


Nation-Building in Independent Myanmar: A Comparative Study of a History Textbook and a Civic Textbook



Myo Oo*

[*Abstract*]

This article examines the image of the nation of the Union of Myanmar (Burma) by comparing the history textbook and the civic textbook prescribed in state schools during the period of independence from 1948 to 1958. After the Second World War, the political conditions gave the way for the formation of the Union of Myanmar composed of ethnic nationals in Myanmar. To shape the national identity, the newly-founded independent nation in 1948, introduced textbooks in history and civics for the purpose of nation building. The paper concludes that the history textbook illustrated the golden ages of the Myanmar kingdom by way of national consolidation and portrayed ethnic nationals as homogenous; on the other hand, the civic textbook defined a citizen as one who is born and raised in Myanmar; it also included migrant Asians such as Chinese and South Asians in the fold. The history textbook aspired for the national consolidation of ethnic nationals for the strength and prosperity of the country while the civic textbook required cooperation from both ethnic nationals and migrant Asians for peace and development of the country and the world.

* Assistant Professor, the School of Southeast Asia, Busan University of Foreign Studies.
myooo14@gmail.com

Keywords: School history textbook, school civics textbook, citizen, nation-building, Myanmar

I . Introduction

This article examines the image of the nation of the Union of Myanmar (Burma),¹ composed of various ethnicities when it was newly-founded in 1948. For this purpose, a school history textbook and a civics textbook prescribed in state schools were compared.

Modern politics of Myanmar may be easily traced by looking back at its administration by the British. The British colonial administration began in the western coastal part of Rakhine, and the southern coastal area of Taninthayi, after the First Anglo-Myanmar War (1824-1826) (Stewart 1972: 35-56; Woodman 1962: 68-69). After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War (1852), the British took over Lower Myanmar (Nisbet 1901: 8; Vibart 1914: 221). Finally the British completed the annexation of Upper Myanmar in 1885 (Furnivall 1953: 21-16). After which, the British divided Myanmar into two administrative areas: Proper Myanmar, inhabited by major ethnic Burmese and some ethnic minorities, and Frontier Area, composed of Shan, Kachin, and Chin Hills. Since the 1900s, nationalist movements emerged in Proper Myanmar and reached a peak by the 1930's (Mya Han 1991: 58). The Young Men Buddhist Association (YMBA), which asked for the development of Buddhist Burmese, (Myo Oo 2011: 124) led the movement between 1906 and 1920. The General Council of Burmese Association (GCBA), which attempted to practice "Home Rule" (Taylor 1988: iv), led from 1920's to the 1930's. The Myanmar Association, which aimed for independence (Khin Yi 1988: 3), led the movement from 1930 to 1945. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, which decided to form the Union of Myanmar, led the movement from 1945 to 1948. On the eve of the independence of Myanmar, the nationalists led by AFPFL made an agreement with ethnic national leaders to form the Union of Myanmar composed of Proper Myanmar and Frontier Areas

¹ The term "Myanmar" has been used to refer the country, "Burmese" is for the ethnicity.

(Maung Maung 1959: 186-187).

This article is an attempt to figure out the national identity in the Union of Myanmar during the independent time. It was an important moment to inculcate civic knowledge to the citizens of the Union of Myanmar. This study carried out a comparative study of a school history textbook and a civics textbook prescribed during this period.

II. Nation-Building and Education in Myanmar Context

Education is a powerful tool of modern governments to shape national identity. As Chai noted, existing researches proved that some authorities utilized textbooks to shape national identity (Vural and Ozuyanik 2008; Cayire 2009; Lee 2010; Williams 2014; Zaho 2014; Chai 2015: 3). Crawford also noted the crucial role of school textbooks in transmitting ideologies and reflecting knowledge considered important by a powerful group (Crawford 2003: 5; Myo Oo 2012B: 123).

In an article, Chai reviewed literatures on history, civics, and social studies textbooks that fostered nationalism or shaped national identity in some countries such as North Korea, Jordan, Turkey, China, India, Nepal, Ukraine, Singapore, and the United States. Chai annotated researches by Apple (1992), Sleeter (2002), Nassar (2004), vom Hau (2009), and Carney and Madsen (2009) (Chai 2015: 4). To build national identity, political leaders often used state education systems and school curricula to make citizens' national identity consistent with long-term political goals (Chai 2015: 3). Regarding how shaping national identity is carried out through textbooks, Williams on the other hand proved the role of social institutions in developing national identity. One may read his "Nation, State, School, Textbook" in *(Re) Constructing Memories: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation* (2014).

