

First Week of Classes in Tianjin

I see that my introductory sentence about visiting the Tianjin water park on the previous Saturday got deleted, but at least the four photos were included in my report.

Student enrollment was smaller than expected. I have 8 students in my classroom rather than 16. The classes are going well, though we have made some adjustments. Last week we discovered that the air conditioning to the entire classroom building is shut off at 5 PM, so when we had a game night on the fifth floor starting at 7 PM, it was too hot in the room. We got the rules changed and they will turn off the air conditioning at 6 PM, and we are starting our games and movies on Tuesday and Thursday nights, respectively, also at 6 PM. The Internet access is threatened to be cut off for about a week, supposedly on July 30, but it could happen tomorrow.



Here are two photos of the audience at our opening ceremonies. The students are in gold shirts. The staff are in white. We North American teachers are at the front left (minus myself and our team leader). Our classroom building is hard to photograph because of the surrounding trees. Here is the opposite corner; our corner would look the same, by symmetry. Then there is a picture of the inside courtyards.



I'll fill some space with two bird photos. The Chinese Pond Heron is arriving on a floating pad with breakfast in its mouth. The Little Grebe was diving underwater for its meal.

This Saturday some of us had a field trip into some mountains north of Tianjin. (Tianjin Jixian National Geopark) From a parking lot we hiked up a narrow tree-covered valley for about 2 miles (3.2 km), rising about 1000 feet (300 m). Then we turned back



Little Grebe

before getting to another section of the Great Wall. When I checked the satellite photo of the area, it looked like the ridge on which the wall would have been built was nearly another 2 miles away, so it was good to have turned back when we did. Here are some photos of the valley.



The rocks were massive and very old quartzite (altered sandstone), all tilted.

Then we visited the Dule Buddhist temple, about nine hundred years old, in Jixian.



The air was very clear in the mountains that day, but back in the lowlands the haze was strong again.

On our return to Tianjin I noticed a very tall and narrow building capped by some floors. It was essentially an elevator shaft perhaps 20 stories high with offices at the top and nothing on the way up. On all four sides of the top floors in large letters was “OTIS”, the maker of elevators. Their building style is very appropriate to their product.

Ed Holroyd, 16 July 2012