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A Thousand Miles of Dreams

The Journeys of Two Chinese Sisters

By Sasha Su-Ling Welland

A Thousand Miles of Dreams recounts the evocative and intimate biography of two intensely rivalrous Chinese sisters, a writer and a doctor, whose eventful lives took very different paths in their quest to be independent women. Ling Shuhao arrived in Cleveland in 1925 to study medicine in the middle of a U.S. crackdown on Chinese immigrant communities, and her struggle to assimilate began. She adopted the name Amy, while her sister Shuhua, still in China, became the darling of the Beijing literary scene. Shuhua's tumultuous affair with Virginia Woolf's nephew during his years in China entangled her irretrievably with the Bloomsbury group. They were Chinese "modern girls" who sought to forge their own way during a period of social revolution that unsettled relations between men and women, even among nations. Daughters of an imperial scholar-official and a concubine, the two sisters followed professional trajectories unimaginable to their parents' generation.

Biographer Sasha Su-Ling Welland stumbled across their remarkable stories while recording her grandmother's oral history, learning the secret Amy had jealously hidden from her American family: her sister's fame as a Chinese woman writer. Interwoven with the social history of their day, the lives and travels of these extraordinary women spanned the 20th century and three continents in a saga of East-West cultural exchange and personal triumph.

SASHA SU-LING WELLAND is the granddaughter/grandniece of the two sisters whose life stories form the core of this book. She is a lecturer in anthropology and women's studies at the University of Washington-Seattle. She has received scholarships and residences at the Blue Mountain Center, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Hedgebrook Retreat for Women Writers, and Millay Colony for the Arts. She lives in Seattle, Washington.

Advance Praise for *A Thousand Miles of Dreams*:

"Reading Sasha Su-Ling Welland's book about her remarkable forbears is like unearthing a long-hidden treasure... This is a book that enlightens as much as it delights and remains with you long after the reading."

—David Takami, *The Seattle Times*

"A portrait of a family's personal journey that is moving, passionate, and fully accessible."

—Clark Blaise, author of *I Had a Father*, *Time Lord*, and others, and former director of the International Writers Program, University of Iowa

"With magnificently fluid erudition and a compassionately wry eye, Sasha Su-Ling Welland forges the story of two remarkable women whose lives expand our knowledge of twentieth-century feminism in China, the U.S., and Britain."

—Anna Maria Hong, editor of *Growing Up Asian American: An Anthology*

“This is a wonderfully written account of two Chinese modern girls whose lives traversed the entire twentieth century from China to England and the United States. Their artistic and professional accomplishments through decades of war and exile may be legendary, but their personal lives were also filled with many human frailties. Intermixed with Welland’s reminiscences of growing up in the United States as an Eurasian whose mother was partly raised by an African American housekeeper, the tales of these women weave an intricate tapestry of literary pursuit, transnational migration, an interracial affair, and middle-class domesticity. The author wields the pen of a historian, an ethnographer, and a poet, but ultimately it is the writer as a granddaughter and a grandniece that gives the story its most intimate human touch.”

—**Shu-mei Shih, University of California, Los Angeles**

“Sasha Welland’s deft and gripping biography of her grandmother and great-aunt is elegiac but never sentimental. It is compelling, lucid, historically nuanced, and an absorbing read.”

—**Gail Hershatter, University of California, Santa Cruz**

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