Three articles discuss Myanmar history textbooks and Burmese nationalism: "Historiography and National Identity of Colonial Burma: An Analysis of a Vernacular School History Textbook" (Myo

Oo 2012a); “A Textbook Case of Nation-Building: The Evolution of History Curricula in Myanmar” (Nicolas Salem-Gervais and Rosalie Metro 2012); and “History Textbooks and the Construction of National Identity in Burma” (Ada Chai 2014). In his article, Myo Oo has explained how modern Burmese national identity was portrayed in a national school history textbook during the colonial period. His paper showed how U Ba Than’s history textbook has reconstructed the golden ages such as the First Burmese Kingdom, the Second Burmese Kingdom, and the Third Burmese Kingdom, as well as how he divided the Burmese historical periods in chronicles and conceptualization that discourse Burmese national identity since the colonial period (2012a: 19-20).

Meanwhile, Salem-Gervais and Rosalie Metro’s paper (2012) unravel how and why the contents in state school history textbooks evolved. It also dealt with how respective Myanmar governments used classic nationalist strategies, such as emphasizing the contributions of national heroes, looking back and the golden past, as well as reinventing and projecting national unity (Chai 2015: 7).

Chai’s research (2014) has noted the use of history by the Myanmar State to promote the following ideas:

- (1) the rule of skilled military leaders who are able to defend and unite the nation and improve national development,
- (2) the unity of different national races as one homogenous group for national peace and prosperity,
- (3) the unity of different national races as one homogenous group for national peace and prosperity,
- (3) cautious interactions with “others,” such as foreigners or dissenting ethnic minorities, and
- (4) Buddhism as the State religion (Chai 2015: 2, 4).

Regarding modern civics textbooks imported into Myanmar during the colonial time and transmitted civic knowledge, there is but one research, “Colonial Knowledge Transmitted in British Burma: An analysis of Civic Textbook Prescribed in National School” (Myo Oo 2012b). In this textual analysis, the author highlighted the reasons the General Council of Burmese Association, the leading nationalist association of the period, in transmitting colonial administrative knowledge in the form of modern civic knowledge, to students and the populace. The council wanted to inform people

about freedom, equality, and civic duties such as protecting the country or obeying the law paying taxes, and participating in social activities.

Researches on the history and civics textbooks prescribed during the colonial and the current times abound, but not as the country was about to gain independence, which, this paper assumes as pivotal in forming citizenship in the Union of Myanmar in 1947. This article appraises the efforts and discourses of nation-building in the history and civics textbooks prescribed during the post-independent period, especially between 1948 and 1958.

III. Myanmar History School Textbook

The history textbook for consideration is *Pyidaungzu Myanmar Nainggan Thamine* (History of the Union of Myanmar) (Yangon: Thudamawadi Ponnaitaik, 1956 (Six Edition)) by Ba Shin, a lecturer of the Department of the Myanmar and Far Eastern History, and an ex-major of the Myanmar Army.

The textbook is composed of four parts. Part A, “The Prehistory and Ancient History of Myanmar,” dealt with the migration of ethnic groups into present day Myanmar and their coexistence. Part B, “Feudal Era,” chronicled the accounts from AD 1000 to the First Anglo-Myanmar War (1824-1826). Part C, “Colonization Process in Myanmar,” featured historical accounts during the colonial period, 1826 to 1945. Part D, “The Federal Era,” record the accounts from 1945 to 1948 (Ba Shin 1956: Contents).

Of these, Part B and C are further divided into several chapters. Part B has five chapters: the First National Consolidation Era (1044-1300); the Disunity Era (1300-1539); the Second National Consolidation Era (1539-1600); the Third National Consolidation Era (1600-1752); and the Fourth National Consolidation Era (1752-1824). Part C has four chapters: The Era of the Present of Capitalism (1824-1885); No Resistance Era (1886-1920); The Nationalist Movements Era (1920-1942); and the Japanese Fascism Era (1942- 1945). Please see below:

<Table 1> Contents of School Myanmar History Textbook

Part	Chapter	Title	Subject
A		The Prehistory and Ancient History of Myanmar	The geographical formation of Myanmar
	Chapter 1	The Stone Age (BC 2500- AD 600)	The migration of ethnic groups into present day Myanmar
	Chapter 2	People in Myanmar	The population of the ethnic nationals based on 1930 Census
B		Feudal Era	The history of Myanmar kingdoms
	Chapter 1	First National Consolidation Era	The glory of Bagan Kingdom by the national consolidation
	Chapter 2	Disunity Era	The disunity and emergence of city-states
	Chapter 3	Second National Consolidation Era	The glory of Taungoo Kingdom by the national consolidation
	Chapter 4	Third National Consolidation Era	The glory of Nyaungyan kingdom by the national consolidation
	Chapter 5	Fourth National Consolidation Era	The glory of Konbaung Kingdom by the national consolidation
C		The Capitalist Era (1826-1945)	Accounts of the Colonial Period
	Chapter 1	The Present of Capitalism Era (1824-1885)	The British colonization process
	Chapter 2	No Resistance Era (1886 -1920)	Accounts before the nationalist movement occurs
	Chapter 3	The Nationalist Movements Era (1920-1942)	Accounts of the nationalist movement throughout colonial period
	Chapter 4	The Japanese Fascism Era (1942- 1945)	The state in Myanmar during the Second World War
D		The Union of Myanmar Formation Era	The formation of the Union of Myanmar by the AFPFL led by General Aung San

