

BOOK REPORT

At Home in this World, a China Adoption Story

By Jean MacLeod

Illustrated by Qin Su, EMK Press, Warren, NJ (2003), A 6.5" x 9.5"
Pamphlet of 28 pages, ISBN: 0-9726244-1-4.

Reviewed by T. C. Peng

Unlike many adoption stories written by the adopting parents, this book describes an adoption story from the point of view of the adopted child, Lily. However, since the adopted child cannot always express herself adequately, this story is really about the understanding of the adopting parents for the adopted child. The remarkable love of the parents makes the whole book possible. The parent's intellect provides the child's point of view, although here and there the parental view is unavoidably present. The extraordinary effort by the adopting parent shows the universal human character of love for a child, adopted or otherwise.

Jean MacLeod, the adopting parent in this case, is to be highly admired for her effort. Someday when the adopted child, Lily in this case, grows up and becomes a mother herself, Lily will realize what a gift this book is from her loving mother. In truth, this book, though only twenty-eight pages, represents a legacy that Lily would probably never have otherwise. All I can say is that I have the utmost respect for motherhood and for Jean MacLeod in particular. I would also like to express the same gratitude for

all adopting parents who have done something similar to what Jean has done here.

In spite of the fact that her birth mother left Lily for adoption, my own instinct tells me that mothers the world over are more or less the same—they have unconditional love for their children. Except in a few extremely rare cases, a mother will always do what is best for her child, even under the most difficult circumstances. This is the real reason why children are taught to respect their parents, especially their mothers. Confucius is right after all. Now we know why Mother's Day is the most important day of the year.

The writing is very lucid: simple, direct, and succinct, it expresses the innocent feelings of a child. The illustrations, which go hand in hand with the writing, make the parent-child relationship come alive. I only wish someone had done the same for me when I was seven years old. But that was when Japan invaded China, and my whole family was running away from the atrocities of the Japanese military. I guess I should forgive my parents for not writing about my childhood under such difficult circumstances.