

**THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN MYANMAR
NATIONALIST MOVEMENT
(1920-48)**

Ph.D (DISSERTATION)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is the outcome of a research work reviewing the Role of Literature in Myanmar Nationalist Movements Myanmar fell into the hands of the British following the advents of three Anglo-Myanmar Wars. The Myanmar People, who had always stayed under their own sovereignty, launched into series of anti-British and national liberation movements over the years of subjection with the ultimate aim of getting back the independence that had been lost. In the course of such movements Myanmar literati also played its role using the pen as a weapon. The period from 1920 to 1948 was a notable period in which Myanmar patriots had staged several anti-expansionist and national liberation movements led by YMBA cum GCBA, many literary artists had taken part with fervour in the way that they were best at. They wrote in endorsement of the 1920 students' Boycott, the setting up of national schools and colleges and remarking on the Dyarchy administration, etc.

In the years between 1930 and 1938, they again helped to instigate Myanmar people with writings in order to awaken the spirit of nationalism in movements, the 1938 Yenamyay Strike, the 1300-Uprising and the Indian-Bama riot, etc.

As World War II was breaking out, the anti-British and national liberation movements in Myanmar gained momentum. The Burma Freedom Bloc was formed and, with the help of the Japanese, attempt was made to drive out the expansionist British. Thirty Myanmar Youths, later to be known as the Thirty Comrades, formed Burma Independence Army with the aid of the Japanese. During this period also Myanmar writers applied their penmanship to the task of instigating the people to rise against the British.

The Myanmar are people who cherish independence. Therefore they were resentful of the independence which the Japanese claimed to have given but which proved to be a Sham. In order to be freed from the oppressive cruelty of the Fascist Japanese, Myanmar people revolted against Japanese. Here too, literary artists contributed in part towards the success of the resistance against the Japanese.

On being liberated from the oppressive rule of the Japanese, the Myanmar people once again fell under the administration of the British who had reentered Myanmar. Thus, even against subjection, the Myanmar people had to strive again under the leadership of the AFPFL to attain independence. This time too, the literary and music artists picked up their pens in support of the endeavour for independence. The Myanmar people were able to attain the much anticipated independence through the unity of all the peoples. And thus, it is seen that literature played a very significant role throughout the history of the endeavour for independence.

CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	iv
Introduction	vi
List of Abbreviation	IX
Chapter - I The Role of Literature in Myanmar Student Movement and Peasants Movement	1
Chapter - II The Role of Literature in Myanmar Labour Movement(1938)	36
Chapter - III The Role of Literature in Myanmar Struggle for Independence 1940-48	65
List of Illustration (1)	between 3 and 4
List of Illustration (2)	between 67 and 68
List of Illustration (3)	between 89 and 90
List of Illustration (4)	between 90 and 91
Conclusion	98
Appendix - I	101
Appendix - II	102
Appendix - III	103
Appendix - IV	104
Appendix - V	106
Appendix - VI	107
Appendix - VII	108
Primary Source	112
Bibliography	113