3.1. *Taiyintha*: Homogenous People of Myanmar

In Part A, the author described the migration of ethnic nationals during the ancient times (Stone Age, Slash-and-Burn-Life Age, and Rice Cultivation Age) in this manner: The migration of Mon-Khmer

and Tibeto-Burman into the area of British Myanmar in the Stone Age; the Salon-Malay in Slash-and-Burn Life Period; and the Mon, Palaung, and Wa in Mon-Khmer group and Pyu and Karen (Ba Shin 1956: 30) in Tibeto-Burman groups in the Rice Cultivation Age. Most of the above-mentioned ethnic groups migrated to Myanmar during the Slash-and-Burn and Rice Cultivation Ages. The cultivation of culture made possible the founding of a city-state. Through trading, they evolved literacy, religion, and arts. Ethnic nationals were perceived to have developed culture and coexistence in the said periods (Ba Shin 1956: 20-36).

The author also listed the ethnicities of the *taiyintha* (ethnic nationals) based on the 1930 Census conducted by the British Colonial Government. The list pegged the total population to over 1,450 million; two-thirds of these were Burmese (the term Myanmar used to refer to ethnic Burmese in the textbook), one-third consisted of other ethnic nationals (135,000), and what remains are foreigners (Ba Shin 1956: 21) such as Europeans, Chinese, and Indians (100,000). Ethnicity was also identified based on language, as ethnic population was determined as it was identified in the 1930 Census (Ba Shin 1956: 21-22). The ethnic groups in British Myanmar in 1930 are as follows:

<Table 2> Ethnic Groups

No.	Ethnic Group	Population
1	Salon-Malay Group	64,000
2	Mon-Palaung Group	84,000
3	Karen Group	1,350,000
4	Burmese Group	9,900,000
5	Thet Group	50,000
6	Kachin Group	150,000
7	Chin Group	350,000
8	Naga Group	40,000
9	Shan Group	1,000,000

3.2. The First National Consolidation

In Part B, the author wrote about the history of Feudal Era, which encompasses the Burmese dynastic history. Unlike previous historians, the author divided history based on the economic system

prevalent in the eras: the First National Consolidation Era (1044-1300); the Disunity Era (1300-1539); the Second National Consolidation Era (1539- 1600); the Third National Consolidation Era (1600-1752); and the Forth National Consolidation Era (1752- 1824). “The Feudalism Era (AD 1000 -1826)” is an account of Burmese dynastic history from Bagan to the Colonial periods. In this, the author claimed that the golden age of the Burmese dynastic history and the construction of the Burmese kingdoms were made possible by way of national consolidation structured on the military conquests of Burmese kings.

The author also separately explained the establishment of the First Myanmar Kingdom in two small sections. The first one is national consolidation in King Anawrahta’s time, the second in King Kyansitha’s, where the Burmese and Mon, the largest ethnic groups in Central Myanmar, consolidated. The author himself preferred the national consolidation by King Kyansittha than that of King Anawrahta. The author also pointed out that King Kyansittha was more interested in national consolidation (Ba Shin 1956: 69) referring the King Kyansitha’s actions, namely, the holding of his wedding to Mon Princess Khin Oo in traditional Mon rituals, alongside the performance of traditional Mon dances and songs; his enthronement which was recorded in stone inscription in Mon language, and where he is recognized as a great king by both Mon and Burmese (Ba Shin 1956: 69); his attempt to solidify Mon-Burmese friendship when he married off his daughter to Nagathamana, a son of a former Mon king. Consequently, he named his grandson Alaungsithu and had him enthroned. The child’s mixed ethnicities satisfied both groups and further enhanced national consolidation (Ba Shin 1956: 71).

Equality between the ethnic groups was observed in the First Myanmar Kingdom. Describing national consolidation of Pagan Period, the author underlined the importance of political strategies and the application of necessary standards in daily life and religious practices of the citizens. For instance, reports stated that King Alaungsithu introduced the standard units of weights, measurement, and currency that enhanced domestic trade and business. During this period, the king equally treated all citizens and emphasized

national consolidation. King Alaungsithu integrated the First Myanmar Kingdom by the policies mentioned above (Ba Shin 1956: 79).

Unlike the First Myanmar Kingdom, wartime was aptly described in Part B's title as the "Disunity Era (1300 - 1539)." As in history textbooks in the colonial period, the Disunity Era meant the period of strife among the city states Sagaing, Pinya, and Inwa (Ba Shin 1956: 103). The author still puts premium on national consolidation, as he emphasized that the wars did not involve ethnic conflict. He also underlined the co-mingling of the Mon and Burmese in lower Myanmar after the later migration in the region.

