

Growing Up Without Knowing My Birth Parents

by Pearl Parker

I was only one day old when my parents took me to a place in China called the Social Welfare Institute.

I don't know the full reason why my parents took me there but I think it would have been a hard decision for them. My Chinese parents might have been poor and didn't have enough money to provide me with food and clothes. They might not have been married and didn't have any family support. Perhaps my Chinese parents already had a child and weren't allowed to have another because of the One Child Policy. The Chinese government made this rule so people living there would have a job, a home and enough food to eat. If families break this rule they have to pay huge amounts of money and some families can't afford that.

One day I want to try to meet my birth parents. It matters to me because my birthparents are a part of who I am. My mum and dad always say that my birth parents are an important part of our family and when I look in the mirror I am looking at them. It matters to me that people understand that I have four real parents. It took two birth parents to make me and two forever parents to make a family for me to grow up in. I just wish I could know at least one of my birth parents or at least have a photo of them.

Mum, Dad and I went on a trip to China when I was ten. We visited the Social Welfare Institute where I lived until I was ten and a half months old. The rooms were very small and crowded with cots. When we looked at the room where I used to sleep it was hard to imagine that I had lived there. It was funny being a visitor to China as I felt a bit at home, as everyone looked similar to me. But I also feel at home in Australia because I've lived here nearly my whole life.

I feel that kids who weren't adopted take it for granted because they live with and know their birth parents. They don't understand the hole that exists in the lives of adoptees. For example, during Chinese New Year I think about my Chinese parents and wonder what they are doing and how they celebrate the occasion. Also, each year on my birthday I wish that my birth parents were there to celebrate with me. They must wonder where I am and if I am healthy and doing okay each time this day comes around. I know I ask myself these questions about them.

In a way I am lucky to have my four parents. I think of myself as Chinese and Australian and I'm proud to be both!