Ella's diary (II)

(August 18)

On August 14 we took our long-awaited trip to Kyoto. I was excited the whole train-ride, because I knew that meant it would be my birthday soon, and I knew I would get a new bicycle!

We stayed in an apartment next to my grandparents, and we went over there for all our meals. I took the picture of my parents, and my mom with Alex all by myself.

I'm still working on my self-portraits. Here is what my mouth looks like when I say “a” and “u” in Japanese.

I also took a picture of my sippy-cup, and Hello Kitty toy. If you push the buttons on the back, Hello Kitty rings the bells.
Finally, it was my birthday!

First I went to my mama and daddy's room. There was a strange bulky thing covered with a sheet.

When I unwrapped it, there it was! My new bicycle! 'Yellow with a yellow basket on', just like I remembered it!

My grandmother got me a princess dress to wear, and a yummy cake with chocolate cream on top.
I was born on August 16, the day of Daimonji. My grandparents have a party every year on that day on their balcony in Kyoto. They have a crowd of people come over to serve lots of yummy food, and after it gets dark, we all watch the fires lit up in the northern Kyoto hills, in the shape of characters. The most famous is the character “dai” which means “big”!

The day after the Daimonji party we took a bus with obachan and her friend Michida-san and others to a modern art museum. We drove past rivers and rice fields, and then up into some mountains. The museum has two parts connected by a long curving tunnel, which we walked through with Michida-san’s son Ken and his family. Ken and Miki have a little boy named “Ko” who is even younger than Alex.
At the museum I got a kind of wooden flute, which I can hang around my neck and arm while I play. You have to blow into it a certain way to get it to make a sound. My mother hurt her toe and I “fluted her” with my flute, which made her feel better. We also got three balls made of colorful yarn. We all laughed when Alex tried to juggle. His hands moved as if he was juggling, but the balls flew everywhere!

Alex is a lot of fun to play with, especially now that he says things like “come on!” “I like this!”, and “look, look!”. These days he calls me “pitty Ella” and calls mama “Ago”, and calls daddy “Mama”. Sometimes he comes up to me from behind and gives me a big hug. When he falls down and cries I give him a kiss on the head.
Alex and I started going to a Hoikusho (day care center) a couple of days a week, but soon we’re going to switch to one that we can go to every day. Here are some photos from the August birthdays party at our first Hoikusho in Kyoto.

In the meantime there are lots of parks nearby with our favorites: swings, slides, and sandpits.