3.3. The Second National Consolidation (1539-1600)

The Second National Consolidation consists of accounts covering the Taungoo dynastic history, often referred to as the Second Myanmar Kingdom in modern history textbooks. The textbook for consideration wrote that the formation of the Second Myanmar Kingdom began in the time of King Dabinshwehti. As in the national consolidation in the First Myanmar Kingdom, the author described the rise of the Second Myanmar Kingdom into two ways: military power and national consolidation. The author however paid more attention to the national consolidation of King Dabinshwehti than his military success. He also noted that the king never engaged in oppression nor the destruction of Mon culture and traditions after his conquest of Pegu, the old Mon capital near Yangon. The king allowed Mon officials to govern, and the landlords to tend to the lands (Ba Shin 1956: 151). Even his cabinet maintained an equal composition of Mon and Burmese noblemen. This suggests the author's tendency to emphasize the importance of national integration which is also true for the reign of King Shwehti. For the author, the kings provided the Mon a space to integrate, since they were the largest ethnic group in Lower Myanmar. This may be seen in how King Shwehti earned the support from both the Mon and Burmese after his conquest of Pegu (Ba Shin 1956: 151).

Another king who engaged in national consolidation is King Bayinnaung, a brother-in-law of King Dabinshwehti. His governance,

economy, trade, and religion were accounted for, but not his military affairs. The author described King Bayinnaung as a unifier who provided security to his people (Ba Shin 1956: 167). Later on, equality among ethnic groups was discussed. Taking from the ethnic egalitarianism (Ba Shin 1956: 151) of King Dabinshehti, King Bayinnaung adopted a ranking and appointment system through meritocracy that avoided discrimination among the Mon, Shan, and Burmese.

3.4. The Third National Consolidation (1600-1752)

The Third Myanmar Kingdom (1600-1752) mentioned in this textbook is widely recognized as the second half of the Second Myanmar Kingdom in modern Myanmar historical writing. The Third Myanmar Kingdom emerged when King Nyaungyan, (1600-1605), a son of King Bayinnaung, built a new capital in Inwa, an old capital, after the destruction of the Second Myanmar Kingdom in Pegu. The author evaluated two key factors that shaped this period. First was King Anaukelon's positions that prevented of colonization in Myanmar. After Bayinnaung's death, King Nanda, his eldest son, succeeded the throne. In King Nanda's time, Pegu was attacked by the Rakhine king, who gave Thanlyin the seaport of Pegu, as well as to Phillip de Britto, who led the Portuguese soldiers. King Tharlon of Inwa attacked Rhanlyin, which De Britto ruled, consequently driving away the west from Myanmar (Ba Shin 1956: 185).

The second one has to do the reforms the king adopted to help Myanmar's economy recover. The author mentioned King Tharlon as the one who led the economic reforms, which especially benefitted the lower class (Ba Shin 1956: 204). The Third Myanmar Kingdom was strong in its national consolidation policy because of three factors: 1. The military efforts of King Nyaungyan and King Anaukelon that followed King Bayinnaung's national consolidation policy; 2. The effective economic reforms enforced by King Tharlon (1628-1648); 3. Continued foreign relations despite the weakening and collapse of the nation in the time of the successors of King Tharlon (Ba Shin 1956: 213-214). The author considered the

economic gains of the Third Myanmar Kingdom as pivotal in national consolidation.

3.5. The Fourth National Consolidation (1752-1824)

The Fourth National Consolidation period in the history textbook for consideration is usually the first part of the Third Myanmar Kingdom in modern Myanmar history books. This period covers the first half of the Konbaung Period, the last dynasty in Myanmar. The author accounted for the reigns of six of 11 kings. Unlike the other kingdoms, the Fourth Myanmar Kingdom was characterized by way of its military might.

Historically, the country during this period faced grave situations. The southern coastal areas of Taninthayi, Myeik, and Dawe were being claimed by Thailand, and in the west, India is being controlled by the British. The author noted that the challenges compelled King Alaungmintaya to further strengthen the kingdom (Ba Shin 1956: 221-222), by way of military enhancement. The author also noted the reign of King Bodawphaya (King Grand Father), third son of King Alaungmintay, who was able to unify the Rakhine Kingdom up to the Fourth Myanmar Kingdom. Meanwhile, a conquest led by the crown prince, King Bodawphaya's eldest son, attacked Rakhine (Ba Shin 1956: 250).

The Capitalist Period (1826-1945) corresponds to the Colonial Period covering British colonization to the Second World War. This section was divided into four parts: the Capitalist Period (1826-1945), the Passive Period (1886-1920), the Independent Movement Period (1920-1942), and the Fascist Period (1942-1945).

The Capitalist Period started in what is considered the second half of Konbaung Period (1826-1886) in the modern Myanmar history books. The second half of the Konbaung Period covered the reigns of King Bagyidaw, King Thayawaddy, King Pagan, King Mindon (1853-1878), and King Thibaw (1878-1885) until the British invasion hit the country hard.

