⁷⁴ Ne Win controlled every position and he had got the real power. Despite all these, situations continued to on degrade. The poor policies, administrative inefficiency and economic mismanagement mixed up with the arbitrary, abusive and xenophobic nature of the government did not bring any enhancement.

This period was marred with uneasiness and demonstration for democratization in the country. In December 1974, hoot broke out over food deficit, corruption and declining economy.⁷⁵ In 1976, student agitation also took place against the declining standard and condition of the University. In January 1978 second national election was held, but it did not change the public leadership and its programs. Later, on 15 October 1982, the military under Ne Win passed a Citizenship Act. Under this act, citizenship is divided into three categories-

- (i) full citizens;
- (ii) naturalized citizens; and
- (iii) associate citizens.

According to this Act, only persons belonging to the recognized eight national groups: Burman (Bamar), Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Kachin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan which together cover 135 ethnic races, and have settled in Myanmar prior to 1824, are full citizens. Naturalized citizens are an adhoc category of second-class citizenship called as naing-ngan-thapyu-khwint-ya-thu in Burmese. They are people not belonging to the recognized national ethnical groups but who can give "conclusive substantiation" that they entered and abided in Myanmar previous to independence. Associate citizens, also called as 'eh-naing-ngan-tha' are those not belonging to the eight recognized national groups but who had applied for citizenship under the 1948 Union Citizenship law frame. To be a citizen, a person must be suitable to speak well one of the national languages. Only full citizens could run for office or qualify for certain

economic and governmental positions. The citizens of two other categories were denied full rights to political participation, and were also denied access to the certain governmental jobs and advanced education.⁷⁶

Muslim Rohingyas near the Bangladesh border was not given any type of citizenship and were excluded from any list of ethnic groups.⁷⁷ The government denies them citizenship on the ground that they are recent migrants from Bangladesh-although many Rohingyas trace their ancestry back to before independence and even before British colonization. Many Rohingyas, thus, cannot be teachers or health workers. They are also not permitted to participate formally in local government.⁷⁸ They are subject to restrictions on their freedom of movement, denied access to advanced education, and are confined from holding public office. Chinese and Indians have also been denied citizenship, indeed if their parents were born in Myanmar. However, they have been given a status analogous to that of a permanent resident.⁷⁹

On the other hand, at the end of the 1980s the “Burmese Way to Socialism” led to severe economic extremity. By 1987, Ne Win had to accept the failure of his ‘BWS’ and his rule. He emphasized the need for an each-round reform of the country. In 1987, in an attempt to save the economy and combat the black market, the governance made the currency notes of 25, 35 and 75 kyat illegal and replaced them with 45- and 90-kyat notes on September 5, 1987. By this year Myanmar was already within the pack of Least Developed Countries (LDC) status.⁸⁰ The people were very much infuriated. All these were the results of the government’s own making. Finding out any viable solution for the crisis proved too late. The approaching political firestorm of restlessness and frustration could not be stopped.

Only a spark was necessary to enkindle the whole issue. And that was handed by the ‘tea stall incident’ of 12 March 1988 near the campus of Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) on the occasion of the completion of 40 years of Myanmar’s independence. The fire had finally started burning with all its furiousness. The ‘tea stall incident’ which started as a normal brawl, took a different turn. The killing of an RIT student, Maung Phone Maw, in police firing and the heavy-handed nature of the authority in the ensuing altercation provoked the already depressed masses. The situation which otherwise could have been avoided escalated into a full-blown violent mass movement. Students played the leading role. On the other hand, the government

instead of pacifying the students and masses resorted to the only means known to them-force.

The dreaded *Lon Htein* or riot police was called out to tackle the unarmed students. It resulted in the killing and injuring a large number of students. Forty-one arrestees died of suffocation inside a small police van.⁸¹ Educational institutions were closed down until June in order to bring the students under control. But massive demonstration broke out formerly again when the institutions were opened. There was mounting pressure on the government from the side of the masses. With no volition in sight, Chairman Ne Win called for an extraordinary session of the BSPP on 23 July, actually scheduled for 7 July. There, Ne Win and San Yu abnegated from their post of Chairman of the Party and President of the Union. This ended the military governance in Myanmar. But the military came back again to power within a veritably short time.

4.5: Challenges of Ne Win Government and Impact of Domestic Politics

In the years leading up to the military coup in 1962, the government of the Union of Burma was confronted with several domestic challenges. Since its independence from the British in 1948, Burma had not engaged in any major conflict with any other countries. Burma's major political problems had been within its borders-armed conflicts with ethnical nonages and the communist mutineers. The political uneasiness and disturbances arising out of insurrection movements were too worrisome for the weak civilian government to handle. In the spring of 1949, the mutineers had controlled utmost of the pastoral areas and indeed controlled the capital Rangoon intermittently.⁸²

After the military coup, the University students and Buddhists monks were the first to protest against the destruction of parliamentary democracy by the army in Myanmar. They were not ready to endure quietly the injustice and highhandedness of the military government. To make the situation worse, the students were in most cases assisted by the monks. Though not openly, the activities of the students and the monks during this period were more or less intermingled. And this created more difficulty for the government in controlling the already deteriorating politico-economic situation. To face the challenge arising out of these two groups, the RC Government imposed restrictive regulations on student movements and activities of Buddhist Sanghas

(Buddhist clergy/monkhood). But this could not restrain the spirit of both students and monks. Instead, as a challenge to these restrictions the first protest by the students against the regime was staged in the form of a huge demonstration organized by Rangoon University Students Union (RUSU) on 7 July 1962. The monks also challenged the military by refusing in 1964 to register with a new government sponsored organization.⁸³ In response the government retaliated strongly.

The military government responded to by firing at the students and the monks. Over one hundred students were killed, although the government admitted to only fifteen deaths.⁸⁴ The RUSU office which was a symbol of freedom and justice was also demolished using dynamites on 8 July 1962. All these incidents created frustration among the students and monks. They considered the actions of the government as a challenge to the spirit and tradition of democratic set up and freedom-a plot to destroy the remnants of the 'parliamentary democracy' era. They also considered it as an attempt by the junta to remove the ideas related with democracy from the minds of the people. Though the RC could subdue the monks up to 1974, in case of students it was not possible. The student movements failed to cease completely though the regime had subdued it up to a certain level. All these formed an important part of the ongoing political crisis.

Thereafter, serious altercations and clashes broke out formerly again in December 1974 between the protesting students and the government forces. The issue, this time, was of not showing proper respect to the death body of U Thant (a prominent world figure and former Secretary General of the United Nations).⁸⁵ The students vehemently protested against the government's niggardly burial plan for the deceased U Thant in the remote Race Course Cemetery, on the outskirts of Yangon. Government resorted to force to control the protest movement which resulted in killing and wounding of many protestors. Officially, 9 people were killed, 7 wounded and 1800 arrested.⁸⁶ Refuting this, the students who participated in the demonstration claimed that between 300 and 400 of their colleagues were gunned down. However, the U Thant issue was nothing but an expression of general resentment of the masses against the incompetent and repressive government of Ne Win.

Political problems faced by the Ne Win regime were confined not only to the activities of the students and the monks. In addition to these two groups, the

government had to encounter lots of tension and problems from ethnic rebels and leftist underground forces. Insurgency continued to be a serious political, military and diplomatic headache for Chairman Ne Win. The growth and stability of the nation had been subjected to constant threat due to the activities of insurgent groups.⁸⁷ Their continuous attack did not make it easier for the government in their efforts against the ensuing political turmoil in the country. While the regime could not bring about any practicable solution to the problem, opposition from the side of the ethnic and other rebel groups was increasing. The most active groups were the Karen National Union (KNU), the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the Shan State Independence Army (SSIA).

Besides, the communist inspired revolutionary coalition front, the National Democratic United Front (NDUF)⁸⁸ conforming of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB-White Flag), the Chin National Vanguard Party (CNVP), the Karen National United Party (KNUP), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and Pao revolutionists also came active. All these developments were not commodity to be taken smoothly by the government. In fact, in utmost part of the territory inhabited by the ethnical nonages, the authority of the Union Government was hardly recognized-certainly off the main roads.⁸⁹ Not only this, the conditioning of non-ethnic insurrectionary groups like CPB both Red and White Flags and Communist Party of Arakan (CPA) also increased. But on its part the most important task for the new government and its army was to subdue the mutineers, both ethnical and non-ethnic, in all parts of the country in order to remain in power it had seized strongly. However, it could not succeed important. Its attempts to negotiate with these warring revolutionists in 1963 were also not fruitful. No solution came out from the negotiation. By the late 1960s CPB controlled 20,000sq.km of entire territory of Myanmar. Insurgents remained active and political crisis for the government persisted.

During the same period another serious problem for the RC government was posed by the armed resistance by U Nu (the first Premier of Myanmar). In the after part of 1969, with his secret headquarters grounded in Central Bangkok, U Nu started his Parliamentary Democracy Party (PDP) whose armed wing; the Patriotic Liberation Army (PLA) established a string of bases along the Thai Myanmar border.⁹⁰ The PDP even signed an agreement with Karen and Mon rebel groups for fighting untidily

against the military regime. A number of former army officials joined the party. In fact, at one point, it was considered to be a political force of enormous significance because of its democratic tag and clandestine international support. This continued up to 1972. Thus under the leadership of General Ne Win there was no enhancement on regarding the issues related to insurrection as compared to the democratic period under U Nu. Much to the dismay and frustration of the people the chances of peaceful solution to the existing problem looked remote because of the use of excessive force and coercion by the RC. Peace full solutions became impossible and problems multiplied very fast.

However, during this period, the great challenge that the Ne Win government faced was with civil war and problem of insurrection. Insurrection and civil war continued through the 1980s. Fighting with the Kachin's and the CPB insurgents in the North and North Eastern part of the country remained constant over the period, fighting with the Shan's and the Karen's increased in 1985. To make the matter worse, a military agreement was signed between NDF and CPB in 1986 in the latter's headquarters at Pang hang (in Shan State). The main point was to cooperate with each other in their fight against the government forces. The government continued with its effort to end insurgency with the belief that force was the only means to contain them and resolve the issue of civil war and insurgency. General Ne Win did not really show any appetite to entertain Aung San's policy of "Unity in Diversity" in dealing with the ethnical groups of the country. The formula and spirit of the "Panglong Agreement" of 12 February 1947⁹¹ was fully ignored. He did not make any genuine trouble to continue with whatever a little attempt was made by Aung San and U Nu, and to find out a solution. Instead of promoting federal authority to the ethnic group power under Ne Win was centralized further. Besides, a genuine political solution seemed to be wanting on the part of Ne Win and his associates.

4.6: Myanmar Foreign Policy Under the Military Rule During 1962-1988

Myanmar, in formulating its foreign policy, wedged as it is between the two most populous and fastest growing economics in the world, has always been conscious of the geopolitical and demographic realities of bordering these two major Asian powers.

The fact that many ethnic groups straddle the porous borders also complicates the policy calculus of Myanmar's foreign relations.⁹²

Myanmar has traditionally reckoned on strict neutrality. After the independent in 1948, the new state of Myanmar faced internal domestic problem, profitable extremity, ethnical and communist insurrection demanding for autonomy and separate state from the Union. So, the country decided for a foreign policy that sought to protect its frugality and save the country from decomposition. During this period, Myanmar pursued a policy of non-alignment and impartiality in world affairs and joined the British Commonwealth. Myanmar supported the UN and in 1961 Myanmar came a founder member of the Non-aligned Movement. The government at the initial stage of her Independence during the civilian government of U Nu abstain from any political, military or economic alliance with any country, but trying to maintain "friendship with all countries." The country did not go for any political or military alliance. It tried to increase foreign trade but it was limited only to natural gas and agrarian products and accepted backing for development efforts.⁹³

After the coup of March 1962, numerous spectators saw shades of "isolationism" in its "non-aligned" policy station. During the one-party Socialist period from 1974 to 1988, the sanctioned position was "independent" and "active" while supporting world peace; opposing war, imperialism and colonialism; and maintaining friendly relations with all countries.⁹⁴ Foreign trade was limited to the export of Myanmar during the period of military rule from 1962 to 1988 faded from transnational affairs. The regime resisted all rudiments of external influence and continued to emphasize independence and non-alignment. External links were cut, bank, business and frugality were nationalized, foreign practices and cultural institutions were banned, politic conditioning were elided and trip visas were also limited to a 'twenty-four hours tray.'⁹⁵ Diplomats were needed to seek sanctioned authorization to move outside the capital. Foreign agencies were also expelled from the country. The military insulated the country from foreign as well as indigenous affairs.

This policy managed to keep Myanmar out of super power contest and trouble from neighbors during this period. This policy on the other hand had bring Myanmar.⁹⁶ From the 1970s onwards military were apprehensive of the significance of foreign contacts and investments for development. They sought to open up the county to the

west without undermining government authority. From the mid-1970s onwards, the country entered large quantities of official development assistance (ODA) from the United States, Japan, and West Germany. During this period, there was no state policy on competition except some generally recognized rules. Even state banks were controlled by the military leaders. From the beginning of military rule in 1988, China has been increasingly involved in Myanmar's economic and military development. It has turned out to be a potent shield against Western punitive measures and a counterpoise to international pressures for political liberalization. Similarly, India has assumed a significant role in supporting the military regime through the expansion of trade, investment, and development aid and security assistance since the mid-1990s.⁹⁷

4.7: Ne Win Regime: Impact on Democratic Landscape in Myanmar

The military governance is a special form of authoritarian rule. And it's different from democracies and other authoritarian rule. According to Dahl, democracy consists of four crucial attributes free and fair election, universal adult ballot, protection of civil liberties of freedom of speech, press and association and the absence of non-elected tutelary authorities.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the modern approach on governance type or governance change considers broad structural factors that can be conducive to either authoritarianism or democracy.

