

Grandson Sixteen (Letter to Kevin)

Grandpa 11-10-2019

Sixteen years ago when Kevin was born, we planted a persimmon tree in our property at Tanglewood. At this Tanglewood yard, we spent a lot of happy hours with Kevin. He would watch his dad mowed the lawn before rewarded him with a big kiss. Then he would push his own toy mower all the way from one end of the yard to the other, sincerely believing that he was mowing the lawn, too. (See the first two pictures on the right, taken on April 30, 2005, when Kevin was two.) That year, we bought our new home at Nalani, and moved the persimmon tree with us. It was to grow healthily with our birth year grandson.



Sixteen year old! How fortunate of him, compared with what his grandparents had endured! In our time in Mao's China, we never had a quiet desk to study. We were constantly dragged into Mao's political campaigns, or asked to do physical labor. And that was not too bad compared with what followed during the so-called Cultural Revolution, when all schools in China were shut down, and kids (labeled as Educated Youth) were forced to vacate their family home to be re-educated in the far-away countryside. At that time, a bicycle was a luxury to own, as were three other luxuries of the era: radio, sewing machine, and wrist watch. That was Mao's era, the so-called "the first thirty years" (after 1949) when the Communist Party kept a tight political and economic control of the people and their miserable lives. That was what was happening under Mao's socialist China about 40 years ago. Distant, but not forgotten, and not sure it would ever repeat itself.

Sixteen was the age when the most your grandparents could dream of was a bicycle, and a quiet classroom. Here, of course, you learn to drive. Our initial plan was to buy ourselves a new car, then give you the 2003 Mazda Tribute we were driving, so as not to pay a teenager premium for insurance. But lately we have come to the decision to keep the old car for ourselves, and give you a newer car (and pay for it). You deserve it, Kevin.