3.6. The Union of Myanmar Formation Period (1945-1948)

The Union Period covered national consolidation in British Myanmar after the Second World War. This section narrated General Aung San's contributions to the formation of the Union of Myanmar, the split of the AFPFL, his assassination in July 19, 1947, and the emergence of independent Myanmar. In the narrative, the government led by the Aung San insisted that Myanmar be given independence within one year. The government also convened Burmese and other ethnic minorities such as Kachin, Kaya, Karen, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan to form the 5th Union of Myanmar as a means of the national consolidation. Aung San worked hard to carry out the project. The author maintained that the ethnic nationals understood the Burmese ambition to unite (Ba Shin 1956: 351). In other words, the author believed that it was possible to form the 5th Union of Myanmar because the ethnic nationals consented with national consolidation.

Also, the author briefly described the main factors that made possible the rise of the Myanmar Communist Party and the split of AFPFL. Foremost of which is the assassination of Aung San, which also aborted the government (Ba Shin 1956: 352-353). U Nu, who succeeded Aung San, and his other cabinet members, signed a treaty on defense and independence with the British government August 29, 1947 (Ba Shin 1956: 353).

The section on independence was the last item in the history textbook. The author discussed the Nu-Attlee Agreement of October 17, 1947 signed by the Myanmar Provisional government's Prime Minister U Nu with United Kingdom Prime Minister Clement Attlee, which certified Myanmar independence, and set the day of Myanmar independence of January 4, 1948 as also the foundation of the 5th Union of Myanmar (Ba Shin 1956: 354).

3.7. Discussion

Myanmar modern historiography has changed during the colonial period. A. P. Phayre, administrator-scholar, published *History of Burma*, which successfully acknowledged Myanmar (the British

Burma) as a multi-ethnic society. Another milestone in Myanmar historiography is U Ba Than's school history textbook *Kyaung Thone Myanmar Yazawin*, which coined the golden ages of Myanmar and introduced the First, Second, and Third Myanmar Kingdoms in Myanmar history. Historiography emerged on the eve of the 1947 independence seeking national consolidation of all ethnic groups in Myanmar across time. This ethos is not lost on school history textbooks.

From the start, the ethnic diversity of Myanmar was pointed out by the history school textbook prescribed during the period of independence. Multi-ethnicities were said to have existed in Myanmar since the prehistoric times, as Myanmar kingdoms were founded in multi-ethnic contexts. This multi-ethnicity stretched to colonial times. The textbook assessed the formation of the Myanmar kingdoms, locating their golden ages of cultural and economic development as well as the gains of national consolidation which eventually led to the formation of the Union of Myanmar after the Second World War. The history textbook prescribed at the independent time assumed a basic ideology: that Myanmar was a nation composed of many ethnicities that participated in national consolidation and the creation of a homogeneous population.

IV. Civics School Textbook

Civic education was imported to Myanmar during the colonial period as part of modern education. The initial purpose of Civics was to impart British Imperial ideology to the colonial populace. In those days, Myanmar educators prescribed Civics in national schools to impart civic awareness. It became more necessary in shaping the citizens of the independent Myanmar. This section analyzes how a prescribed post-independence Civics textbook was produced to educate citizens of the Union of Myanmar.

4.1 Civic Education during the Period of Independence

The civics textbook for consideration is *Pyithu Niti* (Direction of

Citizen) by U Ba Pe, a former administrator and educator. It has two parts: one for Grade 9 students; the other for Grade 10 students.

The first part has 12 chapters, including an introduction; Chapters 1 and 2 discussed the necessity of civic education. Chapters 3 to 6 defined citizenship while Chapters 7 to 12 described the state and its institutions. Meanwhile, the second part described how government works: Chapters 13, 14, and 15 outlined the functions of the administrative bodies; meanwhile, Chapters 16, 17, and 18 discussed the functions of the ministries for the national development; Chapter 19 talked about what the country is all about and the role of a volunteer. Chapters 21 to 24 featured lessons on the importance of the democracy movement in Myanmar and the world after the Second World War.

