Ma Ma Lay, *Not out of Hate*, translated by Margaret Aung-Thwin. Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2006, 216 pp.

When US-based Margaret Aung-Thwin first decided to translate the Burmese language novel *Monywei Mahu* into English, she was not able to locate a copy of the book. Anna Allott, a Burmese language teacher at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, had to send her photocopied chapters from England. Their efforts resulted in an admirable outcome: *Monywei Mahu*, or *Not Out of Hate*, became the first Burmese novel to be translated into English outside of Burma. First published in 1991, this latest 2006 edition was released by Silkworm Books in Thailand and is still one of only a handful of novels translated from Burmese into English.

A helpful introduction by Allott places the novel in its literary and historical context. *Not Out of Hate* was written by Ma Ma Lay (1917–1982), a pen-name for a female Burmese journalist, short-story writer and novelist. The Burmese language edition of *Not Out of Hate*, published in 1955, was so popular that it ran to at least five editions. Composed before the era of oppressive government censorship in Burma and set in colonial times just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the novel is an honest and heartbreakingly grim portrayal of the dichotomy between British, or Western, values and the traditional Burmese way of life. The tensions are portrayed through the ill-fated love story of Way Way, a young woman who lives in a small town in the rice-growing regions of Lower Burma.

The story opens with Way Way excitedly peeping at the next-door house, which is awaiting the imminent arrival of a new member of staff for a British trading firm based in Rangoon called Bullock Brothers. The furniture that has been moved into the house is so grand and the servants are so smartly dressed that everyone in the neighbourhood assumes the new arrival is a British man – a rarity in the town – and are surprised to find out that he is, in fact, Burmese.

U Saw Han, the new Burmese Bullock Brothers representative, may not be British but he is an incurable convert to all that is English. He wears a pith helmet and peppers his speech with English words: "Cheers," he says, or "Cheerio", "Sorry", and "Good night".

To begin with, Way Way is in awe of this new arrival and enamoured of his worldly manners. She becomes embarrassed by her family's small-town Burmese ways, ashamed of the teapot with its broken spout and the way coffee served by her aunt has been sloppily spilled into the saucers. Way Way goes so far as to reorganise the household eating arrangements, so that family members sit on chairs and eat off a dining table rather than sitting on mats spread over the kitchen floor. Her attempts to make the house look "sophisticated and Westernised" are met with scorn by her brother, who proclaims, "It's a white man's house!"

It is perhaps not surprising that Way Way is so impressionable. She leads an isolated life. Her mother abandoned the family to become a nun in faraway Sagaing, the holy centre of Buddhist learning in Upper Burma. Her siblings are both married and no longer live in the family home. While Way Way looks up to U Saw Han, he in turn is besotted by her innocence and malleability. But what begins with a young and simple girl's curiosity rapidly deteriorates after the family allows U Saw Han to marry Way Way.

Much of the tension in the couple's doomed relationship is tantalisingly played out over food. At the first meal in which Way Way and her family are invited to dine at U Saw Han's house, she frets over the use of cutlery (which she is not accustomed to, as Burmese traditionally eat with their hands):

> "She…became worried all over again as to how to use the knives and forks set near each plate. She was thoroughly intimidated by the sight of things she had never seen before. She had occasionally eaten a chicken pilaf with a spoon and fork at a *danbauk* [Indian biryani] shop in Rangoon, but never had she seen such an array of cutlery as on U Saw Han's table. She was so frightened that she could hardly look at it."

As it turns out, she performs quite well during the meal and is even able to take some pleasure in her first experience of English cuisine, admiring the composition of chicken, potatoes, green beans and red beets on her plate and reflecting that the taste is pleasantly different.

But her pleasure is fleeting. When her ill father's tuberculosis worsens and he is moved to Rangoon for treatment, she becomes a captive in her husband's house, forced to abandon the familiar and comfortable Burmese traditions of her childhood. U Saw Han is considerably older than her and takes full control of her day-to-day existence. In his eyes, she is "a precious little doll" or "a delicate piece of porcelain" – something to be mollycoddled and moulded into his image of the ideal Westernised woman.

Way Way follows her husband's lead. She wears the clothes he recommends, even forsaking Burmese sandals for "lady shoes", or closed-toe shoes, which she gleefully kicks off as soon as he leaves for work so that she can walk about the house "Burmese style, free and unhampered".

