

China's one-child policy led to my adoption

5 'So what time does your flight get into Sea-Tac ?" To me, it seemed a fairly basic question. But it confused my brother, Wu Chao, who was texting me from China. At 19, he had never been on an international flight before. He had not thought to ask about an arrival time, an airline or a flight number. All he knew was when his plane was supposed to leave Shanghai. I was going to have to figure this one out on my own.

10 Eventually, I got him to send me his ticket confirmation. It was written in Mandarin and exceeded my basic understanding of the language, so I plugged it into Google Translate, putting periods in odd places, as you have to, to trick it into recognizing Chinese words. Aha ! I was able to decipher "Delta." I e-mailed customer service, attached the confirmation notice and swore that I wasn't trying to get any identifying information — I just didn't want my brother to come through customs and find himself alone. Finally, I had my answer: He was supposed to arrive at the Seattle airport on Dec. 21 at 7:42 a.m.

15 Sometimes it is odd to think that between us, Wu Chao is supposedly the privileged child — the boy preferred by Chinese society, the son my family held out for while I was hidden and ultimately put up for adoption.

20 I am among the more than 100,000 children adopted from China by Western families since the early 1990s. Most of us are girls, byproducts of China's one-child policy, which compounded the cultural gender bias. Few of us know about the families we left behind — or, in many cases, who left us.

25 When I was 9, I got a letter from my birth parents. Since then, I have made two trips to China to get to know them and to answer questions that gnaw at so many adoptees : What happened ? Why didn't they want me ? Or if they did want me, why am I here? And what would my life have been like if I stayed ?

30 The story I got from them is the one I imagine every adoptee longs to hear: My parents never wanted to give me away. In fact, they desperately wanted to keep me. Yet I have learned not to be nostalgic about what might have been. The one-child policy brought my family, and many Chinese families, immense pain. But by forcing my parents to give me up, it also opened incredible opportunities for me — opportunities so irresistible that my brother, the child my parents kept, moved here from China last year for the education and other advantages that time in America can provide.

35

For many adoptees, especially in the case of international adoptions, the search for birth parents is frustrating and futile. It is amazing I was able to find mine.

40 I was 12 when I met them for the first time — or, at least, the first time that I remember. At the airport, my birth mother clung to me, sobbing, like she would never let go of me again. I was both excited and nervous to see them, but the reunion was somewhat overwhelming. Not knowing Chinese, I didn't understand a lot of what was going on around me.

By Ricki Mudd

I.COMPREHENSION (12 points)

A. Are the following statements true or false ? Justify your answers by quoting from the text. (1 point per question)

1. The boy is the favorite child in the family.
2. The narrator and her brother grew up in the same country.
3. In China, boys and girls are equal.
4. The parents of the narrator were obliged to give her away.
5. She could not find her birth parents.

B. Answer the following questions. (1 point per question)

1. Is the text argumentative, descriptive or narrative ? Explain.
2. Pick up from the text the name and age of the narrator's brother.
3. Why had the narrator travelled twice to China before ?
4. What do the numbers below refer to in the text ?
 - 9
 - 100,000
 - 12.
5. Choose one adjective from the words below that best describe the narrator's feeling / behavior. Explain in your own words why you have chosen that one over others.

thrilled	sad	protective	angry	careless	responsible
----------	-----	------------	-------	----------	-------------

C. Find synonyms or similar meanings for the following words in the indicated paragraphs. (0.5 point per word)

1. Get connected to : (paragraph 2).
2. Strange, unusual : (paragraph 2).
3. Advantages of a small group of people : (paragraph 3).
4. Feeling of longing for the past : (paragraph 6).

II. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE (8 points)

Some words or grammar parts are missing from the text below. Write the number and the right answer in your answer sheet. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Four years (0)_____ when (1)_____ 24 years old, I (2)_____ seemed a child with his natural parents before my mother handed me a case file on myself. I hadn't known that I was adopted as an infant and that my birth mother had died in a car accident several years after I was born. But this case file was new to me.

(3)_____ up, I had internalized my parents' matter-of-fact approach to the subject, and by the time I was in elementary school, (4)_____ adopted hardly seemed worth mentioning. Even so, when a classmate and I (5)_____ a book called "Why (6)_____ I Adopted ? "one day during reading time, I (7)_____ him happily, "I'm adopted!" "No you're not," he replied. "You're lying." "I really am," I said, bursting into tears.

I told the teacher's aide, and within minutes I (8) I _____ over it.

Example :

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 0. a) before | b) after | c) ago |
| 1. a) am | b) was | c) had. |
| 2. a) may have | b) could | c) may be. |
| 3. a) grow up | b) grew up | c) growing up. |
| 4. a) being | b) to be | c) be. |
| 5. a) come across | b) came across | c) came to. |
| 6. a) were | b) will | c) was. |
| 7. a) said to | b) say to | c) saying to. |
| 8. a) am already | b) was already | c) will already. |

II. WRITING (10 points pour les séries ES/S/SG. 18 points pour la série L)

Seuls les candidats de la série L traiteront les deux sujets. Les candidats des séries ES, S et SG, traiteront l'un des 2. sujets. Le nombre de mots exigés est de 150 à 200 (ES, S, SG). Pour la série L, le nombre de mots exigés pour chaque sujet est de 150 à 200.

1. Imagine that you are the narrator's brother. Write a letter to your parents about your life with your sister in America. (Education, friends, culture, weather etc...)
2. Write a dialogue between a journalist and the narrator. The journalist asks her questions about her feelings as an adopted child.