<Table 3> Contents of Civics School Textbook

Chapter	Title	Subject
1	Meaning of civic education and basic characteristics	Social character of human being
2	Society and Unity	The formation of a society
3	Citizenship, its Characteristics	Definition and characteristics of a citizen
4	Characteristics which cancel a Citizenship	Characteristics of a citizen who are ineligible
5	Citizen's Responsibility	The responsibility of a citizen
6	Citizen's right	The rights of a citizen
7	The Government	The formation of a government
8	The State	The definition and obligation of a state
9	The State's Policy	The duties of the government
10	The Formation of the State	The formation of a state
11	The President and the Parliament	The role of a president and the parliament
12	The Federal government	The formation of the Union of Myanmar government
13	The State and Government	The description of administrative bodies

Chapter	Title	Subject
14	Laws and Administration	The description of legislative system
15	The State and Defense	The department of Defense and Security
16	The State and Social Welfare (1)	National development: Education
17	The State and Social Welfare (2)	National Development: Health
18	The State and Social Welfare (3)	National Development: Transportation
19	Volunteering	The needs of volunteer work in Myanmar
20	Local Governments	The formation of local governments
21	World's Development and Myanmar	The relation of the world's development and Myanmar
22	Peace	The need of peace for the world's development
23	Human Rights	The importance of human right
24	Democracy	The description of democratic values

4.2. The Social Character of a Human Being

In the first chapter, man is described by the author as fundamentally a social being. Civic then is important as it outlines man's duties and responsibilities to society (Ba Pe 1953: 2). Furthermore, society is multifarious, which makes civics essential (Ba Pe 1953: 5).

The second chapter emphasis man's being a social animal, pacing Aristotle (Ba Pe 1953: 17), and related how it helped evolve the formation of a nation. Societies have been founded on the family as the basic unit, clans were forged by kinship and the need for collective protection. As population increased, the clan grew into a tribe, which later on developed culture and formed ethnicity or a nation (Ba Pe 1953: 17-19). This is something observable in the formation of the Union of Myanmar, which integrated ethnic minorities into the fold immediately after independence.

The author theorized that Myanmar emerged out of this same human process of nation formation, which consequently grew larger

communities like the League of Nations in the 20th century. Cooperation among member-countries was forged and the league grew into the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War (Ba Pe 1953: 20-21). The textbook featured the charter signed by world leaders establishing the UN in July 26, 1945, as well as Myanmar's application for membership communicated on February 27, 1948. The country was accepted in the UN in April 19, 1948 (Ba Pe 1953: 21). This sojourn into modern history emphasized once more the importance of Civics as the world finds itself growing into a larger community. International relations were deemed important (Ba Pe 1953: 22).

4.3. The Definition of Citizen

Lessons from Chapters 3 to 6 accounts for citizenship: Chapter 3 defined what a citizen is; Chapter 4 discusses the characteristics of a citizen who is in-eligible; Chapter 5 talked about citizen responsibility; and Chapter 6, citizen's rights.

The author defined a citizen as “a person who has to fulfill the duty of the state and who has rights,” again pacing Aristotle. He adds that because of this “one cannot be eligible to become a citizen if he is not dutiful, even though he is a citizen by law” (Ba Pe 1953: 27).

For the author, people living in the country may be classified into two categories. The first one is a citizen or *taiyintha*, composed of the Burmese majority and the ethnic minorities (Ba Pe 1953: 28). Taiyintha is one who is born and raised in the country. A foreigner may also acquire nationality in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (Ba Pe 1953: 28).

The second one is any individual who meets the citizenship requirements of the Union of Myanmar as stipulated in the 1947 Constitution. One may acquire Myanmar citizenship if: one was born to native parents; one has grandparents born in Myanmar; one was born to parents who are citizens; one whose parents were born British; one has stayed in Myanmar 8 to 10 years from January 1, 1942; one wants to live in Myanmar forever.

Chapter 4 describes the possible disqualifications of citizenship, which delved on unpatriotic actions such as lack of knowledge, selfishness, and disobedience of laws (Ba Pe 1953: 37). One may also be disqualified by way of economic difficulties, strong attachment to a political party, and preference of individual over collective interests (Ba Pe 1953: 42-44).

Chapter 5 outlines the duties and responsibilities of citizens. The author maintained that the more society develops, the heavier the responsibilities for the citizen. For the author, obligations of citizenship are part of everyday life. When one cannot fulfill obligations harmony in the state is disturbed (Ba Pe 1953: 44-45). As life changed for the past 100 years, and developments in science, education, economy, transportation, and politics has made it increasingly complex, people are required to understand it and be responsible for their immediate and larger communities (Ba Pe 1953: 46-48).

Chapter 6 laid out the rights of the citizens. Rights are part of his participation in society, and must be protected at all times (Ba Pe 1953: 62).

4.4. Freedom and Equality in the Union of Myanmar

Lessons from Chapters 7 to 12 describe the structure of the administrative agencies, including the functions of the state. While Chapters 7 and 8 explained the rationale and obligations of the state, Chapters 9 to 12 outlined the policies and configuration of the Union of Myanmar government.

Chapter 7 bears the title State and Government. Pacing European scholars, the author explains what a state is and the factors that forms it.

Chapter 8 is titled the Duty of a Government. In here, the author explains what nations are all about. According to the author, a state is an organization composed of citizens, and in order to further include all in its fold, it must organize systematically operate the government which was established by way of national sovereignty emanating from the citizens. The author also stated that

while a state is an organization composed of all citizens, the government is a small administrative body composed of selected representatives (Ba Pe 1953: 80f).

