

Celebrating Gotcha Day six years after meeting our baby boy

Six years ago we held our little boy for the first time.

I can still remember how warm he felt in my arms, how he put his head on my shoulder and snuggled into me, how he guzzled bottle after bottle of apple juice, how he smiled at his father for the first time that night. I recall how he slurped down his noodles, how he made us laugh from his first days with us, and how I loved him more every single day.

It feels like yesterday and yet I can hardly remember life without this child in our family.

He lives life at full energy and full emotion.

He's full of curiosity and compassion.

He has so much love to give to every creature he encounters, no matter how small.

He enjoys helping grown-ups with any project as much as he likes making his baby cousins smile.

He loves baseball and candy and fishing and bunnies and TV commercials and praying mantises.

He has an incredible sense of humor.

He has spent the summer learning to shuffle cards with skill. Now he's working on building houses of cards on the slippery dining room table. He gets frustrated when things don't come easily to him, but he's also one of the most determined, resilient people I know.

His favorite food is bowling alley French fries. But when we asked where he wanted to go to celebrate his "Gotcha Day," he requested Japanese food. He sat next to his big brother and inhaled his miso soup, sushi, and udon noodles.

As I watched him enjoy his dinner, I thought of how much I've learned about this son of ours since that day we first met him—and how much we are still discovering all the time. He's preparing to start second grade this year, and I can hardly believe that.



Toward the end of dinner, he came to my chair and climbed onto my lap. He's getting close to 8 years old, and he's too big for anyone's lap. But when we were getting to know him as a 20-month-old toddler in China, there were no rules. And with those memories fresh in my mind, I let him be.

Having the opportunity to be this little boy's mother is an amazing blessing. It's also an astonishing gift for me, especially since I wasn't sure I would ever be a mother—never mind a mother of two sons who were born on the other side of the world.

He's the same child he was that first day we met him in Guangzhou, and yet he's grown in so many ways. And I feel so fortunate to be with him, his brother, and his father on this journey.