It is always at the dining table that the couple's differences are exacerbated. In deference to her husband, Way Way quashes her desire for Burmese food. She eats the bland fare her husband favours and dutifully devours eggs and milk. Secretly, though, she longs for the pungent delicacies of their native cuisine: hot chilli peppers, raw garlic cloves and powdered dried shrimp. Though she occasionally sneaks over to her family home to feast on Burmese food, she fears that her husband will find out when he smells the garlic on her breath.

In one excruciating scene, U Saw Han unexpectedly visits Way Way's

family home and finds her eating with her brother. Way Way is literally caught red-handed as her fingers are smeared with curry sauce, "all sticky and gooey and delicious". U Saw Han's displeasure at his wife returning to the uncouth ways of her upbringing is extreme. It is as if he has stumbled upon an unspeakable crime and his controlled fury is almost sinister. A "cold chill" passes over Way Way when she sees her husband and her face turns ashen when she realises she has been discovered.

Events come to a dramatic head when Way Way receives a telegram from Rangoon saying that her father is dangerously ill. U Saw Han forbids her from going to pay her respects, afraid that his "little flower" will catch her father's highly-contagious disease. Her father dies the next morning and a distraught Way Way leaves to attend his funeral, after which she escapes to her mother's nunnery in Sagaing. Her brief moment of delirious freedom comes to an end when she learns she is pregnant and so returns to her husband. The fates, however, are against the union between these two disparate souls. Way Way loses the baby and is diagnosed with tuberculosis, the disease that killed her father. True to his Western ways, her husband nurses her with scientific rigour, which involves a gruelling regimen of daily injections. Unable to muster the strength to fight against his ministrations of milk and medicine, Way Way wastes away and succumbs to her illness.

Not Out of Hate is a compelling story that explores the dark, psychological underbelly of colonialism. The searing tensions between the two sides are examined within the intimate confines of one Burmese family and a single relationship between a husband who aspires to being British and a wife who only knows how to be Burmese. Played out against the rising tide of Burmese nationalism and the chaos of the Japanese occupation of Burma in the Second World War, the narrative has a desperate inevitability. As Way Way's brother revels in the advance of the Japanese army and the retreat of the British, her husband stubbornly clings to his Western lifestyle; their pantry is stocked with his favourite Western brands of whisky, cigarettes, soap, toothpaste, English tea biscuits and tinned butter. As a good Burmese wife, Way Way caters to her husband's needs and tries to please him till the bitter end, forsaking traditional treatments for her illness that have been offered by her family and sticking with the failing scientific knowledge her husband adheres to. Yet she continues to dream of her old way of life – a way of life that has been forbidden by her husband and is no longer accessible to her.

Each day, U Saw Han makes Way Way take a walk around the garden for exercise. On one of her daily perambulations, the emaciated Way Way hears the cries of food vendors in the streets around her house. "*Mohsein baung*! Nice and hot!" cries one vendor. Way Way used to eat the steaming cake with her family over breakfast, and recalls how it was generously sprinkled with

freshly shredded coconut and ground sesame seeds. "*Kaunghynin baung*!" yells another vendor, conjuring up in Way Way's head fond memories of her family eagerly helping themselves to handfuls of warm and sticky rice. Even just to listen to these cries seems like a crime and, though the restrictions enforced by U Saw Han are now impossible for Way Way to shirk off, it is only with a joyless sense of duty that she acquiesces: "Her mouth watered as she heard each vendor, and then she thought of the bread and butter awaiting her on the table in the house and her appetite left her."

Emma Larkin

Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon, Bernard Sellato, Chanthal Zheng, eds, *Dynamiques identitaires en Asie et dans le Pacifique. I. Enjeux sociaux, économiques et politiques. II. Pratiques symboliques en transition*. Aix-en-Provence, Publications de Université de Provence, 2006. Volume I, 240 pp., Volume II, 208 pp.

Twenty-four papers from an international symposium organized by the Maison Asie Pacifique and the Center for Asia Pacific Area Studies of the Academia Sinica Taiwan, convened at Marseille, 23–25 June 2005, are published here in two volumes. The authors are affiliated with five French institutes of higher education, as well as three from Taiwan. Seven contributions are translated versions, though the original titles are not given.

In Volume I contributions on sociological, economic, and political facets are presented, preceded by the editors' introduction.

Under the title of 'Des Ang-yi au Rotary. Sociétés, associations, fondations, clubs. Solidarité et linguistique chez les Chinois de Thaïlande' [15–28], Jean Baffie highlights different modes of solidarity among Thailand's Chinese communities. He distinguishes between secret societies, vernacular associations, patronymic groups, charitable associations, and prestigious clubs.

Lan-Shiang Huang traces the successive establishment of different groups of Chinese immigrants in one particular harbour settlement on the