According to modernization theory, low situations of socio-economic conditions linked to economic development or modernization are conducive to authoritarianism and its advanced situations are conducive to democracy. Gasiorowski argues that, 'economic crises spark democratic transition in a manner that's analogous to their effect on breakdown.'⁹⁹

Myanmar, after the independence, espoused parliamentary democracy and continued with that system of government until the coup d'état in 1962 by General Ne Win. After the coup, the beginning of 1967 shows some suggestions from the military junta for political liberalization. The junta under Ne Win released several hundred political captures including U Nu. Later the military abolished the constitutional democracy. In 1974, the military government introduced on a new constitution wherein the military accepted both democracy and civilian supremacy and through Revolutionary Council (RC) engaged itself in nation and state structure exercises.¹⁰⁰ Under 1974 constitution, the military government erected a socialist democratic social order. Under Article 14

of the constitution, the organs of state power at different situations were supposed to serve in consonance with democratic principles and practices. Under Article 15 (a) every citizen was given the right to elect and to be elected to the organs of state power.

During the years from 1962 to 1988, three national elections were held in 1974, 1978 and in 1981. Indeed however, there was democratic element during the military rule in Myanmar, it was just in name and the military continued to rule. In reality the military still was dominant and the election was only for namesake and it was not fair. During this governance there were uneasiness and demonstration towards democratization in the country.

4.8: Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the Burmese military (Tatmadaw) has been deeply involved in politics since the country's independence. As its conformation in 1942 anteceded the actuality of an independent state and the officer fraternity was politicized as a liberating force during the struggle for national independence, the army could retrospectively assume the role of guardian of the Burmese state and bulwark of national independence. Military in Myanmar has played an important part since the early period.

The present chapter “Domestic Politics in Myanmar: Since the Military Coup, 1962-1988” described that the role of military in Ne Win government and impact on of Myanmar's domestic politics. The military entered in Myanmar politics after independence for the first time in 1958 when U Nu invited General Ne Win to form on caretaker government and hold a new election. After 18 months of Ne Win's interim government, he earned the trust of numerous by appointing a number of civilian leaders in his cabinet. Also, the Tatmadaw's claim that the 1958 military caretaker government was its first coup.¹⁰¹

Thereafter, in 1962 General Ne Win offered military coup and overthrew the civilian government and captured power. After the coup, the military government established Revolutionary Council which was composed entirely of military officers pious to him. This coup in 1962 marked the end of constitutional democracy and the beginning of direct military rule in Myanmar. The period from 1962 to 1974 is the period of direct

military rule. As the first decade of the Burmese Way to Socialism, the Ne Win government introduced a broad institutional change designed to accelerate the revolutionary metamorphosis of Myanmar and reduce the gap that continued to exist between the military autocrats and Myanmar's polity.

Direct military rule ended in 1974 when a new constitution was introduced and national elections were held. The country got a new name 'the Socialist Republic' of the Union of Burma, and a new flag. It also got a unicameral legislature, the *Pyithu Hluttaw*, with a single legal political party 'Burma Socialist Programme Party.' This second phase of the military rule was in fact a period of constitutional dictatorship. There still remained the trace of a strong authoritarian nature behind the façade of constitutionalism and civilian rule. Force and fear were still important means of ruling. However, General Ne Win ruled the Union of Burma for over two decades from 1962 to 1988 during which the country passed significant changes.

This chapter has also shown that during this period, in addition to these changes, in the fields of foreign policy, the military closed down the links with external affairs and insulated the country from the foreign as well as regional affairs. Some elements of democracy were also seen during this period. Three national elections were held; new constitution was introduced and under the new constitution rights of the citizen to elect and to stand for election was also given. But in practice, election was only for namesake and the elections were not fair. Piecemeal from these, the rigors endured by the people under the Ne Win governance in the last 12 years also made them apprehensive of the true nature of the junta. People were fully fed up with the power hungry, self-centered and sybaritic nature of the military autocrats.

They wanted this group of former army officers to leave the seat of power and in its place a strong and genuine democratic government be installed. As a result of all these, political extremity was exacerbated further during the Ne Win period. Political situation came complex. Problems relating students' insurrection, discontent of ethnical nonage groups, insurrection and internal hassle within the party set up and the question of legality of the governance came veritably complicated to solve. And the incapability on the part of Ne Win government to bring about feasible solutions to the problem from time to time would eventually come the factors for the outbreak of the "88 Movement."

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Chapter- 5

Political Development and Domestic Politics in Myanmar (1988 to 2008)

5.1: Introduction

The year 1988 marked a watershed year within the history of Myanmar. It had been a turning purpose within the method of political development within the country. Before 1988, the words “democracy” and “human rights” were seldom detected and even less understood in Myanmar. It had been not till the scholar leaders began reaching bent on standard people that standard Burmese began to grasp however the daily issues they faced were a part of a bigger system of injustice deeply unmoving within the governing regime.¹ It had been during this year that a well-liked insurrection against the military stern democratic sort of governance happened. In 1988, the continued political oppression and economic negligence diode to the eruption of anti-government riots and pro-democracy demonstrations. On 8 August, 1988 peaceful anti-government demonstration and procession erupted all told the most cities and towns throughout the country.²

Demonstrations and marches were conjointly at the same time administered in different cities and towns as well as urban center Mandalay, Yanangyaung, Pegu, Moulmein, Taunggyi, Sagaing and Prome and unfold to over 40 places throughout the country.³ The strain of all the demonstrations were chiefly for the resignation of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (here after BSPP) Government, ending the noncurrent socialism, institution of multi-party democracy and also the formation of Associate in Nursing interim government to administrate the election and transition to democracy. Thereafter, the military, led by General Saw Muang, taken over power on September 18, 1988 and shaped ‘State Law and Order Restoration Council’ (here after SLORC). General Saw Muang’s government started some form of political liberalism within the face of public protest movement and for economic and strategic thought within the wake of the tip of conflict in 1989.

In May 1990, the government of General Saw Muang command free and multiparty elections for the primary time in 30 years with the National League for Democracy

(here after NLD) winning a landslide success beneath the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴ The election outcome showed majority support for democracy and the election also gave hope for way forward for democracy within the country. But, the military unnoticed and off the results of the election and continued to rule the country. However, still the in-group took up sure steps towards group action of the country. In April 1992, the 'SLORC' took up a series of measures for political transition in Myanmar. On 4 October the same year, the National Convention Convening Commission was shaped. In January 1993, the military government entailed a National Convention to adopt a constitution. In 2003, the in-group adopted a 'seven-step roadmap' towards "disciplined democracy" to hurry up and facilitate in democratizing the country. In 2007, another insurrection since 1988 against the military regime stern democracy happened within the country.

In 2008, a replacement Constitution was enacted. Beneath the provisions of the Constitution, 25% of seats each home of parliament square measure reserved for the military. The Constitution conjointly reserved cupboard ministries for the military representatives and also the Commander-in-Chief of the military was granted extraordinary, self-activated reserved power.⁵ The military conjointly nominated one of the two Vice-Presidents of the country. Section 17 (b) of the Constitution declared that the Commander-in-Chief shall nominate the Defence Services personnel to undertake responsibilities of the defence, security, border administration, so forth, shall be enclosed.⁶ So, the military retains many key ministerial posts: defence, interior and border and police ministries. Another section 40 (C) of the Constitution conjointly scepters the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services to require over and exercise State sovereign power "if there arises a state of emergency that would cause disintegration of the Union, disintegration of national commonality and loss of sovereign power or all empty so by wrongful forceful suggests that like rebellion or violence".⁷

However, supported this 2008 Constitution, "multiparty democracy general election" was command in 2010 by-election. The constitutional referendum was held on May 10. Following this, the primary general election in 20 years was command in 2010, finishing the fifth step of the roadmap to democracy, although the NLD was excluded from taking part in it because the Election Commission declared them "null and void" in accordance with election laws. Within the election, the military backed 'Union

Solidarity and Development Party' (here after USDP) won majority of seats and shaped the government in February 2011. Since returning to power, the Thein Sein government has administered many reforms that looked promising for democracy and national reconciliation. The NLD was, however, allowed to participate within the April 2012 by-elections that followed, Associate in Nursing Aung Suu Kyi discharged from confinement in 2010 won a seat within the lower house (the Pyithu Hluttaw or "People's Assembly") and Suu Kyi became an opposition leader of parliament.⁸ Additional parliamentary election command in 2015, beneath the 2008 constitution, the NLD got the majority on March 15, 2016.⁹ Myanmar's parliament had elective Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi because the first head of the state. She is the first one since 1962 did not come from military background. Thereafter, elections were held: by-election in 2017 and general election on 8 November 2020, and reforms are continued within the country. However, a coup in 1 February 2021 come the country to military rule.¹⁰

With the higher than description, an effort has been created during this chapter to form Associate in Nursing in-depth analysis the political development in Myanmar since the mass uprising against the military regime in 1988 to 2008. The chapter additionally analyses the factors that has caused the developments; problems and challenges regarding political development within the country. This chapter can specialize in seven closely inter-related aspects of the political development and Myanmar's domestic politics. First, it will examine the 1988 Mass Uprising and its impact on society. Second, it will describe emergence of latest political groups and leader. Third, it will highlight Aung San Suu Kyi: Emergence as a Mass Leader. Fourth, it will describe the political development after Mass Movement. These are: 1990 election and constitutional amendment and the 2003 development and its roadmap to democracy. Fifth, it will highlight the 2007 Saffron Revolution and its impact. Finally, try has additionally been created to focus during this chapter on the 2008 constitutional provisions for socio-political development of Myanmar.

5.2: The 1988 Mass Uprising and its Impact on Society

The genesis of the mass uprising of 1988 may be copied back to the approaching into power of the military in 1962. Since then, there are variety of demonstrations against it from the scholars, employees and normal voters. These focused round the institution of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) on 4 July 1962; demolition of students' union building on the campus of Yangon University on 7 July

the same year; and drawback of acute rice shortage in 1967; etc.¹¹ In December 1974, riots broke out over food shortage, corruption and declining economy.¹² Towards the end of the 1980s, Myanmar faced a severe financial condition. In 1987, in an effort to avoid wasting the economy and combat the black market, the military illegalized the currency notes- 25-, 35- and 75-kyat (Myanmar monetary unit) notes, and introduced 45- and 90-kyat notes on 5 September 1987. Rather than up the case it intercalary additional burden to the folk's people as people lost most of their savings long.

Many students within the University additionally faced nice difficulties in paying their fees. This additional led to students organizing demonstrations against the military government. To stay the case in restraint, the military government closed down universities and colleges for two months. All these additional intensified the general public outcry against the regime. It had been against the background of those developments that the mass uprising of 1988 occurred. The favored uprising on 12 March 1988 began with a fight between tiny low cluster of engineering students and municipality over the kind of music vie in an exceedingly restaurant close to the national capital the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) campus.¹³ Within the clash, the safety forces quickly stepped in and targeted students with excessive forces. Within the clash between the state forces and therefore the students that followed, the riot police responded with shot leading to the death of three students as well as Maung Phone Maw, a fourth-year engineering student on 13 March.¹⁴ This sparked off a series of demonstrations within the main university campus in Yangon condemnatory the violent act of the military and stringent answerability.

However, the scholars were viciously suppressed beneath the direct command of Sein Lwin, the BSPP Joint General Secretary. On 14 March, the campuses were sealed by the military forces led by General Sein Lwin. Among three days, thousands of scholars came resolute the streets of Yangon stringent Associate in Nursing finish to the government's pattern of scholars and therefore the want for an edifice. On 15 March, the military took brutal actions against the protestors.¹⁵ Hundreds of students were crushed up and in remission. On following day, one thousand demonstrators (mainly from Rangoon Arts and Science University) were shot at by riot police battalions close to Inya Lake Embankment.¹⁶ Several of these United Nation's agency tried to flee were forcibly submerged in Inya Lake close to Rangoon University and were additionally raped.¹⁷ The subsequent two days saw the demonstrations spreading throughout the town. Many protesters were once more in remission. Of the many

students in remission, 41 detainees died in an exceedingly patrol wagon thanks to suffocation.¹⁸ This led to the deterioration of the case. Universities were pack up by the regime for the second time to stop additional student demonstrations. On 15 June 1988, the military government reopened the universities. After the universities were reopened, a brand-new wave of protests rapidly broke out. Throughout now additionally, the military used brutal actions against the protesters. Thousands of scholars were in remission and dozens of demonstrators were additionally killed.¹⁹ Of these led to additional intensification of the people's sentiment against the military.

The military, on the opposite hand went ahead with its oppressive measures. On 21 July 1988, the military declared that two leaders of the movement Aung San Suu Kyi and General (retired) Tin U were placed beneath confinement.²⁰ From 23 to 25 July 1988, Associate in nursing emergency congress of the BSPP was command to debate Myanmar's economic and political crisis. Within the meeting, Chairman Ne Win advances his intention to carry a National Referendum for the reintroduction of a multiparty system in Myanmar. However, Ne Win' suggestion was rejected outright by the congress delegates. There was a significant shuffle at the leadership level. Later Ne Win and President U San Yu resigned from their individual positions together with three alternative colleagues. Sein Lwin, previous Joint General Secretary of the BSPP and head of the country's riot police was appointed the new party Chairman of the BSPP and additionally President of the country on 26 July.

The coming of Sein Lwin to power did not facilitate the matter. The scholars particularly were against him as they hold him accountable for killing civilian demonstrators in 1962, 1974 and 1988.²¹ Thereafter, contemporary anti-military demonstrations were started in July principally in Yangon. On 3 August 1988, martial law was obligatory in Yangon and therefore the security forces were ordered to shoot at the demonstrators. Yet undeterred by moves of the military, the students and Buddhist monks organized a series of massive demonstrations and strikes in Yangon and other cities and towns between 8 and 12 August demanding resignation of Sein Lwin and restoration of democracy in the country. However, the military responded to the demonstrations by carrying out a series of massacres in which up to 3000 people were killed (See, *Appendix v (1)*).²² On 12 August, the BSPP and the government summoned an emergency party congress and Council of State meeting. On 19 August, Sein Lwin resigned as Chairman of the BSPP and State President after only twenty-three days. He was then replaced by Maung Maung, a Yale graduate and a civilian,

who had close ties with Ne Win. After coming into power, he lifted martial law and ordered the military to return to the barracks. He also opened up opportunities for people to express their grievances about the governance.²³ Subsequently, Aung Gyi (a former close colleague of Ne Win and an outspoken critic of the regime) was released, and permission was also given for the formation of the All-Burma Students Union (ABSU).

