

SYNOPSIS

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

A Synopsis of the Thesis Submitted to Jadavpur University for the Award of
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By

TASLIMA AKTAR

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA-700032, INDIA

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Introduction

The historical process of Myanmar's shift from a "Crown Colony" to an autonomous nation-state is a distinct and noteworthy instance of political change within the Southeast Asian region. Myanmar/Burma is one of the notable countries of Southeast Asia. It is bordered by India, Bangladesh, 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. 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.

The political history of Burma before the British conquest can be summarized as a never-ending struggle among at least four different indigenous groups- Mons or Talaings, Shans, and Arakannese and between the peoples of Burma and their neighbours. The nation-building process in Myanmar began in the eleventh century. During 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. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Myanmar was one of the most powerful states in Southeast Asia. The British colonial power captured Myanmar in 1885. However, the British government did not directly rule Myanmar; rather, they did so through the local elites, such as ethnic leaders who were under British control. Britain made Burma a territory of India in 1886, with the capital at Rangoon. Then, 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 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)”. 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.

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). 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.

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”. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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).

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. 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. 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. 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. 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 Burma/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. 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, 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.

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.

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.

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. Harvey 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. Harvey, *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. Furnivall 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. Taylor, 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. Cady 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), 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 ascendance, 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 Smith 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. Trager 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 Tinker 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 his book, *From Sangha to Laity: Nationalist Movements of Burma: 1920-1940 (1980)*, U Maung Maung 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 Singh 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. Steinberg 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. Steinberg, *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 Mukherjee 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 Maung 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.

South-East Asia People's Struggle and Political Identity (1998) edited by Rameshwar P. Sinha and Surya Dandekar. 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 Smith has bandied 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 Fink 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-U 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 South 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 Kundu 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.

Sunjay Chandiramani 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. 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 Kipgen 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.

The 1988 Uprising in Myanmar (2012) written by Maung Maung 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.

“The Political Role of the Military in Myanmar (2014)” In this working paper HNIN YI 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 Devi 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.

Marco Bunte 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.

A New Constitution for Myanmar: Towards Consensus on an Inclusive Federal Democracy (2022) by W. Elliot Bulmer 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.

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.

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.

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.

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' 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>.

Chapterization

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.

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