



OUR CHINA STORIES

我们的中国故事

Li Hua

Adoptee

Adoption place: Hengdong SWI, Hunan Province

Age at adoption: 11 months.

Should adoptees go to visit their orphanages in China? That is a question many adoptees think a lot about.

Li-Hua was 11 months old when she came home to Connecticut from the Hengdong SWI in Hunan Province. She made the visit with her older brother, Paul, who speaks fluent Mandarin.

I think it depends on the person's story and how they were adopted, their opinion, if they want to do it or not, says this 13-year-old.

“Because I can't tell them, ‘Oh, you should do it because it's so fun’ because some people might not want to. But for me, I thought it was really weird being put back to a place that I was born or grew up for just a tiny bit. So, I thought it was really weird being back to a place I've been to before but never remembered.”

Maria

Adoptive mom

Maria and her husband have two grown sons. Their daughter, Li-Hua, 13, traveled to China a year ago with her brother, Paul, who is fluent in Mandarin. While there, the two kids made an impromptu decision to search for Li-Hua's birth parents.

What started then continues today. Two searches have been unsuccessful. Maria is determined to keep trying though, Li-Hua, at this stage in her life, is not particularly concerned about finding her biological family.

“It's been like that from Day One,” Maria says. “She is a little bit along for the ride, whatever will be, will be. I remember going up to tell her that this couple we thought would be the birth parents were not...Her reaction was ‘I really don't care...I'll care about the people when I know they're my parents.’”

So, why search?

`By and large I think that if there's a really good emotional support system there, with the adoptive family, where the child feels really safe and loved, then I feel it would answer a question and it's up to my daughter if she wants to pursue those people or not. Maybe, if there's a sibling in the family, maybe a sibling will be eager to establish a relationship with her and then she'll know that there's a biological sibling and that she can have a connection,` Maria says.

The first part of Maria's interview was conducted at her home in Connecticut. The interview continued by phone.



Li Hua at the Great Wall