Sein Lwin's resignation could not bring stability to the country. By 24 August demonstrations returned to the streets. By September students and Buddhist monks had assumed control of the municipal government of many towns. It may be noted here that by that time the demonstrations became increasingly violent.²⁴ Subsequently a parallel government was formed on 9 September in which the former Prime Minister U Nu was proclaimed as the legitimate ruler. U Nu then contacted diplomatic missions in Yangon to seek recognition. To handle the situation, a Special Congress was held on 10 September by the military. The Congress proposed to hold multiparty democratic general election in 1990. The People's Assembly also decided to hold a multiparty general election within three months. On 12 September, the then Chief-of-Staff General Saw Maung promised to help in holding free and fair multiparty general elections. Subsequently, U Aung Gyi, one of the prominent leaders of the demonstration hailed it as a victory for the people, and called for the strikers to call off the demonstrations saying that the road to democracy was open now.²⁵

However, the situation did not end here. Aung Gyi later changed his mind and joined with Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo to issue a joint statement calling for an interim government. The political situation further deteriorated and foreign intervention began to occur. The developments gave the military an opportunity to assert themselves. They argued that there have emerged three new developments which threatened the unity and integrity of the country.

First, there was the sighting of a United States naval fleet of five warships, including the aircraft carrier Coral Sea, within the Myanmar territorial water in the morning of 12 September 1988.

Secondly, there were reports that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was prepared to take the Shan State by using the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) as a front, if the United States fleet or troops landed in Myanmar.

Finally, there was possibility of major offensive strikes by various insurgent groups as per information received by the military intelligence, particularly by the BCP in the northeast and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in the southeast.²⁶

Subsequently, the BSPP issued a statement which required the military and armed forces personnel to withdraw their membership from the party on 16 September 1988. On next day, the military issued a public statement requiring its members to fulfill the ‘original duty’ of the perpetuation of the Union, national unity and national sovereignty. As destiny would have it, it was on this very day that a demonstrating mob seized a military platoon of 24 personnel at the Trade Ministry Building. This ultimately led to the immediate coup d’état on 18 September 1988. The military justified their action saying that the coup was a result of the grave provocations that took place on the 16th and 17th September. The military claimed that if there had been no provocations and all parties had joined to control the situation and restore the peace, there would have been no coup.²⁷ However, some argued that the military created the chaos so that they might be praised for ending it.²⁸

After the takeover of power, the military declared martial law. All state institutions (including the People’s Assembly, the State Council and the Council of Ministers) were abolished, demonstrations were also banned and a night-time curfew was imposed nation-wide. The military also prohibited the gathering of five or more people in public places regardless of whether the act is with the intention of creating a disturbance or of committing a crime or of peaceful gathering. The police also began arresting anyone they believed to be in opposition to the government.²⁹ However, demonstrations in favor of a civilian government continued unabated. Saw Maung enumerated his government’s four tasks:

- (i) to maintain law and order;
- (ii) to provide secure and smooth transportation;
- (iii) to strive for better conditions of food, clothing and shelter for the people and render necessary assistance to the private sector; and
- (iv) to hold multiparty democratic general elections.³⁰

At the end of April 1990, Major General Khin Nyut, first secretary of the SLORC and the head of the Directorate of Defense Service Intelligence, announced that three of the four major tasks were accomplished, and on 27 May elections were held in Myanmar. However, after the elections the military refused to transfer power to the newly elected party, and continued to hold power. All the while, it is to be noted that the country continued to be under sustained domestic and international pressure to carry out sweeping political changes for the establishment of an elected civilian government.³¹

5.3: Emergence of Latest Political Groups and Leaders

Following the political turmoil and massacre the foremost vital development was the emergence of variety of political parties and their leaders with the only objective of restoring democracy. It had been a novel development that the country had never witnessed in its history. Briefly the political situation of Myanmar once the '88' events was marked by the emergence of two opposing forces within the political front-one was pictured by the all-powerful ruling army officers symbolized by SLORC and another pictured by the rising pro-democracy groups a lot of considerably pictured by NLD. Consequently, the political affair of the country not remained a one-sided affair. Though the military was still the dominating force nevertheless the pro-democracy force might not be taken gently.

The emergence of outstanding personalities within the political scene gave a robust impetus to the movement for democracy. These personalities were in the main those leaders who had supported the movement for democracy within the early a part of 1988. This enclosed variety of retired army officer's once trustworthy ones of General Ne Win. A number of them were Aung Gyi, Tin U and Aung Shwe. Aung Gyi was a former Brigadier General and just the once trustworthy lieutenant to General Ne Win. He was additionally one in all the initial members of the Revolutionary Council (RC) that was shaped once the coup of 1962. He was, however, ousted in 1963 once his pragmatic ideas clashed with those of the sturdy man. Likewise, Tin U was additionally a former military commander. He was a former Chief-of-Staff and Minister of Defence, removed for acting contrary to General Ne Win. He was, later, jailed on suspicion of getting link with the stillborn coup of 1976. And the same was also thereupon of Aung Shwe who was a former commander.

Different leaders belonged to the class of former political leaders of the parliamentary era U Nu letter. He was the first Prime Minister of Independent Myanmar and a very important member of the legendary 'thirty comrades.' Except these personalities the foremost outstanding and charismatic face was that of Aung San Suu Kyi. Along with the emergence of a replacement set of political leaders the involvement of scholars, each underground and over-ground, became a lot of frequent and intense within the insurrection. There was the institution of the underground student organization, the All-Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), on 28 August 1988 as Associate in nursing umbrella cluster for student organizations in Yangon and different cities.³² It had been led by Paw U Tun alias Min Ko Naing.³³ Another student organization, the All-Burma Students Democratic Association (ABSDA), led by Min Zeya.

On the opposite hand, the young monks and therefore *Sangha*, clandestinely further as overtly, contributed to associate in nursing vast scale to the insurrection. Since the protest began in June variety of monasteries, like the Thayettaw in Yangon and people of the *Yahanpyo* (Young Monks Association) in Mandalay had been providing safe homes wherever students might hold meeting, and a few 30 to 40 monks had reportedly been shot within the demonstrations preceding Sein Lwin's downfall.³⁴ A calculable 80% of the monks in Myanmar supported the political activities of 1988. It had been within the forefront of most of the agitations throughout the amount. Changes by the state that monks actively supporting the NLD were breaking their own code of conduct had very little impact on the Monastic Order.³⁵ They may not be deterred from their chosen path of full democracy within the country.

Except the scholars and monks another force that emerged was the approaching of political parties. The three main opposition leaders Aung Gyi, Tin U and Aung San Suu Kyi along established the National League for Democracy (NLD) and registered it on 30 September as an organization. However, thanks to some internal conflict Aung Gyi left the NLD and shaped another party of his own known as the Union National Democracy Party (UNDP). U Nu, re-emerged as a number one politician with two political parties-the League for Democracy and Peace (LDP) and therefore the Democracy Party. Besides these political parties connected with the stalwarts another terribly outstanding cluster that emerged was the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) led by ABFSU leader Moe Thi Zun. This one was, in reality, a

student cluster within the semblance of a political cluster. Allied with the NLD, it apace engineered up a mass youth following in Yangon.

According to Moe Thi, it had been supposed to figure as a third house to revive the ideals and sacrifices created throughout 1988 just in case compromises were created with the SLORC.³⁶ The amount additionally saw the emergence of political groups led by former leaders with leftist leaning. The recent Red Flag Communist, Thakin Soe, came out from political hibernation to announce on 7 October that he had registered the Unity and Developed Party.³⁷ Thus, at intervals some months since the SLORC legalization the quantity of political parties registered within the country crossed the 200 mark. Despite the emergence of an oversized range of parties, solely some remained functioning with significance price mentioning. Among them NLD remained the strongest and best famed, and additionally the most rallying party with a broad base for participation of somebody or cluster from any walk of life.

5.4: Aung San Suu Kyi: Emergence as a Mass Leader

It would not be attainable to present an intensive analysis of the political development in Myanmar, and in setting the country on the trail of group action while not mentioning and accenting the numerous roles vie by Aung San Suu Kyi. From a political perspective, Suu Kyi could be a vital figure in Myanmar politics. She was the first woman leader within the country's history. Aung San Suu Kyi could be a pro-democracy activist and leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Burma/Myanmar. Wilhelm Hofmeister observed that Myanmar's political development would not have received a similar level of international attention had it not been for Aung San Suu Kyi.³⁸

Aung San Suu Kyi, also called Daw³⁹, was born on 19 June 1945 in Rangoon within the then British Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar). She is that the daughter of General Aung San, the national hero of independence war of Burma and Khin Kyi, a distinguished Burmese diplomat. Aung San Suu Kyi was solely two once her father was assassinated.⁴⁰ She did her primary education in Rangoon till 1960, once her mother was appointed ambassador to India. When graduating from Delhi University in 1964, and St Hugh's College, Oxford University in 1968, she worked for the international organization for three years. In 1972, she married British scholar Michael Aris.

In 1988, Aung San Suu Kyi came to Burma/Myanmar to go to her sick mother in Yangon however became trapped within the 1988 uprising as protests against the Burmese in-group light-emitting led by General Ne Win sprang up round the country. She became active in supporting the National League for Democracy (NLD) and shortly became promoted to a distinguished position within the movement. Thus, Aung San Suu Kyi started her political career within the wake of the 1988 uprising.⁴¹ She has been taking part in crucial role in democratic movement within the country, and is taken into account because the icon of democracy in Myanmar. In 1989, she was placed underneath confinement by the military junta. From 1990 to 2011, the country had about 1500 political prisoners. Aung San Suu Kyi herself spent 16 of these 21 years underneath confinement (1989-1995, 2000-2002, and 2003-2011). Throughout that point, she was not allowed to speak along with her followers; this severely obstructed party development. At that point, her words, her actions, her ideas resonated worldwide and she became the image of democracy and also the icon of the struggle of the Burmese individuals for self-determination.⁴² Not solely was she emblematic; however, she was conjointly a determined actor within the democratic transition in Myanmar (See, *Appendix v (2)*).

On the opposite hand, General Saw Muang's government started some form of political liberalism within the face of public protest movement and for economic and strategic thought within the wake of the end of Cold War in 1989. In May 1990, the government of General Saw Muang control free and multiparty elections. In keeping with the results of the 1990 general election, Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD won majority and she was presupposed to be the Prime Minister of Myanmar because the leader of the bulk party in Parliament. But, her detention by the military junta prevented her from assumptive that role. For her principled, non-violent protest against the military and support for democratic principles, she was lauded by several human rights groups and influential bodies round the world. Aung San Suu Kyi won the Rafto Prize and also the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990 and also the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. In 1992, she was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Peace Prize by the Government of India for her peaceful and non-violent struggle underneath a military dictatorship. This considerably increased her stature each within and outdoors Myanmar as a beacon of peace and democracy.

In 2010, she was discharged from confinement and travel allowed to round the world speaking for democracy in Myanmar/Burma. Within the summer of 2012, she received an unearned doctor's degree from Oxford University. In May 2012, she was elective to the National Parliament with different Democrat MPs. In 2015, her party, the NLD won a sweeping victory, although she was ineligible for the Presidency (due to provisions that prevented widows and mother of foreigners). She claimed she would hold the real power within the new government. The president, Htin Kyaw, created a brand-new role for her-the position of State Counsellor on the 1st of April, 2016.⁴³ This enabled her to assume the dominant position within the government. Currently that she holds much more power than ever before she is being exposed to more frequent criticism each from Burmese citizens and also the international community. Such criticisms question her pragmatic position and her strategic ambiguity with each military and also the ethnic minorities.⁴⁴ Aung San Suu Kyi's party NLD had won the 8 November 2020 Myanmar general election.⁴⁵

The election transpires throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, moreover as each the Rohingya conflict and also the Rohingya race murder (alongside international condemnation for these events). Additionally, the government has conjointly been criticized for proscribing press freedom and having did not agitate the country's economic problems, golf shot dents in its electoral promise of reform.⁴⁶ On 1 February 2021, the Tatmadaw claimed the results of the election were illegitimate and launched a coup d'état that oust State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.⁴⁷ Many charges were filed against Aung San Suu Kyi and on 27 April 2022 she was sentenced to five years in jail on corruption charges.⁴⁸ The international organization, most European countries, and also the United States condemned the arrests, trials, and sentences as politically intended.⁴⁹ Table 5.1 provides the result of Myanmar's democratic elections in 1990-2020 led by Aung San Suu Kyi.⁵⁰

Table 5.1
Elections in Myanmar (1990-2020) Results of Both Houses led by Aung San Suu Kyi

Election	Upper House (Total Seats Won)	Lower House (Total Seats Won)	Election Leader	Note
1990	-----	392/492	Aung San Suu Kyi	Not Recognized
2010	-----	-----	Aung San Suu Kyi	Boycotted
2012	04/224	37/440	Aung San Suu Kyi	Opposition
2015	135/224	255/440	Aung San Suu Kyi	Majority Government
2020	138/224	258/440	Aung San Suu Kyi	Majority Government

Source: Democratic Voice of Burma, 1990. Also, National League for Democracy, Election Results.

