



We adopted our daughter knowing full well she had clubfeet. It was not until well into the adoption process that we learned she had been started on the Ponseti method when Dr. Jose Morcuende from Iowa City was visiting China. She had been through a series of casting, had the tenotomy performed on both feet, and was wearing a brace 23 hrs per day. Meizhi was born with bilateral clubfeet, meaning both feet were affected. Her treatment began at 2 months (see photo at left), her tenotomy took place at approx 4-5 months of age and she wore the brace 23 hrs a day for several months.

Meizhi's feet after correction (in China):



Meizhi's brace in China:



She now wears the brace 12-14 hrs a day and will most likely continue to do so until she is about 4 yrs old. Though we live in Illinois, we travel to Iowa City to have Meizhi seen by Dr. Morcuende. He says her feet are doing quite well. In January, 2007, he recommended the Ponseti/Mitchell brace and in the last 4 months, we have seen amazing results. It

is much more comfortable for Meizhi to wear than her previous brace. Morcuende stated that children as old as 4 and older can still benefit from the Ponseti method. He told us that the older the child is at the beginning of treatment, more bracing and possibly the tenotomies etc. might be needed as the muscles have had more time to strengthen into the extended positions; but they absolutely can be corrected and given quite good prognosis as well. This was a concern of ours since we didn't know at the time we committed to adopting our daughter how legitimate the medical information was. We feared the worst (no treatment at all, possible scarring, perhaps improper procedures had been performed that we'd have to get re-corrected) and educated ourselves to handle her condition as if that had been the case. Fortunately, that did not happen for our Meizhi. Dr. Morcuende found her first.

Many people look at infants/children with orthopedic issues and are frightened to adopt them. With basic education and love, some commitment to making sure the treatment is followed through and maybe some additional physical therapy for the child (depending on how severe the muscle atrophy is) children with clubfeet post treatment are 100% perfect in every way and have no impediments for a full and happy life. Our Meizhi has been walking less than 1 year already and most people don't even notice a problem with her feet. We've had to work with her on her muscle strengthening for her legs and abdomen but she has made amazing strides. When we adopted her at 22 months, she couldn't sit up from a laying flat position. Seven months later, she is in tumbling and bending/stretching and running like all other toddlers. Her feet are double extra wide so we have to buy wide width shoes and she is completely flat footed which will require supports at some point. But all these things are minor. She is doing exceptionally well and thank God for Dr Ponseti and his colleagues for educating the world on this method to treat the common birth defect. Our daughter's life was forever changed the day Dr Morcuende walked into the room.



Meizhi's feet and new brace.