



OUR CHINA STORIES

我们的中国故事

Gao/高

Adoptee

The Netherlands

Adoption place: Xi'an, Shaanxi Province

Age at adoption: 12 months.

My name is Gao and I live in The Netherlands. I'm 22 years old and I was adopted at the age of 1 from Xi'an, Shaanxi province in China.

For me, identity has always been a key concept in my life as an adoptee. From very early on in life, I have come to realize a part of my identity was and is still missing. I felt like the predominantly white area I grew up in emphasized this missing part even more. I have been searching for my identity throughout my life, and I've especially experienced puberty as one of the most difficult periods in this process. As every other teenager, I started looking for my identity, but I wasn't sure where to find it – I wasn't even sure what I was looking for. It was also during puberty that I started to ask myself questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I want in life?"

I couldn't find the answers to these questions in The Netherlands. So, when I travelled to China in 2014, I hoped to find recognition and connectedness in the country that I had been fantasizing about for so long. Reality however, was different. I really felt like a tourist, not being able to even understand the language I was supposed to speak fluently and not knowing the habits of the culture that was supposed to be mine. I realized I had been changed by Western society.

Today, I am still not sure who I am or what I want. I can handle these missing parts of my identity better now, but I don't think I will ever come to terms with them. Therefore, I will keep trying to find the answers to the questions I have been asking for so long.



Gao