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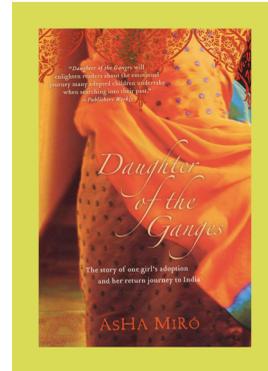
The newsletter for adoptive families with children of color

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Book Review Daughter of the Ganges

By Asha Miro

Reviewed by Lisa Pious



Daughter of the Ganges is a moving, 2-part account of the Asha Miro's search for her roots in India, from where she was taken as an almost 7-year old to be adopted by a loving couple from Barcelona, Spain. The first part of the book details Miro's first trip back to India, as a 27-year-old, yearning to find the missing pieces in what little information she has about her first seven years of life. She comes away from the trip satisfied, filling important gaps in the details of her origins, and establishes a comfortable identity as an Indian-Catalan. After returning home to Barcelona, Miro publishes her memoir and the success of the work generates a wide contact with other adoptees. Through hearing other adoptee stories, Miro deepens her understanding of who she is and what it means to be adopted. Seven years later, she returns to India to document her story for television. Miro hopes she can help adoptive parents to imagine some of what their adopted children experience and secretly hopes to find members of her biological family. In the second part of the memoir, Miro details her second return to India and her search for biological family, that her story takes some surprising turns, and where her simple language is used to greatest effect in describing what she discovers, and how it impacts her.

This book is a deceptively easy read, covering intense emotional ground in highly readable prose. It is instructive for adoptive parents, as it conveys the author's urge to find her origins on her own terms. Her loving parents not only support her in talking freely about her adoption, they also hope to make the first trip together with her to her homeland. As it happens, Miro decides to plan her trip without the involvement or knowledge of her family, though eventually tells

them after her plans are finalized. As Miro uncovers details about her origins, she powerfully illustrates - for all concerned - the emotional pitfalls for the adoptee of inaccurate personal information, even though it may be given with the best interest of the adoptee in mind.

For several reasons though, Daughter of the Ganges will probably leave something to be desired among readers who are adult adoptees. The author finds out more about her origins than she expected and hoped to find, yet doesn't share with the reader any thoughts she might have had if she not been so lucky in her search. This kind of exploration might better prepare other adoptees in thinking about initiating their own searches. Additionally, (and somewhat unfortunately) she includes only the most cursory and glowing descriptions of her school years growing up in Barcelona as one of the few transracial adoptee in the 70's and 80's, leaving the reader to wonder when and how she faced racism, and how she dealt with difference. These issues might have been instructive for a broader adoptee audience, and might have answered lingering questions for curious adoptive parents.

Miro does find her birth family, including a full sister she did not know she had until her second trip, and a half sister who - she also found out on her second trip - nursed her for several months after her birthmother died. Daughter of the Ganges expresses her struggle with identity throughout her life in Barcelona. She writes eloquently about the importance to her of search and finding connection to her birth family, of seeing herself reflected in biological family members and of being able to imagine what her life would have been like had her circumstances been different.