

## **Visit China Tour Experience**

*By Ruth Ellison*

Our first visit to China was in 1997 to receive our baby girl. China was sharing with us. We knew very soon into our first visit we would need to bring our daughter back to her homeland when she was old enough to remember and cherish the trip. We could show her pictures, read her books and tell her our experience, but pictures and stories can't begin to capture our experience especially with the Chinese people themselves.

In 2006, we returned to China on the Visit China Tour with our daughter, Kaeli and our son, Isaac. Isaac was not really old enough the first time to make the trip to China when we received Kaeli. The emotions this time were just as strong as they were the first time as we once again saw this wonderful part of the world and its people.

In preparing for this trip, we knew we would see a lot of sights we had not seen on that first trip. We knew also we would get to do things like fly kites and make dumplings, but we had no idea what else was in store. We had only been in China for two days and we had already seen and done so much more than we would have known to do if we had just come to China on our own. The rickshaw ride through narrow streets, watching dancers in the park, and actually having dinner at the home of a Chinese family! These experiences will never leave our minds or our hearts.

The most special thing was the welcome we received from BLAS (Bridge of Love Adoption Service). Being able to meet the people at BLAS and the CCAA (China Centre for Adoption Affairs) has been so incredible. To be able to tour the CCAA facilities, actually see our child's file and listen to them speak to us about their work was very special. We had visualized people in a building doing a job at matching babies with parents as just a part of their job, but not their passion. We have always told our daughter of all the baby girls in the world she was the only one that was supposed to have come to our family. Now, we have another piece of the puzzle to show how the perfect baby girl for our family came to us. These people really care. It is not just a job for them. They do this work with love.

Each member of our family experienced this trip in a different way, and we are grateful we were given the opportunity to visit Kaeli's birth land and have a connection with China. We think Kaeli will especially have more of a feeling of what it means when she proudly tells people she is from China. She has always shared that information readily, but now she will know the reason why she has a right to feel proud.