

to foreign powers, which included the New Territories of Hong Kong and a few areas in other parts of China, and on relations between Taiwan and the USA, it will certainly be necessary for students to consult the books recommended for further reading and some other ones as well.

It is unfortunate that the cover of the book bears a photograph of policemen of the communist People's Republic of China marching under a portrait of Sun Yat-sen. Perhaps this is intended to demonstrate the communists' continuing respect for Sun as founder of the Republic of China, or perhaps it is merely a mistake, though presumably one for which the publisher rather than the author is responsible. In either case it is a misleading feature which should preferably be rectified in any future edition.

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**Sasha Su-Ling Welland.** *A Thousand Miles of Dreams: The Journeys of Two Chinese Sisters*. Rowman & Littlefield. Lanham, MD & Plymouth, UK, 2006. pp. xvi + 369. Map. B/w photos. Sketches. Notes. Index. Hb. £15.99. ISBN 0 7425 5313 2. Pb. £10.99. ISBN 0 7425 5314 0

**Patricia Laurence.** *Julian Bell, the Violent Pacifist*. Cecil Woolf Publishers, The Bloomsbury Heritage series, London, 2006. pp. 44. B/w photos. Notes. Bibliog. Pb. £7. ISBN 1 8979 6744 6

It is 1936. A young Englishman, recently graduated from King's College, Cambridge, comes to Wuhan University to teach English literature. There he is well received by the Dean of his Department, an acclaimed writer and editor in the new modernist movement and his wife, also an aspiring writer and painter. He is popular with his Chinese students and colleagues, and promptly forms a close relationship with the feminist wife of the Dean, who is keen to learn English and new ideas current in English literature and art. They fall in love and have an affair, which ends in his resignation and departure from China after barely a year. The repercussions are profound and extensive, not only for themselves and their families, but also for a coterie of literary and artistic figures in China and England.

The English teacher was Julian Bell, the son of Vanessa and nephew of Virginia Woolf, the heart of the Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists. The Chinese woman was Ling Shuhua, daughter of a traditional Chinese scholar-official who had held a high position at the Imperial Court and then with the new Republican government. As her grand-niece, Sasha Welland, describes in the first of the books under review, this powerful and wealthy "mandarin" gentleman had a number of wives (reminiscent of the patriarch and his concubines in the film, *Raise the Red Lantern* by the famous director Zhang Yimou), one of whom was the mother of Ling Shuhua and her sister Shuhao. These and other memories are described by Ling Shuhua in her *Ancient Melodies*, published in English by Hogarth Press, owned by Leonard Woolf, in London in 1953.

Sasha Welland, who "grew up a child of the American Midwest, at a time when Chinese meant *chop suey* on the sign of a gas station converted into a take-out shop", has researched and recorded the lives of the two sisters. Her grandmother, Shuhao, changed her name to Amy when she settled in Indiana as a medical student and

married a distinguished Chinese physician who had migrated in the same period, the early 1920s, also to study medicine. The sisters' stories unfold from their Beijing childhood home and their Cantonese ancestral town, through the modern Western-style Beijing school, where the girls both studied new practical subjects after their traditional classical literary education at home. It is a vivid personal account of the new opportunities opening for wealthy urban women. It also reveals China's transition from feudal life and culture in the last throes of Empire to the tumultuous changes and upheavals in the early Republican period and after the First World War.

The sisters went different ways when Amy left for America and Shuhua married Chen Yuan (pen-name Xiying). In Beijing, and later in Tianjin and Wuhan, he became a prominent writer and literary figure within an elite circle of Western-influenced academics and writers, often known as the Chinese Bloomsbury writers. When the Japanese invaded the north, the universities were forced to leave Beijing and relocate in the south. So Chen Yuan took up a post at Wuhan University and Shuhua (now with a daughter) tried to pursue her literary ambitions as well as domestic duties on the new campus.

The author of *A Thousand Miles of Dreams* intersperses the accounts of the two sisters' lives in alternate chapters, thus providing a fascinating comparison of experiences in these distant countries and contrasting cultures as the Second World War loomed. After the war, in their later years, their lives and attitudes diverged as they led separate lives, Amy in America and Shuhua in England. Their versions of their experiences conflicted in many ways, and the author has taken great care to sort out "fact" from "fiction" in the narratives told to her, thus displaying academic objectivity in the process of writing family history.

The second work under review is a booklet based on the author's research on the life and writing of Virginia Woolf and her family and literary circle. This particular account focuses on Woolf's nephew, Julian Bell, his early life and education, which included his years at Cambridge University where he studied English literature in the early 1930s, his experiences in Paris and Wuhan and finally his early death fighting for the partisans in the Spanish Civil War. Growing up within the Bloomsbury set and his privileged education brought him into contact with eminent academics and literary and artistic figures. Patricia Laurence highlights Bell's stay in China, which was also the starting point of her work on the interaction of Chinese and English literature and art during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes: Bloomsbury, Modernism and China* (South Carolina, 2003). Laurence also refers to another work, a colourful novel, *K, the Art of Love* by Hong Ying (London, 2002), which is itself based on the love affair of Julian Bell and Ling Shuhua and caused quite a scandal when it was published.

The comings and goings of the Chinese and English modern literati in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century produced a fruitful and energetic tide of creative thought and activity which has left its mark on the cultural history of both East and West. These two biographical presentations contribute to our knowledge of the intellectual history and artistic communication between the two literary communities. Both authors have applied rigorous academic research and analysis, which is reflected in their copious notes, references and bibliographies. In a more popular style, however, ample photographs illustrate both books. They can be recommended to the general reader, starting perhaps with the booklet on Julian Bell.