5.5: Political Development after Mass Movement

Since the mass demonstration for democracy in 1988, Saw Muang's government started some form of political liberalism and for economic and strategic thought within the wake of the end of Cold War in 1989. There has been hope for an elementary political amendment in Myanmar. The requirement for reform has been mirrored by all the key stakeholders, together with the military regime, the ethnic insurgent forces and conjointly by the NLD.⁵¹ Since the mass uprising in 1988, Myanmar has witnessed a series of necessary political developments. When the demonstration, the SLORC proclaimed that political parties would be allowed to operate and by early 1989 over 230 parties registered and a complete of 93 parties oppose the May 1990 elections.⁵² The NLD along with other two parties-the Democracy Party (DP) led by U Thu Wai and the National Democratic Party (NDP) led by Thakin Lwin also registered as a political party. The military government also abrogated the law framed during Ne Win that maintained BSPP as the sole party, and encouraged new parties to register for the elections. All these led to the first multiparty general elections of 1990.

5.5: i. The 1990 Election and Constitutional Amendment

It was in the midst of the ongoing conflicts between the pro-democracy activists and the junta after Daw Khin Kyi's funeral that the SLORC suddenly fixed the date for holding multi-party general election in the country. The announcement was considered to be a shrewd policy to contain the ongoing protest movement. On the opposite hand, it was also a quest for legal and political legitimacy taken by SLORC. With the election it wanted to show the world that it really cares for democracy. In May 1989 the *Pyithu Hluttaw* Election Law No. 14/89,⁵³ which was promulgated in March, was ratified. The law clearly affirmed once more that the goal of the election was to create a democratically elected parliament through a multiparty election.⁵⁴ The law provided for holding the election on 27 May 1990, throughout the country excluding the ethnic rebel held areas. It was the free and fair multiparty democratic poll for the first time in 30 years.⁵⁵

On 27 May 1990, the first multiparty general elections took place to elect the representatives for the formation of the 'Pyithu Hluttaw', or 'People's Assembly' to draft a new Constitution that will help the country return to civilian rule. The elections gave hope to the people for political change in Myanmar. The election process was free and fair contrary to the people's belief that it would be rigged massively in favor of the pro-military NUP. The reason being that the rulers were over confident of their control over the entire population and as such of their victory. They even invited foreign journalists and diplomats to observe the election proceedings. The junta never expected opposition victory, that too in a large scale. Prior to the election the SLORC had adopted a three-pronged strategy-

- (i) militarily increasing pressure on insurgent groups;
- (ii) reducing socialist control in the country in the economy; and
- (iii) efforts to revive relations with neighboring countries.⁵⁶

But ultimately everything went against preconceived expectations. Nothing turned out as visualized by the top leaders of SLORC on the basis of information provided by its intelligence network, the Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI). They expected 75% of the vote in their favor.⁵⁷ However, more than 200 political parties registered in the election. 93 political parties were allowed to contest the elections. 33

political parties were there representing ethnic minority groups and which were formed on a local and regional basis.⁵⁸ Aung San Suu Kyi, Tin U and U Nu were banned from taking part in the election as mentioned earlier. In the election, the National League for Democracy (NLD) of Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory. Out of 485 seats in parliament, the NLD secured 392 seats, Shan National League for Democracy won 23, Rakhine Democracy League got 11, the National Unity Party (NUP) won 10, Mon National Democratic Front won 5, and other parties got 44 seats.⁵⁹ Statistics in figure provide the results of the Myanmar general election of 27 May 1990.⁶⁰

Table 5.2
27 May 1990 Myanmar Election Results by State/Division and Party

State/Division	Party					
	NLD	NUP	Independent	National	Regional	Total
Kachin	14	2	---	---	3	19
Kayah	4	2	---	---	2	08
Kayin	10	---	---	1	3	14
Chin	4	1	2	---	6	13
Sagaing	52	1	2	---	3	58
Tanintharyi	13	---	---	---	---	13
Bago	47	1	---	3	---	51
Magway	39	---	---	---	---	39
Mandalay	55	---	1	---	---	56
Mon	16	---	---	---	4	20
Rakhine	9	---	---	---	17	26
Yangon	59	---	---	2	---	61
Shan	22	1	---	1	32	56
Ayeyarwady	48	2	1	---	---	51
Total	392	10	6	7	70	485

Source: Working People's Daily, 28 May to 3 July 1990. Also, Robert H. Taylor, "Myanmar 1990: New Era or Old?", *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 1991, pp. 203-220.

Table 5.3

**27 May 1990 Myanmar National Election: Numbers of Pyithu Hluttaw
Seats, Percentage of Seats Won and Percentage of Valid Voted Won by
Successful Political Parties**

Political Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Seats Won	Percentage Total Votes
National Parties				
National League for Democracy	447	392	80.8%	59.87
National Unity Party	448	10	2.1%	25.12
Patriotic old Comrades League	3	1	0.2%	0.02
Party for National Democracy	3	3	0.6%	0.48
Democracy Party	105	1	0.2%	0.48
Graduates and Old Students Democratic Association	10	1	0.2%	0.08
Unions National Democracy Party	247	1	0.2%	1.48
Regional Parties				
Kachin State National Congress Democracy	9	3	0.6%	0.11
Kayah State Nationalities League for Democracy	8	2	0.4%	0.08
Karen State National Organization	3	1	0.2%	0.05
Mon National Democratic Front	19	5	1.0%	1.05
Democratic Organization for Kayan National Unity	3	2	0.4%	0.11

Chin National League for Democracy	13	3	0.6%	0.38
Mara Peoples Party	4	1	0.4%	0.04
Zomi National Congress	4	2	0.4%	0.14
Naga Hills Regional Progressive Party	6	2	0.4%	0.08
United Nationalities League for Democracy	4	1	0.2%	0.07
National Democratic Party for Human Rights	8	4	0.8%	0.97
Rakhine Democratic League	25	11	2.3%	1.21
Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization	4	1	0.2%	0.17
Kamans National League for Democracy	3	1	0.2%	0.08
Shan Nationalities League for Democracy	58	23	4.7%	1.68
Union Paoh National Organization	15	3	0.6%	0.27
Union Danu League for Democracy	4	1	0.2%	0.17
Shan State Kokang Democratic Party	2	1	0.2%	0.05
Ta-ang (Palaung) National League for Democracy	9	2	0.4%	0.18
Lahu National Development Party	7	1	0.2%	0.12
Total	---	485 Seats	100.0%	---

Source: Robert H. Taylor, “Myanmar 1990: New Era or Old?”, *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 1991, pp. 203-204. Also, Mark Weller (ed), 1993. *Democracy and Politics in Burma*, Manerplaw: NCGUB, pp. 187-188.

In this election, NLD gained support from the ethnic minority. The proposal of NLD to give right to each ethnic minority group to make their own laws with regards to administration was the main reason of support from the minority ethnic people in the election.⁶¹ The electoral outcome showed majority support for democracy and the election also gave hope for future of democracy in the country. But the military ignored and cancelled the results of the election and Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest.⁶² The military contended that transfer of power was to follow only after a new Constitution was enacted, and the 1990 elections were held to constitute a popular assembly in the form of 'Pyithu Hluttaw', or 'People's Assembly' which was to draw up a new Constitution. Pending that, it refused to hand over power to the newly elected representatives of the People's Assembly. It may be noted here that the earlier 1947 and 1974 Constitutions were not acceptable because of the right to secession clause and the one-party Socialist State clause. It is also to be noted that the military junta had also announced a year before the election that those elected could not form a new government until there was a new Constitution.⁶³ The military also declared that the SLORC would remain in power until the new Constitution is adopted. Thus, the people's hope for democracy to follow after the elections was all over again betrayed by the military.

According to the ruling authorities' power will be transferred to a civilian government after a constitution, acceptable to all the people of Myanmar, had been drawn up and approved. This new constitution would guarantee the rights of all the 135 diverse ethnic minorities and groups in Myanmar. Despite such promises the ruling Junta has adopted several measures to further delay the transfer of power to civilian hand. The measures adopted are as follows:

- (a) Many NLD leaders have been arrested and imprisoned. The Secretary General of the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi, has been placed under house arrest since 1989. The detention has been extended for another three years. Tin Oo, the chairman of the NLD, has also been imprisoned. Diplomats in Myanmar say that as many as 80 NLD officials have disappeared or been detained.⁶⁴
- (b) In July 1991, Myanmar amended its election laws. Consistent with the change associate election candidate is debarred from collaborating in any future election, reckoning on the seriousness of the crime he/she might have

committed. A candidate is disqualified, sentenced to death, exiled, and illegal for five to ten years or forever from collaborating within the elections. The offences justifying such penalties might vary from ethical evildoing to it of crime that will endanger the protection of the state. This change has affected majority of the parties that had participated within the polls, significantly people who won seats. The NLD is that the most affected as 89 of their members are inactive, tried and guilty.⁶⁵ Thanks to this law the amount of prospering NLD candidates can decrease by the time the Election Commission submits its report back to the SLORC.

- (c) The government has stepped up its operations against the insurgent groups. This action has been undertaken as some electoral MP's joined students and different activists in Manerplaw headquarters of minority Karen guerrillas, UN agency are fighting for an extended time for autonomy. Several students have additionally joined the Mon National Liberation Army.⁶⁶
- (d) In another recent development, the junta has dismissed 10,000 civil servants for corruption whereas 5,400 others were cashiered, demoted, or transferred for having non-conformist politics. This move came in spite of everything ministers got order to warn their subordinates that their continuing opposition in words, deeds, behavior and thoughts, despite warnings having been issued, can now not be tolerated.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the election of 1990 was the foremost important event after the uprising of 1988. It absolutely was the primary major victory of the pro-democracy forces. It helped in transportation to limelight the people's need for a democratic originated within the country that was manifested by their ballot against the junta, portrayed by NLD. It tested success of the NLD and different democracy groups in hanging home the concept of democracy within the Myanmar's society. The election result brought joy and relief plus hope for a future democracy government within the country. But, at identical time, there was some doubt on the real motive of the military rulers as a result of folks were not unaccustomed their insincere nature. People knew well that the words of those military rulers could not be relied upon. They dominated while not standard support however with force, and force is not supported commitment and promise. During a country like Myanmar even a preferred mandate is not the desire of

individuals that counts however the military bureaucratic nexus that determines UN agency goes to reign supreme.⁶⁸

Thereafter, the refusal of the military to transfer power to the electoral civilian body after the 1990 elections generated robust opposition from many of us together with the electoral representatives. This denial of transfer of power to the electoral representatives after the election light-emitting led to the formation of National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). It absolutely was established on 18 December 1990 at Manerplaw in Kayin State. It consisted of 8-members⁶⁹ with Sein Win as its Prime Minister. It absolutely was the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU), and on the border with Thailand.⁷⁰ Later, the NCGUB went into exile. Afterward they visited Thailand and stirred to the United States of America (USA) to lobby for his cause. They additionally established their headquarters within the USA. However, the NLD maintained its legal presence in Yangon and within the interest of its own survival formally disassociated itself from the NCGUB and people NLD-elected representatives UN agency had fled.⁷¹

The NCGUB was shaped to support and facilitate the NLD light-emitting led by Aung San Suu Kyi to bring peace and stability, and re-build the state. The most purpose of this government in exile, as we will assume, was to determine associate freelance, prosperous and progressive Federal Union in Myanmar.⁷² The military government in Myanmar failed to acknowledge it; the NCGUB started gaining hefty international acceptance. For example, the USA government supported the NCGUB,⁷³ and also the Norwegian government in period of time accorded recognition to NCGUB. This increased the credibleness of the NCGUB because the legal interim government of Myanmar.⁷⁴ Solely after the parliamentary elections in November 2010 and also the sequent reforms concerned by the freshly shaped civilian government beneath Thein Sein, the NCGUB was formally dissolved on 4 September 2012.

5.5: ii. The 2003 Development and its Roadmap to Democracy

In 1992, the SLORC initiated a process of holding a National Convention (here after NC) that might lay down the fundamental principles for the drafting of a constitution. Beneath the steering of a commission created of senior military officers and civil servants, the NC, with delegates representing political parties, election winners, ethnic

groups, workers, peasants, government staff, intellectuals and geographical areas (in that politicians were mostly outnumbered by different delegates), convened in January 1993. In September 1993, an in depth set of 104 “basic principles” was established as a basis for future deliberations. In November 1995, the NLD representatives walked out of the National Convention thanks to their discontent with the conduct of the proceedings and were afterwards expelled for breach of rules. The National Convention went into an extended recess in April 1996.⁷⁵

On the opposite hand, in 1997, the SLORC continuing to rule the state till it metamorphosed into the ‘State Peace and Development Council’ (SPDC). The aforesaid SPDC was shaped on 15 November 1997. However, the amendment was terribly insignificant. Though there have been some changes within the 19-member council with the inclusion of regional commanders in situ of prime brasses, however the “four top generals”⁷⁶ still remained as was common, within the helm of power. The amendment was cosmetic. It was, in fact, a political charade of the regime to mesmerize the international community and at identical time to impress its ASEAN partners. Several opposition groups thought-about it a cosmetic amendment with identical previous wind during a new bottle. According to them the amendment is barely facial not intrinsic and has nothing to contribute towards restoration of democracy within the country.

The SPDC, like its precursor, might contribute nothing towards transportation any amendment and reformation within the political and economic setting of the country that might produce atmosphere for more progress of the country. The positive atmosphere towards amendment was utterly lacking. Instead, factionalism has emerged among the set-up thanks to the sidelining of the many distinguished generals at consultative level. This gave associate degree indirect boost for the democracy movement. It is the most want on the part of the democratic groups that a kind of robust contradictory force emerges among the military set-up thereby creating it weaker. However, the factionalism and dissent, it seems, was not robust enough to interrupt up the military started from within; as desired by the democratic groups of the country. The entry into ASEAN conjointly reduced its outcast standing. And below the dynamical circumstances and new developments within the county’s political atmosphere it became necessary on the part of the democratic force to utterly re-evaluate its existing strategy yet again, keeping in mind the new demands of your

time. With a lot of stress on the authoritarian primarily based disciplined democracy on the part of the foundations fast political changes in close to future looks bleak unless bound new strategies area unit efficient in unified spirit.

