

This lifebook was prepared using the following materials:

Beth O'Malley's Book,
Lifebooks, Creating a Treasure for the Adopted Child.

Cindy Probst's book
Adoption Lifebook, A Bridge to Your Child's Beginnings

And Jean MacLeod's Book
At Home in this World, a China adoption story.
(an empowering narrative for all kids adopted from abroad.
This one really helps to deal with feelings and emotions and
was instrumental in parts of this lifebook.)

Thanks Beth, Cindy and Jean...

Carrie Kitze

My Story



Annette Zhen



I was born in China
one day in May.

May 6th, 1998 is the birthday I was given.

On that day, it was a typical day in China.

It rained during the day and was 72°.

The rice had been planted
and had started to grow. Rice is a crop
that is grown around the area I am from.

The rice paddies are flooded with water and are tended
by people and water buffaloes.

Before I was born, I grew
in a special place inside a woman.
That person is my birthmother.
She gave me my birthday.
She gave me my looks.
We probably have the same skin color,
hair color and eye color.
I don't know her, and yet maybe I do .
I wonder if she likes to draw or
likes horses as much as I do.

This is what I think she looks like:

If I could talk to her, I would ask her:

It takes two people to make a baby,
a man and a woman.

Everyone in the world starts with
a birthmother and a birthfather.

I did too.

I have a birthmother and a birthfather in China.

I don't know much about my birthfather.

I don't even know his name.

But some things I might be able to guess at.

I wonder if he liked playing with bugs when he was little,
or likes music or art?

I wonder if his favorite color is red,
just like mine.

Here is what I think he looks like:

If I could talk to him, I would ask him:

After children are born,
they might live with their first parents, join other families
or enter an orphanage.

There are many possible reasons why
I didn't stay with my first family.
I don't know the answers for sure now.
But I do know that all the reasons
have to do with my first parents
or my birthcountry,
not me.

My feelings about my first family are:

I was just a little baby.
A precious, adorable little baby
and babies can't do anything wrong.



The peach trees were blooming when
I was born in China and the blooms have
a blush of pink to them.

My Chinese name is Ba Tauzhen
which means precious peach.

Peaches are symbolic in China, they represent a long,
tranquil and prosperous life.

I don't know who gave me my first name,
but it was a good choice.

I was a precious baby.

My mouth was shaped like a flower bud
and my cheeks had a slight blush to them.

I wonder who gave me my name and why.





China is a large country that is very far away. It is a country with over a billion people. It is very beautiful but also very crowded. The town I am from is small by many Chinese standards, only a million people live there!!

Sometimes people have a hard time finding places to live, jobs and enough food. So the people in charge of China made a rule. They made the rule that mothers and fathers could only have one child or sometimes two. If you broke this rule, there were punishments.



I have always wondered why so many of my adopted Chinese friends are girls.



Sometimes I wonder
if it would have been better if I had been born a boy.

In China, parents live with their sons until they die. If a mother and father are allowed only one or two children, it is important to have a son. They need someone to take care of them when they are too old to work. Many Chinese parents really believe they must have a son to support them.

What would I have done if I were them?

I understand all of these things in my head, but it is so much harder to understand in my heart.

I don't know why my Chinese parents placed me for adoption.

But I think it must have been a very difficult decision.

I am sure they thought hard about what to do.

I know they must have loved me and wanted
good things for me.

But, they didn't want to break the rules
and get punished.

My Chinese parents couldn't change the rules in China, but they
wanted to make sure that I grew up healthy and happy.

So they placed me somewhere that I would quickly be found.

When I was two days old, someone (probably my birth parents) placed me at the doorway to the a large complex of houses. Many families live there and there is a courtyard in the middle. The woman in the picture (I don't know her name) found me and took me to the Yueyang County Social Welfare Yard. Her house is near the entrance to the complex and she heard me crying.



The Yueyang County Social Welfare Yard is a home for both babies, and people who are too old to take care of themselves.

In 1998, when I was brought to the SWY, they were in the process of building a new building. They couldn't take care of babies so I went to live with a foster family.



My foster family cared well for me and loved me.
My foster mother took care to feed me my favorite
foods: noodles and fruit.

They taught me to drink tea from a cup and start to walk

They said I was a happy and social baby who
was very curious about my
surroundings. I still am like that and my
favorite food is still noodles.



When I was almost 9 months old, my foster family was asked to bring me back to the orphanage.

There was a family coming to adopt me from the United States. My foster mother made me a special orange sweater with a little bit of blue on the sleeve.

She wanted to leave a clue so we could find each other again in the future. And we did.

So my Mom writes letters to let them know how I am doing. Hopefully I will get to see them again some day when I am older.

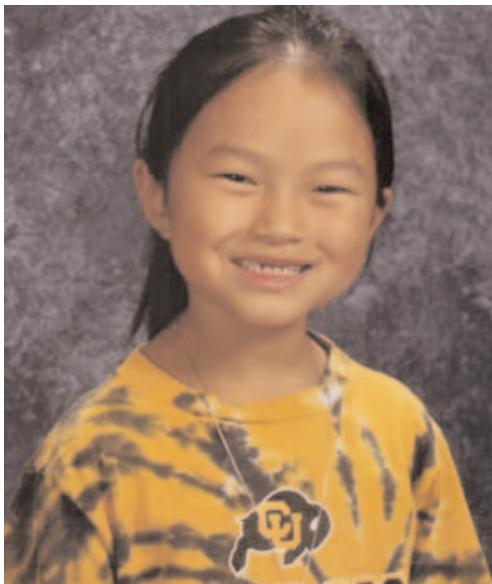


Now I am 6 years old.

I love to draw horses, play with my little sister, eat pasta and chocolate ice cream. I also enjoy getting a chai latte with my Mom at Starbucks after school.

I especially like it with added whipped cream.

I like to ride my bike and to swim and dive for rings at the YMCA with my Dad. I like to go to the beach in the summer and catch crabs but I don't like to go on stage in front of people, but I am working on that.



I still wonder about my life in China.

I love my parents very much and I wouldn't want any other family, but I think I will always miss knowing the parents that weren't mine to keep.

My life has been an amazing adventure and Mom tells me I am a brave kid to experience the enormous changes and to survive them all. I like to think about it that way. It helps me bring both my sides together.



I was born in China and now I am from here. All these experiences are a part of who I am: one girl from two places who is growing up to be at home in this big, wide world.

This is my life and I look at every thing that happened to me. I am a warrior and a survivor and I am learning more about myself each day..

