



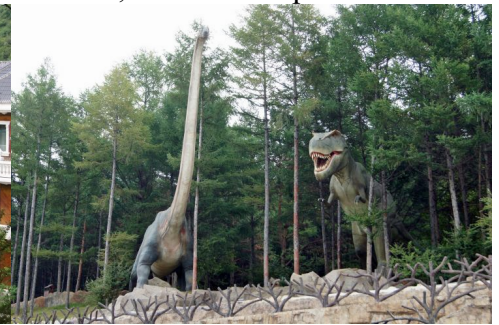
Home and Hills

During the week Elaine, our Team Leader, and I joined several of

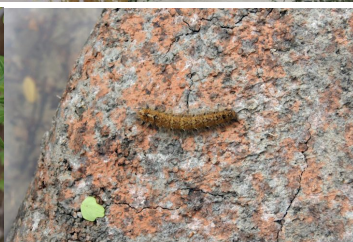
our Chinese teachers to visit the home of Iona, a teacher in my classroom. We met her husband, son, and mother-in-law and enjoyed a large dinner. They live on floor 21 of a building of about three dozen floors. We had good fellowship discussions.



Late Friday morning everyone joined in another Sing-Along. The scene was similar, so I took no photos.



Saturday morning our class and I went to a nearby resort in the hills. It had two dinosaur models with moving parts and sounds. Some of us climbed the hillside. Of course I was looking at the trees, flowers, caterpillars, rocks, and a snake. I was "at home" in the forest environment, but many of the teachers from the city were not. Some of the Chinese teachers brought their children. Asians use umbrellas for shade. We had a large lunch.



For the early afternoon I joined another class that was visiting the same resort and I went up the hillside again.



The view from the top of the tower was good. Some in that class liked exploration while others were less adventuresome.



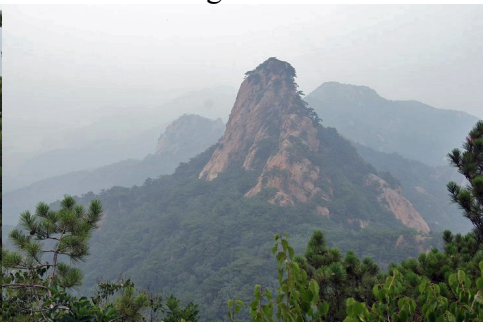
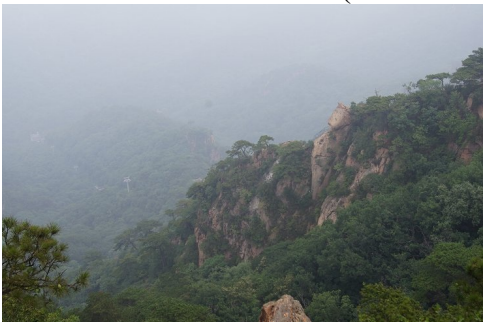
I did not see any interesting birds here.



At church there were many songs with tunes familiar to us, and from following some of the Chinese characters projected on the screens, the messages were the same. We heard He Leads Me, Jesus Loves Me, Trust and Obey, while the anthem was Washed In the Blood of the Lamb. A man read the familiar passage from Matt. 5:3-11 and then amplified its message for an hour. Afterwards in their bookstore we purchased the large high quality bilingual books for about ten dollars each.



In the afternoon Meggie (from N. Carolina), two of her teachers and I went to a nearby mountain park. After entering we took a long ride to the far end. Then we climbed up a road, then stairs, then rocks to reach the summit of Mount Qian, the highest peak in the area. The vertical climb was about a thousand feet (310 meters). The air had very thick haze, so the views were not good.



In the upper left hidden in the haze is the cable car system, shown in a later enlargement to the left. We did not use it. Our group is shown at the right on the summit. Other views from the top are above. In the middle view you may see some tiny red dots on the high ground. That is a shrine of Tibetan Buddhism with statues covered by red robes.



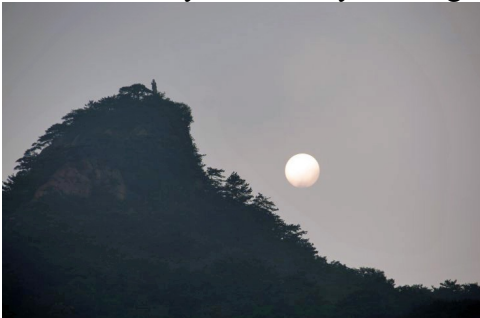
There are lots of prayer flags, shown on the next page. I was under the impression that Tibetan Buddhism would be practiced from Tibet, through Qinghai Province (where I saw it previously), to Mongolia. I was not expecting to find it so far east in China. There were also lots of locks, some of which were double hearts, that I



had not seen previously. The upper part of the path to the summit was steep in some places. While at the summit I was able to photograph a flock of Carrion Crows being attacked by a Eurasian Sparrowhawk. Both were of species that I had never seen before. This crow was growing a new set of feathers.



The lower parts of the trail were paved and surrounded by tall trees. It might have been pleasant there except for the gnats, which are very tiny flies. There were yellow sheets of sticky fly paper everywhere to catch those gnats. They do not bite us but are a nuisance by swarming around us. Some people wore special hats with a netting covering the head to keep the gnats away from their faces. It seemed that our bodies were more attractive to the gnats after we climbed the mountain than before, probably because of our sweat and body odors. At the end of our return trip down the trail I stood still in the middle of the parking lot with hundreds of gnats around me. Eventually the dragonflies took notice, likely thinking "dinner!". Eventually I had dozens of dragonflies also around me and then there were fewer gnats present. They were either eaten by the dragonflies or quickly departed the scene. So this Sunday afternoon walk in the woods was pleasing, as long as one could ignore the clouds of gnats around the head and near the ears. The final photos show the sun near another peak and then a view of our summit from the base of the cable car system. Lastly is a large butterfly that we saw on the summit.



We had a large dinner of noodles and vegetables at a small Muslim restaurant in the city. I paid the bill for the four of us. It was about five dollars total (not each), and there were no taxes or tip.

Dr. Ed Holroyd, 28 July 2015