However, the political stalemate carried over into the 21st century influenced over all aspects of life in Myanmar with the SPDC continued to harass the NLD activists and also the military maintaining tight management. Again, to woo the western investment and to possess a lot of balanced relationship with China and different powers like India and also the West, Myanmar step by step began to open up and liberalize its social group. On the opposite hand, in 2003, the Depayin incident cracked down by the government and also the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) killed some dozens of Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters. The eruption of Depayin incident created Myanmar's domestic political state of affairs worse. As a result, the United States and Western countries imposed tighter sanctions on Myanmar.⁷⁷ ASEAN through associate degree uncommon diplomatic initiative wanted to place pressure on Myanmar to unravel the political stalemate and build political reforms.

The SPDC having gauged the intensity of pro-democracy environment within the country initiated a policy of 'divide and rule'. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt proclaimed in 30 August 2003 a "the seven-point roadmap"⁷⁸ to democracy and also the reconvention of the National Convention that was halted in 1996. "The seven-step roadmap" towards "disciplined democracy" that aimed to form a new Constitution and establish a civilian government. The roadmap towards "disciplined democracy" enclosed the subsequent points:⁷⁹

1. Reconvening the National Convention (NC) that has been adjourned since 1996 and tasked to draw up the careful basic principles of the new Constitution;
2. After the successful holding of the National Convention, Step by step implementation of the process necessary for the emergence of a real and disciplined democratic system;
3. Drafting a new Constitution in accordance with the essential principles and careful basic principles set by the National Convention;

4. Holding of a National Referendum to adopt the Constitution;
5. Holding of free and fair elections for national and regional legislative bodies or Pyithu Hluttaws (people's assemblies) in accordance with the new Constitution;
6. Convening of the national and regional Hluttaws attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new Constitution;
7. Making in an exceedingly "modern, developed, and democratic nation" ruled by national and regional leader's elective in by the Hluttaw; and also, the government and different central organs shaped by the Hluttaw in accordance with the new Constitution.

Opposition groups rejected the roadmap declaring it to be an endeavor to divert international attention from the detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and different NLD leader. The Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCO) projected another roadmap that concerned the drafting of a constitution acceptable to Myanmar's various ethnic groups fighting in Yangon. However, most ceasefire groups welcome the government's roadmap within the belief that they would be a part of the National Convention.⁸⁰ Consequently, the National Convention was convened in May 2004 within which more than one thousand delegates from 28 cease-fire groups took part. However, the two major political parties, specifically NLD and also the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA- the coalition of ethnic nationality party), boycotted the Convention⁸¹ in anticipation that there was no chance of a comprehensive and constructive dialogue over the core problems. Finally, in September 2007, the National Convention terminated its deliberations once endorsing a close formulation of principles for the draft constitution.⁸²

5.6: The 2007 Saffron Revolution and its Impact

The 2007 Saffron Revolution is another uprising against the military regime that has controlled the country since 1962. It had been the primary major nationwide uprising since 1988. The Saffron Revolution of 2007 was partly caused by public discontentedness with deteriorating economic and social conditions in Myanmar. Tens of thousands of monk's light-emitting led large demonstrations in towns and cities across Union of Burma (See, *Appendix VI*). Thousands of Burmese civilians

from all walks of life joined the protests to demand associate degree finish to military rule.⁸³ Were distinguished in Myanmar's questionable Saffron Revolution (named for the saffron-colored robes traditionally worn by Theravada Buddhism monks), associate degree outsized demonstration in Yangon for democratic reforms that scholar a harsh response from the government.⁸⁴ That action was a catalyst serving to impact constitutional reforms in 2008 and a modification in government.

It was triggered by the announcement of military government in August 2007 that everyone government subsidies would be off from foreign diesel and fossil fuel. On 15 August the government hyperbolic worth for gas, doubled the cost of fuel and also the price of compressed fossil fuel rose by 500% resulting in inflation in different commodities, like rice, vegetable, oil and different foodstuffs. Consequently, on 19 August, hundreds of people came out and marched within the streets of Yangon against the government's decision of rising price of fuels and natural gas.⁸⁵ They were semiconductor led by activists from the "8-8-88 Students" cluster and also the NLD. The protestors were severely troubled and overwhelmed up by the military forces. Among two days, the military arrested an outsized range of student's leaders. However, the marches, rather than subsiding, unfold to different cities across the country. It absolutely was against the background of those developments that in late August, Buddhist monks within the western city of Sittwe began to hitch the marches.⁸⁶

On 5 September 2007, around six hundred monks walking within the town of Pakokku in central Burma were savagely attacked by the military forces.⁸⁷ The native authorities tried to disperse the protesters, allegedly victimization members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and Swan Arshin (vigilantes). Many people were allegedly overwhelmed by supporters of the government, and a few monks were arrested. The subsequent day, once regime officers visited one amongst the most monasteries to apologize, monks from the cloister burned the officials' cars. The monks conjointly command the officer's captive till the authorities united to release the detained monks. Meanwhile, associate degree underground monk union called the Alliance of All Burma Buddhist Monks emerged. The Alliance created its presence illustrious by distributing leaflets, asking the government to apologize for its practice of monks in Pakokku.

The All-Burma Monks Alliance (ABMA)⁸⁸ then demanded a proper apology from the government among 17 September for the Pakkoku incident. The ABMA conjointly demanded reduction of trade goods costs, release of all political prisoners and enter into dialogue for national reconciliation with the democratic forces.⁸⁹ However, the military government refused to apologize resulting in additional widespread protest within the country. On 17 September, many hundred monks staged peaceful protests.⁹⁰ The government blamed these protests on counterfeit monks and instigation by opposition groups and Western countries. However, monks who participated within the demonstrations claimed that they joined the protests out of their frustration with the economic hardships within the country.⁹¹ These monk-led protests drew the attention of the international community once some locals disseminated information concerning and photos of protests over the web.

Thereafter, on 22 September, thousands of monks, enclosed by civilians, began to march within the streets of many Burmese towns and cities. The government tried to regulate things through mass arrests, torture and murder. Because the protests drew larger crowds of lay folks and assumed a political character, on 25 September security forces began victimization live ammunition to disperse the crowds when curfew orders were neglected by the demonstrators in Yangon, who persisted despite tear gas attacks and baton charges. The government declared that 10 persons had been killed, whereas opposition groups claimed that over hundred folks had died. Security forces raided monasteries within the cities wherever the biggest demonstrations had taken place and detained leading protestors. The protection forces conjointly continuing misestimating up marchers within the streets. They explore for suspected protesters and went ahead with political executions.⁹²

Initially, thousands of lay demonstrators and monks were command in interrogation centers however most were afterwards free. A lot of hard-core protestors were jailed below varied criminal charges. Several novices and monks from teaching monasteries in cities were come to their home cities and villages. These actions were recorded by onlookers who used cell phones and moveable video cameras to document the suppression.⁹³ Despite the government's effort to censor these pictures by motion down the web in Myanmar, this footage found its approach into households across the state that had gained access to satellite televisions in recent years. Burmese folks

witnessed the government's violence for themselves and this attack on the *Sangha* caused the government to lose legitimacy within the eyes of the many.

In addition, these pictures were broadcast round the world, resulting in a world outcry.⁹⁴ By October, what the Western media dubbed "The Saffron Revolution" was fully neutralized. However, in contrast to in 1988, the globe witnessed the oppression in nice detail via cell phones, digital cameras, and also the net. Myanmar has become a perilously divided nation that is in severe want of a national reconciliation. This presently semiconductor led to one of the foremost important developments throughout this era, which was conjointly the completion of the new Constitution at the end of May 2008.⁹⁵ Overall, the Saffron revolution was another important chapter within the struggle for democracy in Myanmar.

5.7: The 2008 Constitutional Provisions for Socio-Political Development of Myanmar

The Constitution of the 'Republic of the Union of Myanmar' is that the supreme law of Myanmar. Before independence, Myanmar had two quasi-Constitution, the government of Burma Act, 1935 and Constitution of Burma below Japanese occupation, 1943. After independence, Myanmar adopted three Constitutions in 1947, 1974 and 2008. The 2008 Constitution is that the present Constitution of Myanmar.

The constitutional history of Myanmar may be a checked one.⁹⁶ The primary Constitution of the country was adopted on 24th September 1947, a couple of months before obtaining independence on 4 January 1948. It established a bicameral legislative assembly. The lower house was the Chamber of Deputies composed of 250 members and also the upper house, Chamber of Nationalities, was composed of 125 members. This technique was supported British heritage of representative system. The Union of Myanmar, consequently, was established as a quasi-federal state.⁹⁷ It absolutely was used from in 1948 to 1962, once the constitution was suspended by the socialist Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma, semiconductor led by military General Ne Win.

The second Constitution was adopted in 1974 when holding a National Referendum, providing for one-socialist-party system for the country. It created unicameral law-makers known as the People's Assembly (Pyithu Hluttaw), delineated by members of

the Burma Socialist Programme Party.⁹⁸ Upon taking power in September 1988, the military primarily based SLORC suspended the 1974 constitution. The SLORC had known as a constitutional convention in 1993, however it had been suspended in 1996 once the National League for Democracy (NLD) boycotted it, business it autocratic. The constitutional convention was once more known as in 2004, however while not the NLD. Myanmar remained while not a constitution till 2008.

The genesis of the 2008 Constitution is derived back to 1988 mass uprising and therefore the election in 1990. After the election, the military did not transfer power to the freshly electoral representatives. On 28 July 1990, the NLD that won majority of seats adopted associate in nursing amended version of the 1947 Constitution to permit a sleek transition from a single-party to a multiparty system. In that, provisions concerning the formation of States have been cancelled on the ground that it was no more necessary.⁹⁹ However, the SLORC refused to acknowledge any temporary Constitution. On 9 January 1993, the military junta opened a National Convention to draft a brand-new Constitution. However, NLD withdrew from the National Convention on 28 November 1995 as a result of the SLORC did not enable the party to chair the constitutional reform process, despite it winning the 1990 elections.¹⁰⁰

However, another supply claimed that NLD withdrew from the National Convention as a result of the military did not enable open discussion and debate amongst participants.¹⁰¹ On succeeding day, the military junta expelled all the NLD delegates. Later, on March 1996, the military junta suspended the Convention while not rationalization until date. Constant year, the military conjointly introduced a law that sentenced public critics of the National Convention to a most of 20 years in jail to forestall anyone from criticizing the National Convention and drafting a Constitution outside the National Convention.¹⁰² On 30 August 2003, the military junta adopted a 'seven-step roadmap' towards "disciplined democracy" to hurry up and facilitate the process of democratization within the country. When the adoption of the roadmap, the National Convention was revived because the start that was adjourned since 1996. When the National Convention was reconvened on 17 May 2004, a series of different sessions followed. On 19 October 2007, the military shaped a committee to draft the Constitution supported the fundamental Principles and careful Basic Principles arranged down by the National Convention control in 1993.

On 9 February 2008, the Secretary one of the SPDC, Lt. General Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo proclaimed that the Constitution is going to be approved in a very National Referendum to be control in May 2008.¹⁰³ On 19 February 2008, the military proclaimed that the Committee has finished drafting the Constitution. After a drafting process for fourteen years, the military government of Myanmar, unveiled a brand-new Constitution for the country on 19 February 2008 (See, *Appendix VII*). The text of the Constitution is 194 pages with 15 chapters and 457 provisions. From 10 to 24 May 2008, the military organized a referendum for making certain people's support for the new Constitution. The SPDC issued the Referendum Law in February 2008 for the approval of the draft Constitution. The National Convention finally approved a draft of a brand-new Constitution in May 2008 that was place to a referendum and passed.

The law excludes the voting right of the members of non-secular orders and persons UN agency square measure illicitly living abroad. They excluded monks thinking that their ethical clout could influence the option behaviors of the overall folks. There square measure 27 million eligible voters in Myanmar out of a complete population of 54 million. General people had terribly restricted scope to grasp concerning the new Constitution. The draft Constitution was circulated at restricted levels and most of the people did not fathom the contents of the Constitution. The referendum was control with none international monitors. The junta prohibited the international aid staff to facilitate a multi-million-dollar disaster relief programme within the country throughout Cyclone Nargis¹⁰⁴, thinking that the foreign nationals would possibly take it as a chance to look at the election process. It had been necessary for the official, together with academics, soldiers, polices and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) to cast their votes supporting the new Constitution and most were told by their seniors to try and do therefore.¹⁰⁵ The international community did not acknowledge the voting process as honest. The internal democratic forces of the country were suspect of rigging the results of the referendum. However, the government of Myanmar declared that 92.48% people gave their vote supporting the draft Constitution.¹⁰⁶

However, Donald M. Seeking in 2008 argued that the validity of the referendum was dubious. It alleged that individuals got ballots already marked "yes", which Than Shwe originally used the constitutional drafting process as a delaying maneuver to

offset domestic and foreign demands for real political liberalization.¹⁰⁷ The ultimate version of the Constitution drew heavily from the 1947 and 1974 Constitutions with some new provisions together with the section outlining the election process. The Constitution came into force on 29 May 2008, and therefore the initial regular session of the Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Assembly) was persisted on 31 January 2011. It provided for a national bicameral Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly) that comprised of a Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw (National Assembly). It conjointly provided for seven State and seven Regional Assemblies (Pyineh and Taing-dethagyi Hluttaws).¹⁰⁸ The form of government of the country underneath the Constitution is delineated as a "disciplined, flourishing, real multiparty democracy."¹⁰⁹

In the Constitution, 25% of seats in all three legislatures i.e., Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw) and local parliaments for every of the seven States and seven Regions square measure reserved for the Defence Services. These members square measure to be appointed from the Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services. Underneath the Constitution, the President is additionally electoral from among three candidates-one each put forward by the two Houses and another by the military. The President is going to be electoral once a vote in a joint session of the Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw). The one who wins the vote becomes the President and therefore the remaining two become Vice-Presidents. Associate in nursing change of the Constitution needs support of quite 75% of members in every of the two Houses comprising the Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw); the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities or Upper House) and Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives or Lower House) (See, *Appendix VIII*).

