

**SOCIAL CONDITIONS WHICH UNDERLIE THE
EMERGENCE OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN
MYANMAR (1920-40)**

Ph.D (DISSERTATION)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on the premise that the Myanmar nationalist movement of the colonial era had its main roots in the prevailing social conditions of that time. The British Liberal Education system had been established to produce an educated class of people, deemed to be an essential adjunct to creating and operating various aspects of the colonial administration machinery. Some of the new educated class fulfilled the original expectations albeit some became educated revolutionaries who gravitated to nationalist groups. This latter class initiated the formation of Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) and General Council of Buddhist Associations (GCBA), and became leaders in these nationalist movements. The stated political goal of GCBA was national freedom. But before Home Rule was in sight, adversities such as British government instigations, internal splits and factions, political and personal factors, and financial constraints all combined to gradually weaken the organization. By 1930 it had lost the political leadership and had fragmented into insignificance. In the same year, in 1930, another political entity the Dobama Asiayone emerged. Its broad party leadership featured not only indigenous business, but also progressive elements, and those conversant with modern political thought and practices. The Dobama Asiayone stated political policy was to strive for complete independence, outside the British Empire. With its modern outlook, the workers class and the peasants class were viewed as the twin pillars of the country. In addition to gaining the support and active involvement of the workers and peasants, similar support of the students and youth activists was also achieved by the Dobama Asiayone, during its mission to lead the nationwide anti-colonial struggles.

CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	IV
Contents	V
Abbreviation	VI-IX
Introduction	X-XII
Chapter I - British Liberal Education and its impact on Nationalism of Myanmar	1-22
Chapter II - Formation of the Associations and Development of Nationalist Movement during the years 1920-30	23-55
Chapter III - Anti-colonial Struggle Led by Dobama Asiayone	56-76
Conclusion	77-80
Bibliography	81-90