As representatives of the state, the government is obligated to rule as the citizens wish (Ba Pe 1953: 80f).

Meanwhile, Chapter 9 is titled the Basic Policy of the State. This chapter explains freedom and equality as enacted by the 1947 Constitution. Chapter 10 is the Formation of the Nation. The author narrated how the Union of Myanmar was formed through national consolidation after the Second World War. It also traces the history of Myanmar from the time of Myanmar kings and the colonial period, to the ethnic and geographic integration that led to the striving for independence. The book sported a clearly anti-colonial perspective that valued, among others, the contribution of General Aung San in the movement for national consolidation that led to the formation of the “union” that imbued rights to its citizenry and formed the government.

Chapter 11 on the other hand outlined the functions of the President and Parliament. It detailed how a president is elected as well as his duties and responsibilities. A president is elected from members of Upper and Lower Parliaments by the secret balloting, and serves only twice. A full term is composed of five years (Ba Pe 1953: 127).

Chapter 12 is titled the Federal Government, and contains what had been articulated in Chapters 10 and 11. The legitimacy of the independent government was also elaborated in this chapter. The author reiterated that the Chin, Karen, Kachin, Mon, and Shan already existed and co-mingled freely in Myanmar, a rich country of national resources, throughout history, from the time of Dagaung to Mandalay to the founding of the Union of Myanmar, when all consolidated. He argued that the Myanmar suffered when the United Kingdom occupied it in 1886 (Ba Pe 1953: 139). The author reiterated the importance of nationalists like General Aung San in the campaign for independence. Differences in ethnicity, language, thought, and religions were bridged as the Union of Myanmar strived for national solidarity, inspired by the national spirit of

taiyintha (Ba Pe 1953: 139-148).

Chapters 13 to 15 account for the governing agencies of the Union of Myanmar. Chapter 13 explained administration from the village level to the state level administration of the Cabinet. Chapter 14 discussed the judicial and legislative systems. Chapter 15 elaborated on defense and security, and the institutions of the military, police, and prisons. These chapters explained the three main pillars of the Union: legislation, administration and judiciary.

4.5. The Development of the State

Lessons from Chapter 16 to 20 discuss the functions of administrative agencies. Chapters 16, 17, and 18 dealt with education, health, and agriculture while 19 stressed the importance of volunteerism. Chapter 20 talked about local administration.

Chapter 16 particularly discusses education in general, criticized its dispensation during the colonial period, and explained how it changed in the independent period. Chapter 17 accounted for the government's health services. Chapter 17 discussed agriculture and forestry, as 65 % of Myanmar citizens are farmers (Ba Pe 1953: 141-146).

Chapter 18 delves into transportation and infrastructure (Ba Pe 1953: 151) while Chapter 19 discussed social welfare. Local administration was discussed in Chapter 20 (Ba Pe 1953: 182-184).

4.6. The World and Myanmar

Chapter 21 elaborates on Myanmar's relation with the world. Given that the world has become borderless by way of progress in science, technology, and economy in the last 100 years, Myanmar has found itself connecting with the world (Ba Pe 1953: 206). The author emphasized that this necessitated a forging of international relations.

Chapter 22 talks about the emergence and importance of the League of Nations (1930-1946) that later became the United Nations (UN). The league was described as pivotal in ending the First World War, and much later on, campaigning for lasting peace (Ba Pe 1953:

215-216). The author also explained the structure and functions of the UN, as well as its purposes: to be a forum where countries deemed equals may lobby for peace; to be a platform where a set number of members with particular tenures dialogue (Ba Pe 1953: 227-228); and to provide access to a World Court of Justice where disputes may be raised. 68 countries became members of the UM in 1951. In 1947, every member country agreed to teach about the UN in schools. The success or failure of the UN depended on the participation of member countries (Ba Pe 1953: 236-237). As a member, Myanmar is expected to cooperate with the international community to maintain world peace and stability.

4.7. Discussion

Administrators and educators in Myanmar imparted civic knowledge during the colonial period and the independent period. During the colonial period, the British administrators taught civic education to teach British Imperial ideology; Myanmar intellectuals prescribed civics in national schools to educate people about modern administrative knowledge. In the independent period, the state conveyed civic awareness to the citizens of the inclusive Union of Myanmar.

The civics textbook prescribed in during independent period situated the country in a multi-cultural context. For the textbook, national politics was formative in the consolidation process. The textbook emphasized man's being a social animal who could not avoid relating with other people and the world. This is a fundamental principle that hold citizens of the Union of Myanmar responsible for forging solidarity among themselves, and with the larger world. The textbook educates as well as it imparts understanding about democracy and the multiculturalism that built its national consolidation. In short, this textbook imparted civic knowledge and conveys a sense of spiritual and social unity to produce members of the union and the world.