It may even be mentioned here that the 2008 Constitution was drafted to transfer power to the electoral representatives of the 1990 elections. However, Article 91 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law declared on 10 March 2010 by Than Shwe, Senior General, Chairman of the SPDC repealed the SLORC (former name of the SPDC before 1997) Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law No. 14/89, 31 May 1989.¹¹⁰ Therefore, Than Shwe argued that the results of the 1990 multiparty democracy general election held underneath the Election Law in 1989 repealed by this 2010 Law was not in line with the Constitution. As such, the military claimed that results of the 1990 election

were nullified mechanically. As a result, the military government failed to transfer power to those representatives electoral in 1990 election however determined to still be in power.¹¹¹ However, the opposition's square measure pent-up and undermined and it is clear that they might not be able to challenge the military. Though the new Constitution could be a new model of military rule, the participation of huge electorates throughout the vote day proves that the people of the country still hope for associate in nursing open democracy. Yet, the new Constitution raises little hope towards democracy.

Thereafter, the military junta held Legislative elections in November 2010 amidst conflicting state of affairs as per the availability of the new constitution. But the elections were not thought of to be democratic as results of 25% of all seats within the national Parliament were not contested.¹¹² Moreover, Myanmar the most opposition party, NLD boycotted this election. After the election, General Thein Sein was elected as President in March 2011 and power was transferred consequently. The transfer of power to the new electoral government was a part of the democratization process in Myanmar.¹¹³ After the election and consequent transfer of power, reform processes towards democratization started at a quicker pace and have become visible. Thein Sein, after coming to power, met Aung San Suu Kyi, contacted opposition leaders for reconciliation, free thousands of political prisoners, relaxed media censorship, allowed NLD and alternative antecedently illegal opposition parties to endure parliament, signed many peace agreements with ethnic minorities and exaggerated budget outlay for health and education.¹¹⁴

Private journals, magazines and newspapers were allowed to have interaction in political coverage, detached area for civil society, non-governmental organizations were conjointly allowed to create political organization and participate in political life, economic and social development.¹¹⁵ NLD conjointly began to collaborate with the government and united to participate within the April 2012 by-elections. NLD won the majority of seats within the 2012 by election associate in nursing Aung San Suu Kyi became an opposition member of parliament. This election was acknowledged by ASEAN and international observers to be freer and fairer.¹¹⁶ Some opined that the transformation of Myanmar's social group was designed and enforced by the military regime. On July 8, 2015, the Union Election Commission declared that elections are going to be held on November 8, 2015. During this election, the NLD

won a supermajority of seats within the combined national parliament.¹¹⁷ It made-up the way for the country's first civilian person to become president in 54 years. In 2015, the election of Aung San Suu Kyi and her party won absolutely the majority and were unconditional with government power of the country.¹¹⁸

However, Suu Kyi's government became the actually democratic government. But Aung San Suu Kyi was changing into Burmese President of a clause within the 2008 constitution. The clause barred from the presidency of Myanmar all the candidates who were foreigners or had foreign relatives. The latter is that the case of Aung San Suu Kyi, whose sons square measure British citizens. Notwithstanding, she has ensured that she would hold the real power at intervals the NLD as she expressed her disposition to be higher than the president, Htin Kyaw. Moreover, she has been conferred with three ministries: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Electric power and Energy. Beyond that, Aung San Suu Kyi is that the President of the workplace minister and state counsellor, associate in nursing workplace designed for her by President Htin Kyaw.¹¹⁹ Thereafter, the foremost recent election, were held on 8 November 2020, during which the NLD exaggerated its majority, the Tatmadaw, claimed the results were invalid. The election happened throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, still as each the Rohingya conflict and therefore Rohingya genocide. Additionally, the government has conjointly been criticized for limiting press freedom and having did not manage the country's economic problems, putt dents in its electoral promise of reform.¹²⁰ The Tatmadaw throw out democratically electoral leaders the day before newly-elected politicians may be sworn in. A coup in 1 February 2021 came back the country to military rule once more.

5.8: Conclusion

In conclusion, we are able to say that the current chapter, "Political Development and Domestic Politics in Myanmar (1988–2008)," has represented the political development in Myanmar since the mass uprising against the military regime in 1988–2008. The favored uprising of 1988 was a singular expertise that the country had never seen in the past. The long period of continuous neglect and inefficient management of the country's socio-economic and political beliefs caused the mass uprising of 1988. Since the year 1988, Myanmar has witnessed vital political

developments within the variety of mass movements for democracy, the formation of political parties, elections, well-liked participation, democratization, decentralization of power, reforms, the government's ability to unravel problems, transferrable peace and stability, economic liberalization, and the gap up to the international community.

This chapter has additionally analyzed the emergence of the latest political groups and leaders and highlighted Aung San Suu Kyi: Emergence as a Mass Leader. Suu Kyi has been playing a crucial role in the democratic movement and is taken into account as the icon of democracy in Myanmar. The demonstration led the military to carry out free and truthful democratic multiparty general elections in May 1990. After the election, the military refused to hand over power to the electoral representatives and continued to hold power. Thenceforth, hope for democracy pales away, and military rule continues within the country. However, the military junta took boundless steps to bring the country towards democratization. In 2003, the military junta adopted a 'seven-step roadmap' towards "disciplined democracy" to hurry up and facilitate democratizing the country.

In 2007, another uprising since 1988 against the military regime and difficult democracy came about within the country. It had been another vital issue in the struggle for democracy in Myanmar. The Saffron Revolution of 2007 was partly caused by public discontent with the deteriorating economic and social conditions in Myanmar. It has become a hazardously divided nation that is in severe need of national reconciliation. This presently led to at least one of the foremost vital developments throughout this era, which was additionally the completion of the new Constitution at the end of May 2008. Thereafter, in 2008, a brand-new Constitution was enacted. This Constitution apparently failed to raise abundant hope for democracy in Myanmar. The massive participation throughout the option makes it clear that individuals hope for a constitutional system within the country. The new Constitution does not indicate that the military would reward the state with a western-style democracy.

However, it appears that the military needs to hand over power to a government that might be controlled by them and facilitate forging a relationship between the military and the people. However, on the face of limitations, the 2008 Constitution somehow created the impression that the military was dynamic in its unscrupulous control over

power within the country. Yet, supported by the Constitution, “multiparty democratic general elections” were held on November 7, 2010. This election resulted in political amendments and the democratization of the country. Additional elections were held in April 2012, November 2015, and 2017 as a district of democratization of the country on the side of alternative democratic reforms. The last general election in Myanmar was held on November 8, 2020, and reforms are continuing within the country. However, a coup in February 2021 brought the country back under military rule.

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⁴⁰ Aung San was killed on July 19, 1947, just a few months before Burma became independent, by U Saw, a member of a reactionary Burmese group. He was an ambitious senior politician, had his gunmen assassinate the thirty-two-year-old general. He was connected with the imperialists and planned to seize power in the country.

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⁵² See, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, November 1991, p. 38628.

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- ⁶² See, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, July 1990, p. 37612.
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- ⁶⁵ See, *Dialogue*, Dhaka, September 20, 1991.
- ⁶⁶ See, *Asia Week*, New York, October 25, 1991.
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Chapter- 6

Conclusion

The history of the transition of Myanmar from a “Crown Colony” to an independent nation-state is undoubtedly a unique episode of the political transformation of Southeast Asia. The objective of this study endeavour is to elucidate the characteristics of Myanmar's internal politics and examine the progression of its dynamics. In order to achieve this objective, an analysis has been conducted on the 2008 constitution and the ensuing internal political landscape of Myanmar, commencing with the period when it was under British colonial rule. The introductory chapter of the study has addressed the introduction, initial statement, and research material. The three aims of this study have significant importance in the first chapter. Subsequently, further efforts are undertaken in the second, third, fourth, and fifth iterations to substantiate the three hypotheses.

Based on the observations and evidence offered in the preceding chapters, a comprehensive conclusion can be drawn that Myanmar has a substantial historical background. Myanmar is a nation with a rich historical legacy. The pre-British invasion political landscape of Burma may be characterized as a persistent conflict involving many indigenous factions and Arakannese, as well as tensions between the Burmese people and neighbouring communities. The beginning of the nation-building process in Myanmar may be traced back to the eleventh century. During the period spanning the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the progenitors of the contemporary Burmese established the Pagan Kingdom, characterized by notable advancements. During the early nineteenth century, Myanmar had a prominent position as one of the dominant nations in the Southeast Asian region. Myanmar was annexed by the British colonial force in 1885. The governance of Myanmar by the British government was not implemented by direct authority, but rather through the intermediary influence exerted over local elites, including ethnic leaders who operated within the framework of British administration. In 1886, the British colonial administration included Burma as a colony of British India, establishing Rangoon as its capital. Britain transformed Burma into a territory under the colonial British Indian government, assuming governance over the region for about half a century.

On November 7, 1927, the Indian Statutory Commission was established by the British Government, with Sir John Simon serving as its designated leader. In the year 1928, the British government established the Simon Commission, which subsequently led to the convening of a Round Table Conference with prominent Burmese leaders. The separation of Myanmar from the British Indian government under the India Act of 1935 occurred as a result of the Round Table Conference. This legislative measure was put into effect on April 1, 1937. During the period of 1937-1941, Burma was placed under British governance, during which a new constitution was implemented. Consequently, Burma emerged as an independent nation under British rule, leading to the dissolution of its administrative connections with India.

The constitutional and political advancements in Myanmar were disrupted by the onset of the Second World War. However, despite the brevity of the period, the populace had the opportunity to reflect upon almost two decades of experience with electoral processes, parliamentary governance, political accountability, and political party dynamics. The nation-building process in Myanmar has been shaped by the indigenous nationality. The introduction of new ethnic conflicts in Myanmar by the British, along with their exploitative economic tactics, resulted in a significant portion of the population developing a negative perception towards capitalism. Nevertheless, they also implemented a system of restricted representative government, allowing elected officials to participate in the process of governing. The individuals may possess a cumulative experience of twenty years in the domains of elections, parliamentary governance, political accountability, and political parties. The British administration has been responsible for the emergence of several national heroes and notable Burmese proletariat revolutionaries. The current analysis demonstrates that Burma has achieved independence from its status as a Crown province. In the year 1942, the nation of Japan assumed control of Myanmar and proceeded to build a domestic governing body. In 1943, the Japanese government granted Myanmar a kind of formal independence. Myanmar saw the impact of Japanese military philosophy and fascist behaviours during the Japanese period from 1942 to 1945. The nationalist elite in Myanmar continue to exhibit traces of fascist ideology, as seen by their enduring influence. The current thesis comprehensively examines the historical context of Myanmar's internal politics in the second chapter.

The examination of internal politics in the three chapters reveals that Myanmar implemented a system of complete parliamentary democracy during two periods: from 1948 to 1958 and from 1960 to 1962, under the leadership of U Nu. The principles of freedom of speech, press, and assembly were largely upheld, and the court demonstrated a significant degree of independence. The first democratic administration led by U Nu successfully orchestrated a series of three national elections including many political parties. The conducted elections were characterized by a high degree of fairness and freedom, therefore mostly capturing an accurate representation of the prevailing popular sentiment. However, as a result of ethnic conflicts, separatist movements, corruption, and factionalism, the military seized control in a nonviolent coup in 1962, led by General Ne Win.

The examination of internal politics in the four chapters reveals that in 1962, General Ne Win assumed control via a military coup. The military regime proceeded to form the Revolutionary Council. The time span ranging from 1962 to 1974 was characterized by an era of governance marked by direct military authority. During the first ten years of the Burmese Way to Socialism, the government led by Ne Win implemented extensive institutional modifications aimed at expediting Myanmar's revolutionary progression. In 1974, the cessation of direct military governance occurred with the implementation of a new constitution and the conduct of national elections. The subsequent era of military governance may be characterized as a time of constitutional dictatorship. Despite the appearance of constitutionalism and civilian governance, there are still remnants of a strong authoritarian inclination. During this particular era, the military adopted a foreign policy approach characterized by the cessation of communication with other entities and the deliberate isolation of the nation from international and regional events. The democratic system saw a lack of progress during the tenure of Ne Win. During this period, a series of three national elections were conducted, accompanied by the implementation of a novel constitution that granted individuals the fundamental rights to participate in electoral processes as voters and candidates. However, in practical terms, the election might be characterized as just symbolic, lacking fairness and legitimacy.

The examination of domestic politics in the five chapters reveals that the mass uprising of 1988 may be attributed to a protracted period of disregard and ineffective governance according to the socio-economic and political ideologies of the nation.

The mass movements in question have been marked by significant political advancements, such as the establishment of political parties, the conduct of elections, the promotion of democratic principles, the decentralization of authority, the attainment of sustainable peace and stability, the implementation of economic liberalization measures, and the cultivation of international relations. The political trajectory of Aung San Suu Kyi, including her emergence in politics, the 1990 elections, the saffron revolution of 2007, and the subsequent establishment of the 2008 constitution, has significantly contributed to the advancement of Myanmar's political landscape. Following the ratification of the 2008 constitution, the commencement of the democratic process was initiated by the conduct of the 2010 elections. The attainment of its fulfilment was realized by the conduct of the general elections in 2015. As a result, during the course of Myanmar's 75-year history, there was a transition of power from the military ruler to the democratic authority, which remained in effect until 2020. The period spanning from 2015 to 2020 saw the establishment of a civilian administration in Myanmar, which marked a significant turning point in the country's political landscape by introducing democratic principles. Nevertheless, a military coup took place on February 1, 2021, resulting in the reinstatement of military governance in the nation.

