



Something on my Chest ...

I wrote a couple of weeks ago about the birth of my new grandson Alex, and I have now had a chance to see him, as I made a quick trip over to Canada for a family get-together at the beginning of September.

I suppose that any new grandparent feels somewhat nostalgic when first holding their new grandchild. In my case this was fairly strong for a couple of reasons. One is that I really haven't had much contact with other babies during the years since I had my own, so there has been nothing to disturb the memory of my own days as a new parent. But what really brought out a strong sense of nostalgia was having the chance to use the same baby carrier that I used all those years ago!

In Japan, traditional baby carriers have held the baby against the mother's back but in the west, the most common types support the baby against the mother's chest. The one we used to carry Himi and Fumi when they were infants was made of a strong but soft corduroy fabric, and was adjustable to allow for a wide range of baby 'sizes'. We used it from the time they were newborn, up until their head and spine were strong enough to support themselves in a backpack type carrier.

When preparing for the arrival of Alex, Himi found this old carrier in a box in the storeroom and as it was still in perfect condition, eagerly put it back into service. She and her husband loan use it daily so that they can go about their work while the baby sleeps quietly.

I hadn't been in their home more than a few minutes when Himi said "OK Dad, get ready; it's your turn to wear the baby carrier!", and a few minutes later there I was, strolling around their garden with tiny Alex asleep against my chest. Can you imagine what a vivid feeling of nostalgia I felt!

I was a little bit apprehensive that he would start crying. When Himi was in her first few months of life she cried incessantly - it seems she had quite a difficult time with her digestion at first. But Alex seems to be a quite peaceful baby, crying only in short episodes as his tummy learns to digest his milk. For the rest of the time he sleeps very peacefully for hours on end, then drinks eagerly, then sleeps some more. Himi doesn't know how lucky she is!

Because he slept so peacefully in the carrier, there was nothing to disturb my thoughts and memories as I walked in the garden with him. I am sure you can guess what I mostly thought about ... here I was at the 'close' of another circle ...

I have now been around the cycle twice; the first time from my own birth up to the point where I had a child; the second time 'watching' as an adult as my own child grew from birth to become a parent in her turn. I am still fairly young, so I guess there is every chance that I will see at least another full turn of the wheel, and who knows, perhaps more than that!

This baby carrier is very well made, and in good condition, and I wonder when I will next have a chance to use it ...

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