

Dec 10 , 2010

Our Dream, our searches

A story of Chunde and our family

Dear Pastor, Professors, and Friends,

Today, we gather here to remember our common friend.

He was a son full of respect. He was a student full of work ethics. He was my dear brother. He was also your friend with a warm heart.

He had a dream. He fought for this dream steadfast for 20 years. His name is Chunde.

Chunde came from a small village in a remote, mountainous area of China. In this village, for centuries farming was the only thing people did. No one knew what the outside world would look like. Our ancestors did not leave us much, but they gave us a dream, a dream for searching outside world. They also gave us the determination, passion, and perseverance to fulfill this dream. Therefore, young people in this generation of the family have determined that the education is the key to reaching that dream. One after another, they left the village and went cities to seek the education. Chunde and I were admitted into two most prestigious universities in China --- Peking University and Tsinghua University. I know that most you who are here today came from prestigious universities. I do not intend to show off myself here and there is no need for such thing. What I want to emphasize is not the end result of entering universities, but the effort we had made and everything that our parents had poured into, in the process of achieving this in the twenty years. From this effort, our life has experienced a transformation -- a transformation that is sought not only by American people, but also by our family. This transformation had not happened for many centuries in this small village.

After entering the best universities, Chunde and I continued to work hard. No matter how much we had achieved, the dream in our hearts always led us to the next search, just like the stars in the sky are always above us. Therefore, we had been running in our life, seeking that brightest star in the sky.

Upon graduation, I went first to Germany and then to Japan to continue my study. Chunde chose to come to America. Although Peking university is known for its academic freedom while Tsinghua is known for its academic rigor, I ended up choosing Germany and Japan, two countries that are known for their discipline and precision, whereas Chunde ended up choosing America, a country that is known for its search for freedom.

Therefore, I had always felt that our choices complemented each other. If we were to combine our experiences, it would have been perfect. In this long journey, from small village to cities in China, from east to west around the world, we always encouraged each other, appreciated each other, and expected a better future.

But now, Chunde's expectation, Chunde's American dream, was suddenly gone, submerged under the waves at a Miami beach.

We lost a dear son, a dear brother. You lost a dear student, a dear friend.

He left a dream that is yet to be fulfilled and a pain for all relatives and friends, just like a beautiful cherry blossom that was sadly taken away by the wind.

Friends, there is nothing we could do to change this sad reality. Life continues. Tomorrow, the sun will rise again. The only thing we could do is to cherish our life, to cherish the friends and relatives around us. May peace with everyone.

Hancheng Dai, Cousin

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