



Li Zongren, at the time he was elected Vice President of China in 1947.



Leslie Li's mother, Genevieve, at 16 years of age.

Images courtesy of Leslie Li



By Sally Friedman

# Leslie Li:

## Food as Autobiography

The memories run deep and envelop her; they are rich, full-blown and always, always through food.

Writer Leslie Li can reconstruct her life through the lens of food with both clarity and passion. And she has done just that in her critically-acclaimed book *Daughter of Heaven*, which traces Li's personal odyssey as the daughter of a Chinese-Polish-American mother (a former star of the legendary George White Scandals) and a strict Chinese father.

"Food was my touchstone to everything. For me, food was always communication, always a vital link to who I am," said Li during a recent visit to Philadelphia where she participated in the city's two-week First Person Festival, a celebration of life stories from around the globe. In Philadelphia, Li led a writing and yoga workshop that involved