Myanmar has not achieved the status of a unified, ethnically homogeneous democratic nation since its independence. The historical record of political achievements is marred by a series of challenges including internal political conflicts, ethnic animosity, protracted civil warfare, and enduring military governance. Consequently, the process of transitioning Myanmar's internal politics is characterized by a gradual and seamless progression. Political parties, competent leadership, constitutional progress, and participation in elections have played a significant role in facilitating good transformations throughout the democratic transition in Myanmar. In light of the prevailing circumstances, it may be inferred that the attainment of comprehensive democratization in Myanmar poses considerable challenges and necessitates a protracted period for the consolidation of democratic principles, notwithstanding the recurrent emergence of democratic administrations.

Appendix I

Government of Burma Act, 1935

The Government of Burma Act of 1935 was included in the Government of India Act of 1935, the largest Act of British Parliament ever enacted by that time. The Act was passed in August 1935 and was enforced on April 1, 1937. The Government of Burma Act of 1935 is divided in 14 ‘parts’ and contains 159 ‘sections’ and 6 schedules. The brief narration of this Act is as follows:

- Part I.** contains short title and Government of Burma by the Crown.
- Part II.** contains the Executive, in which the Appointment and functions of the Governor of Burma and his administration is stated.
- Part III.** contains the Legislature, its Constitution, Sessions, Voting in Chamber, etc.
- Part IV.** contains Powers of the Legislature as to Legislation and Legislative Procedure and Legislative powers of Governor.
- Part V.** contains Restrictions on Discrimination, British subjects domiciled in the United Kingdom and British India, Taxation, Medical qualifications, etc.
- Part VI.** pertains to Finance, meaning of “revenues in Burma”, Duty of the Government of Burma to keep Secretary of State supplied with funds; also containing Proceedings in the Legislature, Annual financial statement, Borrowing, Auditor-General of Burma and Federated Shan States.
- Part VII.** pertains to the Burma Railway Board.
- Part VIII.** is concerned with the High Court; Constitution, Jurisdiction, Proceedings in High Court to be in English, etc.
- Part IX.** contains the Services of the Crown in Burma under which Defence Services, General Provisions as to Civil Services, Recruitment by Secretary of State and provisions as to certain civil posts, Provisions as to persons appointed by Secretary of State in Council, persons

holding reserved posts and commissioned officers in civil employment, Special provisions as to Judicial Officers, Special provisions as to Burma Frontier Service, Public Service Commission, Chaplains, etc. are highlighted. Section 117 is noteworthy it deals with Application to members of Indian services serving in Burma.

Part X. contains provisions relating to Property, Contracts, Liabilities and Suits.

Part XI. is completely dedicated to Miscellaneous Provisions as to Relations with India. It consists of five sections from 134 to 138. Considering the relevance of this Part, it is given in full, which is as follows:

Part XI

Miscellaneous Provisions as to Relations with India

134. Whereas it may appear that the distribution of property, rights and liabilities effected by and under this Act and the Government of India Act, 1935, as between India and Burma may result in an undue burden on the revenues of the Federation, His Majesty in Council may, if he thinks it just so to do, make provision for the payment to the revenues of the Federation out of the revenues of Burma, and for the charging on the revenues of Burma, of such periodical or other sums as may appear to him to be proper.

135. With a view to preventing undue disturbance of trade between India and Burma in the period immediately following the separation of India and Burma and with a view to safeguarding the economic interests of Burma during that period, His Majesty may by Order in Council give such directions as he thinks fit for those purposes with respect to the duties which are, while the Order is in force, to be levied on goods imported into or exported from India and Burma, and with respect to ancillary and related matters.

- 136.** His Majesty in Council may make provision for the grant of relief from any Burma tax on income in respect of income taxed or taxable by or under the law of the Federation of India.
- 137.** His Majesty in Council may make such provision with respect to the monetary system of Burma and matters connected therewith or ancillary thereto as he thinks fit and in particular, but without prejudice to the generality of this section, such provision as may appear to him to be necessary or proper for the purpose of giving effect to any arrangements with respects to the said matters made before the commencement of this Act with the approval of the Secretary of State by the Governor of Burma in Council.
- 138.** His Majesty may by Order in Council direct that, during such period as may be specified in the Order, immigration into Burma from India shall be subject to such restrictions as may be specified in the Order (being such restrictions as may have been mutually agreed before the commencement of this Act between the Governor of Burma in Council and the Governor-General of India in Council and approved by the Secretary of State), and no other restrictions:

Provided that any such Order may be varied by a subsequent Order in Council in such manner as appears to His Majesty necessary to give effect to any agreement in that behalf made after the commencement of this Act by the Governor with the Governor-General of India or the Governor-General of India in Council.

Source:http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1935/2/pdfs/ukpga_19350002_en.pdf

(For Government of India Act, 1935).

Also, https://myanmar-law-library.org/IMG/pdf/government_of_burma_act_.1935.pdf

(For Government of Burma Act, 1935).

Appendix II

List of Colonial Heads of Burma During the Period of 1937 to 1948

Separated from British India	
Name	Period
Sir Archibald Douglas Cochrane (Governor)	April 1, 1937-May 6, 1941
Sir Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith (Governor)	May 6, 1941-August 31, 1946
Japanese Occupation of British Burma	
Name	Period
Lieutenant General Shojiro Iida (Military Commander)	April 20, 1942-March 18, 1943
General Masakazu Kawabe (Military Commander)	March 18, 1943-August 30, 1944
General Heitaro Kimura (Military Commander)	August 30, 1944-August 15, 1945
Under British Allied Military Administration	
Name	Period
Actg. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten (Military Governor)	January 1, 1944-October 1945
Major General Sir Hubert Elvin Rance (Military Governor)	October 1945-August 31, 1946
Under the British Again	
Name	Period
Sir Hubert Elvin Rance (Governor)	August 31, 1946-January 4, 1948

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_colonial_governors_of_Burma

Appendix III

The Panglong Agreement, 1947

A conference having been held at Panglong, attended by certain Members of the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, all Saophas and representatives of the Shan States, the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills:

The Shan's, the Kachin's and the Chins will more speedily achieve the Members of the Conference, believing that freedom by their immediate cooperation with the Interim Burmese Government:

The Members of the Conference have accordingly, and without dissentients, agreed as follows:

1. A Representative of the Hill Peoples, selected by the Governor on the recommendation of representatives of the supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples, shall be appointed a Council to the Governor to deal with the Frontier Areas.
2. The said Counsellor shall also be appointed a Member of the Governor's Executive Council, without portfolio, and the subject of Frontier Areas brought within the purview of the Executive Council by Constitutional Convention as in 54 the case of Defense and External Affairs. The Counsellor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.
3. The said Counsellor shall be assisted by two Deputy Counsellors representing races of which he is not a member. While the two Deputy Counsellors should deal in the first instance with the affairs of their respective areas and the Counsellor with all the remaining parts of the Frontier Areas, they should by Constitutional Convention act of the principle of joint responsibility.
4. While the Counsellor, in his capacity of Member of the Executive Council, will be the only representative of the Frontier Areas on the Council, the Deputy Counsellors shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Council when subjects pertaining to the Frontier Areas are discussed.

5. Though the Governor's Executive Council will be augmented as agreed above, it will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner, which would deprive any portion of these areas of the autonomy, which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.
6. Though the question of demarcating and establishing a separate Kachin State within a Unified Burma is one which must be relegated for decision by the Constituent Assembly, it is agreed that such a State is desirable. As a first step towards this end, the Counsellor for Frontier Areas and the Deputy Counsellors shall be consulted in the administration of such areas in the Myitkyina and the Bhamo districts, as are Part Scheduled Areas under the Government of Burma Act of 1935.
7. Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges, which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries.
8. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial autonomy now vested in the Federated Shan States.
9. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial assistance which the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills are entitled to receive from the revenues of Burma, and the Executive Council will examine with the Frontier Areas Counsellor and Deputy Counsellors the feasibility of adopting for the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills financial arrangements similar to those between Burma and the Federated Shan States.

Source: Roger M. Smith (Ed.) Article Josef Silverstein, 'Southeast Asia Documents of Political Development and Change, Cornell University, Press, London. 1974, p. 91-93.

Appendix IV

The State Religion Promotion Act, 1961

It is hereby enacted as follows:

1. (i) This Act may be called the State Religion Promotion Act, 1961.
(ii) It shall come into force on such date as the President may, by notification, appoint.
2. (i) Buddhist Scriptures shall be taught to Buddhist students in all the State schools within the Union.
(ii) In all the State schools within the Union-
 - (a) Examinations in Buddhist Scriptures shall be held for Buddhist student;
 - (b) Certificates shall be granted to successful candidates in the said examinations;
 - (c) Prizes shall be awarded to those who have passed the said examinations with distinction.

Explanation- The purpose of holding the examination under this section shall be to grant pass certificates to those who are successful, but not to bar those who fail in the said examination from promotion.

3. In all the Universities and their constituent Colleges within the Union, if there is a sufficient number of students who are desirous of studying Buddhist Scriptures as a subject for examination, they are allowed to study other subjects for the same purpose.
4. The Government or Boards, Municipalities or other local authorities shall grant, in accordance with the rules made by the President in this behalf, those members of their services, who have made actual preparations to appear for any examination of Buddhist Scriptures to be held by any organization constituted by an Act, such as the Union Buddha Sasana Council, Pali Education Board, or Pali University Central Council, such leave as is admissible to them under the law for the time being in force, for the days on

which the examination is held and for such days as are actually required for the journey to and from the nearest place where the examination is held.

5. (i) In all State Teachers' Training Schools and Teachers' Training Colleges, Buddhist Scriptures shall be taught as a subject in order to enable students to teach the said Buddhist Scriptures.

(ii) The subject shall be compulsory for the persons who are Buddhists, and optional for the persons who are non- Buddhists, undergoing teacher ship training.

Explanation- The teaching of this subject under this section is to grant pass certificates to those who pass in the said subject but the failure to pass therein shall not be a bar to promotion.

6. In cases where it is proposed to open new State primary schools, preference shall be given for the purpose to those monasteries which can provide suitable and adequate accommodation, and where a sufficient number of pupils are available, and the presiding monk is willing to accept the conditions lay down by the Government.
7. The State Broadcasting Service shall broadcast on Buddhism for at least one hour either continuously or at different periods on Uposatha (Sabbath) days.
8. The Government shall have classes opened in prisons to enable prisoners to learn Buddhist Scriptures.
9. The Government or Boards, Municipalities or other local authorities shall-
 - (i) Close their offices within the Union on Uposatha (Sabbath) days;
 - (ii) Close their schools also on Uposatha (Sabbath) days.

Provided that the President may from time to time, by notification, direct any other day to be a holiday in any office, if he is satisfied that because of the nature of business in such office it is inexpedient to close such office on Uposatha days.

10. (i) All ordinary shops licensed by the Government to sell toddy, fermented or distilled liquor or foreign liquor shall be closed on Uposatha days;
- (ii) No liquor shall be sold or served in restaurants on Uposatha days;

(iii) In any hotel no liquor shall be sold or served on Uposatha days in rooms open to the public except that it may be sold or served in lodging rooms.

11. All State public libraries shall be provided with a complete set of Triptaka Pali Texts, the Commentaries, Sub-commentaries and Burmese translations thereof and other suitable Buddhist literature.

12. (i) If there is a sufficient number of students who are desirous of studying Pali in all the State schools within the Union, arrangements shall be made in order to enable them to take Pali like other subjects beginning from the eighth standard and to provide a sufficient number of teachers for the said students;

(ii) It shall be open to any student to take Pali as a subject for all matriculation examinations held within the Union;

(iii) In selecting candidates for appointment to any post, whether by competitive examination or otherwise, the Public Service Commission shall give the same value to Pali as to other subjects.

13. (i) For the purpose of ensuring compliance with any provision of this Act or any order made there under, the President may issue instructions to any authority;

(ii) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such instructions may provide for the following matters:

(a) Installation of an image of the Buddha in a place easily accessible to the public for worship, either in a separate shrine room or in a separate Dhamma Rama in every Court building or group of Court buildings; (b) Arrangement to be made in all State schools for the Buddhist teachers and students to pay their homage to the Buddha, to recite Buddhist Scriptures and to hear sermons on the teachings of the Buddha;

(c) Closing of the Government shops, the Municipal bazaars and the bazaars belonging to other local authorities on Uposatha days;

(d) Provision for the teaching staff and students in all State schools, Universities and their constituent Colleges with reading rooms;

(e) Provision of such reading rooms with Buddhist Scriptures, periodicals and papers;

(f) Assistance to be given by the Government to such public libraries within the Union as require assistance for providing themselves with the Tripitaka Pali Texts, the Commentaries, Sub-commentaries and the Burmese translation thereof.

Source: Smith, Donald Eugene, 1965. *Religion and Politics in Burma*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 332-335.

Appendix V

Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar's Domestic Politics

(1)

8888 Uprising



Source: Bertil Lintner, 2012. *Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's Struggle for Democracy*, Illustrated. Also, Asia News.

(2)

Aung San Suu Kyi Burma's Longtime Pro-Democracy Leader



Source: www.voanews.com

Appendix VI

The 2007 Saffron Revolution in Myanmar

Monks marching through Rangoon during the 2007 uprising.



