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Al Wansai is an astute Shan political analyst, who has written extensively on Myanmar's e nflict and political situation. His new book, Tracking the Transition: The Path from Quasi ese available to a wider audience. As he points out, after decades of civil war and military, ifferences among the key stakeholders, and he points towards possible solutions. This boo essential reading for anyone wanting to understand ethnic conflict and the current political reprocess in Myanmar."

Tom Kramer, Transnational Institute (TNI).

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

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

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

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

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PREFACE

IT HAS always been my wish to present an unbiased non-Bamar ethn point of view on the contemporary political development of the count

Many tend to think that the struggle is just between the two Bamar stakeholders: The democratic forces headed by the National League for Democracy's (NLD) Aung San Suu Kyi and the Bamar-dominated military government. Often overlooked is the third party in this power equation, the non-Bamar ethnic nationalities.

we all know as Myanmar or Burma.

While this oversight has now largely been corrected, due to increased visibility of the non-Bamar ethnic nationality forces - armed or unarmed - their political grievances and rights as stakeholders Myanmar's future, remain under-represented. And as a lifelong activist, and a person belonging to the Shan people - one of the biggest ethr groups after the Bamar - I am inclined to fill in the gaps as much as I can. within my capacity. Thus my column for Mizzima Weekly, covering the United Kingdom, as they considered the then military regime did Myanmar's transition from a military state to a democratic one, has bee compiled into book form that goes some way to satisfying my wish to tell the story from our side of the struggle.

Originally, the plan was to publish it as a sort of year book, compilir all my articles reflecting the contemporary, everyday politics of Myanmar, week-for-week, for the past year. But Julian Gearing, editor of Mizzima's English language products, came up with the brilliant idea to present my commentaries as Tracking the Transition to democratisation, process which started in March 2015 and came to a conclusion with led by Aung San Suu Kyi. This occurred following the latter's landslide

democratic transition from March 2015 to April 2016, through my 52 I from those in Burmese language. commentaries - one for every week of the transition period.

First, I would like to touch on the usage of 'Myanmar' versus 'Burma' in the book. Although I personally have been inclined to use 'Burma' when writing or speaking in English, I have no objection to using the term 'Myanmar'. Furthermore, it is also the style directive of Mizzima's editorial team to use this moniker, with the exception being the use of 'Burma' in direct quotes, or in historical documents that were written prior to the announcement by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) on June 19, 1989, that henceforth, Burma would be known as Myanmar. There are two reasons behind the regime's decision to change

the name: The first was to have English place names aligned with Burmese language place names and pronunciations, while the other it was believed by the military - would more inclusively embrace the country's ethnic nationalities, rather than just the Bamar majority. The military regime wanted a name for the country in English language that would reflect this.

The shift in nomenclature from 'Burma' - which originates from the spoken Burmese name for the country, to 'Myanmar', the written terary name - was quickly recognised by the United Nations and by countries such as France and Japan, but not by the United States and not have the mandate to make the change. The democratic opposition parties were also staunchly against it.

But lately, Aung San Suu Kyi has said both names are acceptable toning down her former position of only sticking to 'Burma'. Recently, while attending a gathering of ambassadors in her capacity as Foreign Minister, she said: "It's up to you, because there is nothing in the constitution of our country that says we must use any term in particular."

The second issue is that of honorifics and dealing with Burmese language titles, once they are translated into English. To a native of the transfer of power from the military regime's Union Solidarity and Myanmar, it might seem impolite to just use the name without putting Development Party (USDP) to the National League for Democracy (NLD), U' or 'Daw' in front of the male or female name, but after deliberations between the editors and me, we resolved to stick to the international win in November 2015, and the subsequent handover of power to the norm of leaving out honorific titles. So, for example: 'Daw Aung San NLD in March 2016. And that is basically how this book came to fruition. I Suu Kyi' becomes 'Aung San Suu Kyi' and 'U Thein Sein' changes to As for the book's objective, it is simply to serve as a record for Their Sein', in line with international reporting. The same goes for the scholars, researchers, students and interested people alike; tracing the honorifics of the non-Bamar ethnic nationalities, which are different

There are, however, a few issues I would like to bring to the reader's abbreviated names of political parties, committees and organisations, etc. that the reader will encounter in the book. In order to make it easier

to check them, I have included the abbreviated form in alphabetics order, followed by each organisation's full name, which I hope will help to guide the way through the country's complex political landscape.

period covered in the book, thus adding to its readability, so-to-speak.

One other issue that needed to be tackled, was how to reference the 52 commentaries and present them in a way that would make ead one easily accessible to researchers, scholars, or students, who migh not have time to read the complete text.

It was therefore decided to include a reference to the Mizzim publication issue, as well as the date of publication and volume serie number, at the top of each commentary (for example: Issue 13, Vol. 4 March 26, 2015), so as to provide a clear timeline of when incident occurred and when they were written about. It also enabled us to brea the commentaries into manageable chapters, based on the 14-mont

This brings me to the book's Index, the names and other reference of which, are not linked to their respective page numbers, but rather to the commentary in which they appear, thus highlighting the relevance of the time period to which they are associated. For example: Arakan Arm Iss13/V4, Iss18/V4, Iss19/V4, Iss11/V5 (Iss - Issue, V - Vol.).

Sai Wansai