

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SAI WANSAI is the nom de guerre of Sai Myo Win born in 1950, in Myanmar's Shan State. Belonging to the Shan people, a Tai ethnic group of Southeast Asia, he has been a lifelong activist in the Shan political scene from childhood to the present day.

As a schoolboy, he was an active member of the Tai Youth Association and later at Mandalay University became keenly interested in Shan literature and culture. After leaving university, he joined the armed struggle with the Shan resistance movement, before going into exile in Thailand. Following five years in exile, he immigrated to Germany where he was eventually naturalised as a German citizen.

During his political career, he has been secretary of the Shan Literature and Cultural Committee at Mandalay University; general secretary of the exiled Shan Democratic Union (SDU); has worked as an international emissary for the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) party, which won the majority vote in Shan State during the 1990 elections – before the result was annulled by the military regime – and has served as a representative of the Shan people at the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), The Hague, Netherlands.

He is married with two daughters, and currently lives with his family not far from the city of Hamburg in Germany.

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"SAI Wansai is an astute Shan political analyst, who has written extensively on Myanmar's ethnic conflict and political situation. His new book, *Tracking the Transition: The Path from Quasi-civilian Rule to Fully Fledged Democracy*, brings together his most important articles, and for the first time makes these available to a wider audience. As he points out, after decades of civil war and military rule, there is still a long way to go before ethnic conflict can be solved in Myanmar. Sai Wansai's clear writing provides an excellent guide to navigate through Myanmar's complicated political process to achieve peace and reconciliation. He explains the history of the conflict and conflict dynamics in Myanmar, the key grievances and aspirations of the country's ethnic nationalities, the conceptual differences among the key stakeholders, and he points towards possible solutions. This book is essential reading for anyone wanting to understand ethnic conflict and the current political reform process in Myanmar."

Tom Kramer, Transnational Institute (TNI).

"FOR reflective, insightful and timely analysis, Sai Wansai's writings have become a must-read in following the complexities of ethnic politics during recent years. After decades of conflict, never has the need been greater for national peace and reconciliation, and Sai Wansai discerningly highlights the deep challenges that need to be addressed in the ethnic, political and socio-economic fields, if inclusive agreements and lasting solutions are to be achieved. During a critical period of national transition, understanding of the perspectives and divisions that perpetuate ethnic unrest and state failure is vital. With a particular focus on political reform and ethnic ceasefire initiatives, this book presents an informed narrative from the front-line of contemporary events and will become an essential reference for the future."

Martin Smith is an independent analyst who has written extensively about ethnic nationality affairs for over three decades. His most read reference book is, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Zed Books).

"BEFORE, people read Sai Wansai, because he was writing for SHAN. Nowadays, people are reading SHAN, because Sai Wansai is writing for them. It's no wonder, if you consider the facts: He keeps abreast of things in Burma, even though he's thousands of miles away from the country he left more than 40 years ago. His articles not only keep you abreast of the current situation, but they are also keenly insightful, and what's more, presented articulately."

Comments posted by a reader to the *Shan Herald Agency for News* (SHAN) website.



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