Source: <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/about-burma/2007-uprising-in-burma/>

Appendix VII

Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008)

The 2008 constitution is the country's third and present constitution of Myanmar. It was published in September 2008 after a referendum and came into force on 31 January 2011. This constitution has 194 pages with 15 'chapters' 457 'provisions' and 5 schedules. The brief narration of this constitution is as follows:

Chapter I. Basic Principles of the Union

Part 1: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Part 2: Basic Principles

Chapter II. State Structure

Chapter III. Head of State-the President and Vice-President

Chapter IV: Legislature

A. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Part 1: The formation of the Pyidaungsu

Part 2: The Head and the Deputy Heads of the respective Hluttaws

Part 3: Performance of duties by the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Part 4: Functions of the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Part 5: Convening the Sessions of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Part 6: Legislation

Part 7: Legislation relating to Other Matters

Part 8: Legislation relating to Union Territories

Part 9: Submission of a Bill

Part 10: Submission of the Union Budget Bill

Part 11: Ordinance

Part 12: Promulgation as Law

B. Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 1: Formation of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 2: Election of the Pyithu Hluttaw Chairperson

Part 3: Election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 4: Functions of the Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 5: Performance and termination of duties of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 6: Formation of the Pyithu Hluttaw Committee, Commission and Bodies

Part 7: Term of the Pyithu Hluttaw

Part 8: Qualification of the Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives

Part 9: Disqualification of the Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives

Part 10: Qualifications of the Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives who are the Defence Services personnel

Part 11: Convening the Pyithu Hluttaw Session

Part 12: Submission of Bill

C. Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 1: Formation of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 2: Election of Chairperson of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 3: Election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 4: Duties of the Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 5: Performance and termination of duties of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 6: Formation of the Amyotha Hluttaw Committees, Commissions and Bodies

Part 7: Term of the Amyotha Hluttaw

Part 8: Qualifications of the Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives

Part 9: Qualifications of the Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives who are the Defence Services personnel

Part 10: Convening of the Amyotha Hluttaw Session

Part 11: Submission of Bill

D. Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw

Part 1: Formation of the Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw

Part 2: Election of Chairperson of the Region or State Hluttaw

Part 3: Election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw

Part 4: Duties of the Speaker of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw

Part 5: Performance and termination of duties of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw

Part 6: Formation of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw Committees and Bodies

Part 7: Term of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw

Part 8: Qualifications of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw Representatives

Part 9: Qualifications of the Region Hluttaw or the State Hluttaw Representatives who are the Defence Services personnel

Part 10: Convening of the Region Hluttaw or State Hluttaw Sessions

Part 11: Legislation

Part 12: Submission of Bill

Part 13: Submission of the Region or State Budget Bill

Part 14: Promulgation of Law

Part 15: Self-Administered Division and Self-Administered Zone Leading Bodies

Part 16: Duties, powers and rights of the representative of the Pyithu Hluttaw, the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Region or State Hluttaw

Part 17: Effect of Laws

Chapter V. Executive

A. The Union Government

Part 1: Formation of the Union Government

Part 2. Formation of the National Defence and Security Council

Part 3: Powers and Functions of the President

Part 4: The Executive Power of the Union Government

Part 5: Formation of the Financial Commission

Part 6: Duties and Functions of the Financial Commission

Part 7: Taxes and Revenues to be paid to the Union Fund

B. The Union Ministers and the Deputy Ministers

Part 1: Appointment of the Union Ministers

Part 2: Impeachment of the Union Ministers

Part 3: Appointment of Deputy Ministers

Part 4: Term of office, resignation, termination of duties and filling vacancy of the Union Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Part 5: The Attorney General of the Union and the Deputy Attorney General

Part 6: The appointment of the Attorney General of the Union

Part 7: Impeachment of the Attorney General of the Union

Part 8: Appointment of the Deputy Attorney General

Part 9: Term of office, resignation, termination of office, filling the vacancy of the Attorney General of the Union and the Deputy Attorney General

Part 10: Auditor-General of the Union and the Deputy Auditor-General

Part 11: Appointment of the Auditor-General of the Union

Part 12: Impeachment of the Auditor-General of the Union

Part 13: Appointment of the Deputy Auditor-General

Part 14: Term of office, resignation, termination of office, filling the vacancy of the Auditor-General of the Union and the Deputy Auditor-General

Part 15: Formation of the Union Civil Services Board

Part 16: The Region Government or the State Government

Part 17: Formation of the Region Government or State Government

Part 18: Executive powers of the Region or State Government

Part 19: Charges and Taxes to be collected by the Region or State Government

Part 20: Office of the Region or State Government

C. Chief Minister of the Region or State

Part 1: Appointment of the Chief Minister of the Region or State

D. Ministers of the Region or Ministers of the State

Part 1: Appointment of the Ministers of the Region or Ministers of the State

Part 2: Impeachment of the Chief Minister of the Region or State or any Minister

Part 3: Resignation, termination of office, filling the vacancy of the Chief Minister or Minister of the Region or State

Part 4: Advocate-General of the Region or Advocate-General of the State

Part 5: Appointment of the Advocate-General of the Region or State

Part 6: Impeachment of the Advocate-General of the Region or State

Part 7: Resignation, termination of office, filling vacancy of the Advocate-General of the Region or State

Part 8: Auditor-General of the Region or Auditor-General of the State

Part 9: Appointment of the Auditor-General of the Region or the Auditor-General of the State

Part 10: Impeachment of the Auditor-General of the Region or Auditor-General of the State

Part 11: Resignation, termination of office, filling vacancy of the Auditor-General of the Region or the Auditor-General of the State

Part 12: Administrative Body of the Self-Administered Division or Self-Administered Zone

Part 13: Formation of Leading Bodies of the Self-Administered Division and the Self-Administered Zone

Part 14: Executive Powers of the Leading Bodies of the Self-Administered Division or Self-Administered Zone

Part 15: Office of the Leading Bodies of the Self-Administered Division or Self-Administered Zone

Part 16: Administration of Nay Pyi Taw, the Union Territory

Part 17: Formation of the Nay Pyi Taw Council

Part 18: Resignation, termination of office, filling vacancy of the Chairperson and members of the Nay Pyi Taw Council

Part 19: Office of Nay Pyi Taw Council

Part 20: Administration of district and Township

Part 21: Administration of Ward and Village-tract

E. Civil Services Personnel

Chapter VI. Judiciary

A. Formation of Courts

B. Supreme Court of the Union

Part 1: Constitution of the Supreme Court of the Union

Part 2: Original Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the Union

Part 3: Judiciary Budget

Part 4: Submission of the Judiciary Situation

Part 5: Appointment of the Chief Justice of the Union and the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union

Part 6: Qualifications of the Chief Justice of the Union and the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union

Part 7: Impeachment of the Chief Justice of the Union and Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union

Part 8: Term of the Chief Justice of the Union and the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Union

C. High Courts of the Region or High Courts of the State

Part 1: Formation of High Courts of the Region or High Courts of the State

Part 2: Jurisdictions of High Courts of the Region or High Courts of the State

Part 3: Appointment of the Chief Justice of the High Court of the Region or High Courts of the State

Part 4: Qualifications of the Chief Justice of the High Courts of the Region or the High Courts of the State and Judges of the High Court of the Region or the High Courts of the State

Part 5: Impeachment of the Chief Justice of the High Courts of the Region or the High Courts of the State and Judges of the High Court of the Region or the High Courts of the State

Part 6: Term of the Chief Justice of the High Courts of the Region or the High Courts of the State and Judges of the High Court of the Region or the High Courts of the State

Part 7: Courts under the Supervision of the High Courts of the Region or the High Courts of the State

Part 8: Jurisdiction of the District Courts and Township Courts

D. Courts-Martial

E. The Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 1: Formation of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 2: Duties and Functions of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 3: Effect of the Resolution of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 4: Submission to obtain the interpretation, Resolution and opinion of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 5: Appointment of the Chairperson and member of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 6: Qualifications of the Member of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 7: Impeachment of the Chairperson and the Members of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Part 8: Term of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union

Chapter VII. Defence Services

Chapter VIII. Citizen, Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Citizens

Chapter IX. Election

Part 1: Election of People's Representatives to the Hluttaws

Part 2: Recalling a representative of the Hluttaws

Part 3: Formation of the Union Election Commission

Part 4: Duties of the Union Election Commission

Part 5: Impeachment of the Chairperson or the Members of the Union Election Commission

Part 6: Resolutions and Functions of the Union Election Commission

Chapter X. Political Parties

Part 1: Formation of the Political Parties

Part 2: The right of Non-Existence of Political Parties

Chapter XI. Provisions on State of Emergency

Chapter XII. Amendment of the Constitution

Chapter XIII. State Flag, State Seal, National Anthem and the Capital

Chapter XIV. Transitory Provisions

Chapter XV. General Provisions

Schedule 1: Union Legislative List (Refer to Section 96)

1. Union Defence and Security Sector
2. Foreign Affairs Sector
3. Finance and Planning Sector
4. Economic Sector
5. Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Sector
6. Energy, Electricity, Mining and Forestry Sector
7. Industrial Sector
8. Transport, Communication and Construction Sector
9. Social Sector
10. Management Sector
11. Judicial Sector

Schedule 2: Region or State Legislative List (Refer to Section 188)

1. Finance and Planning Sector
2. Economic Sector
3. Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Sector

4. Energy, Electricity, Mining and Forestry Sector
5. Industrial Sector
6. Transport, Communication and Construction Sector
7. Social Sector
8. Management Sector

Schedule 3: List of Legislation of the Leading Body of Self-Administered Division or Self-Administered Area (Refer to Section 196)

Schedule 4: Form of Oaths or Affirmation (Refer to Section 125)

Schedule 5: Taxes Collected by Region or States (Refer to Section 254)

Source:https://www.biicl.org/files/6649_handout_-_some_key_provisions_of_the_myanmar_constitution.pdf

Appendix VIII

Some Important Sections of the 2008 Constitution

Article (20)

- (a) The Defence Services is the sole patriotic defence force which is strong, competent and modern;
- (b) The Defence Services has the right to independently administer and adjudicate all affairs of the armed forces;
- (c) The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services is the Supreme Commander of all armed forces;
- (d) The Defence Services has the right to administer for participation of the entire people in Union security and defence;
- (e) The Defence Services is mainly responsible for safeguarding the no disintegration of the Union, the non-disintegration of National solidarity and the perpetuation of sovereignty;
- (f) The Defence Services is mainly responsible for safeguarding the Constitution.

Article (59)

Qualifications of the President and Vice-Presidents are as follows:

- (a) shall be loyal to the Union and its citizens;
- (b) shall be a citizen of Myanmar who was born of both parents who were born in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Union and being Myanmar Nationals;
- (c) shall be an elected person who has attained at least the age of 45;
- (d) shall be well acquainted with the affairs of the Union such as political, administrative, economic and military;
- (e) shall be a person who has resided continuously in the Union for at least 20 years up to the time of his election as President;

Proviso: An official period of stay in a foreign country with the permission of the Union shall be counted as a residing period in the Union;

- (f) shall he himself, one of the parents, the spouse, one of the legitimate children or their spouses not owe allegiance to a foreign power, not be subject of a foreign power or citizen of a foreign country. They shall not be persons entitled to enjoy the rights and privileges of a subject of a foreign government or citizen of a foreign country;
- (g) shall possess prescribed qualifications of the President, in addition to qualifications prescribed to stand for election to the Hluttaw.

Article (60)

- (a) The President shall be elected by the Presidential Electoral College.
- (b) The Presidential Electoral College shall be formed with three groups of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives as follows:
 - (i) group formed with elected Hluttaw representatives in the Hluttaw with an equal number of representatives elected from Regions and States;
 - (ii) group formed with elected Hluttaw representatives in the Hluttaw elected on the basis of township and population;
 - (iii) group formed with the Defence Services personnel Hluttaw representatives nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services for the said two Hluttaws;
- (c) Each group shall elect a Vice-President from among the Hluttaw representatives or from among persons who are not Hluttaw representatives;
- (d) The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and a Body comprising the Heads and Deputy Heads of the two Hluttaws in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall scrutinize whether or not the Vice-Presidents possess the qualifications prescribed for the President.
- (e) The Presidential Electoral College comprising all the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives shall elect by vote one of the three Vice-Presidents who are Presidential candidates, as the President;

- (f) Necessary law shall be enacted for the election of President and Vice-Presidents.

Article (109)

The Pyithu Hluttaw shall be formed with a maximum of 440 Hluttaw representatives as follows:

- (a) not more than 330 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives elected prescribing electorate in accord with law on the basis of township as well as population or combining with an appropriate township which is contiguous to the newly-formed township if it is more than 330 townships;
- (b) not more than 110 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives who are the Defence Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services in accord with the law.

Article (141)

The Amyotha Hluttaw shall be formed with a maximum of 224 Hluttaw representatives as follows:

- (a) The Amyotha Hluttaw representatives elected in an equal number of 12 representatives from each Region or State inclusive of relevant Union territories and including one representative from each Self-Administered Zone;
- (b) 56 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives who are the Defence Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services in accord with the law, four representatives from each Region or State inclusive of relevant Union territories;
- (c) in forming the Amyotha Hluttaw as mentioned in Sub-Sections (a) and (b), the relevant Union territory means the Union territories, prescribed under the constitution, or prescribed by law of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which are inclusive in State or Division, Region or State for the purpose of electing the Amyotha Hluttaw representative.

Article (436)

- (a) If it is necessary to amend the provisions of Sections 1 to 48 in Chapter 1, Sections 49 to 56 in Chapter II, Sections 59 and 60 in Chapter III, Sections 74, 109, 141 and 161 in Chapter IV, Sections 200, 201, 248 and 276 in Chapter V, Sections 293, 294, 305, 314 and 320 in Chapter VI, Sections 410 to 432 in Chapter XI and Sections 436 in Chapter XII of this Constitution, it shall be amended with the prior approval of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of all the representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, after which in a nation-wide referendum only with the votes of more than half of those who are eligible to vote;
- (b) Provisions other than those mentioned in Sub-Section (a) shall be amended only by a vote of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of all the representatives of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Source: [https://www.biicl.org/files/6649_handout -
_some_key_provisions_of_the_myanmar_constitution.pdf](https://www.biicl.org/files/6649_handout_-_some_key_provisions_of_the_myanmar_constitution.pdf)

Also, <https://www.myanmar-law-library.org/law-library/laws-and-regulations/constitutions/2008-constitution.html>

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