V. Conclusion

In this article, a comparative study of a Myanmar history school textbook and a civics school textbook prescribed in state schools during the independent period (1948 to 1958) was carried out. The history textbook portrays the golden ages of the Myanmar kingdoms and narrated the process of national consolidation that homogenized all ethnic nationals. On the other hand, the Civics textbook defines citizenship for all dwelling in Myanmar, including migrant Asians, Chinese, and Indians, who acquired nationality. It may be inferred that a dichotomy exists in the history textbook and the Civics textbook. The history textbook posit national consolidation of all ethnic nationals as a requirement for national strength and prosperity; the Civics textbook meanwhile require the cooperation of all citizens to achieve peace and development in the region and the world.

References

- Apple, M. W. 1992. The Text an Cultural Politics. *Educational Researcher*, 21 (7): 4-9.
- Ba Aye, U. 1934. *Pyi-ye Pyi-ya* (Direction of Citizen). Yangon: Pyigyí Mandaing Ponnaitaik.
- Ba Pe, U. 1953. *Ahettan Kyang Thone Pyithuniti* (The Civics Textbook Prescribed for High School Students). Yangon:
- Ba Shin, Bhomu. 1956. *Pyidaungzu Myanma Nainggan Thamine* (History of the Union of Myanmar). Sixth Edition. Yangon: Thudamawady Ponnaitaik.
- Ba Than, U. 1990. *Myanmar Yazawin* (Prescribed Myanmar History School Textbook). Ninth Edition. Yangon: Ministry of Information.
- Cayire, K. 2009. Preparing Turkey for the European Union: Nationalism, National Identity and 'Otherness' in Turkey's New Textbooks. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 30(1): 39-55.
- Furnivall, John Sydenham. 1958. Burma: Past and Present. *Far Easter Survey*, 22: 21-26.

- Khin Yi. 1988. *The DoBama Movement in Burma 1930-1938*. New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program.
- Lay Maung. 1960. *Myanmar Naingan Alokethama Hlutshamhu Thamine* (History of Myanmar Political Movements). Yangon: Sapei Beikman Ponnaitaik.
- Lee, D. B. 2010. Portrays of non-North Koreans in North Korean Textbooks and the Formation of National Identity. *Asian Studies Review*, 34(3): 349-369.
- Maung Maung. 1959. *Burma's Constitution*. The Hague: Najhoff.
- _____. 1989. *Burmese Nationalist Movement, 1940-1948*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Mya Han. 1991. *Koloni-khit Myanma Thamine Abidan* (Dictionary of Myanmar History in Colonial Period). Yangon: Tekkatho-mya Thamine Thutethana Uzihtana.
- Myo Oo. 2011. The Covert Objective of YMBA (1906-1920) and Its Activities. *History and Boundary*, (81):105-128.
- _____. 2012a. Historiography and National Identity of Colonial Burma: An Analysis of a Vernacular School History Textbook. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 15 (2): 1-26.
- _____. 2012b. Colonial Knowledge Transmitted in British Burma: An Analysis of Civic Textbook Prescribed in National School, *The Kanda Journal of Global and Area Studies*, (3): 121-140.
- Nasser, R. 2004. Exclusion and the Making of Jordanian National Identity: An Analysis of School Textbooks. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 10(2): 221-249.
- Nisbet, John. 1901. *Burma under British Rule and Before 1*. London: Archibald Constable.
- Sleeter, C. E. 2002. State Curriculum Standards and the Shaping of Student Consciousness. *Social Justice*, 8-25.
- Stewart, A. T. A. 1972. *The Pagoda War*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Taylor, Robert H. 1996. The Traditional and the Modern in English-Language Myanmar Studies. Traditions in Current Perspective: Proceedings of the Conference on Myanmar and Southeast Asian Studies, 15-17 November 1995. Yangon. Yangon: Universities Histories Historical Research Centre.

- Vibart, Henry M. 1941. *The Life of General Sir Harry H. N. D. Prendergast*. London: Eveleigh Nash.
- Vom Hau, M. 2009. Unpacking the School: Textbooks, Teachers, and the Construction of Nationhood in Mexico, Argentina, and Peru. *Latin American Research Review*, 44(3): 127-154.
- Vural, Y., and Ozuyanik, E. 2008. Redefining Identity in the Turkish-Cypriot School History Textbooks: A Step towards a United Federal Cyprus. *South European Society and Politics*, 13(2): 133-154.
- Williams, J. H. (ed.). 2014. Nation, State, School, Textbook' in *(Re)Constructing Memories: School Textbooks and the Imagination of the Nation*. Washington, D.C.: Sense Publisher. 1-9.
- Woodman, Dorothy. 1962. *The Making of Burma*. London: Cresset Press.
- Zhao, Z. 2004. Pedagogization of National Identity through Textbook Narratives in China: 1902-1948. *Citizenship Studies*, 18(1): 99-112.

Received: Apr. 18, 2016; Reviewed: Jan. 23, 2017; Accepted: June 8, 2017

