

Dear Friends and Relatives,

The final week in China went well. We had a few last instructional classes and a review. There was a retaking of the initial placement test. It showed listening and understanding improvements of an average of about 14 percent, ranging from about 30 percent for previous low-scoring teachers to about 1.5 percent for the advanced group. This is what we expected.



Program hosts

Sherry

Tuesday evening we had a variety show. Participants varied from entire classes to individual teachers to their children to invited guests. The program hosts were a monitor from another class and Asheely, our translator. Her daughter, Sherry, sang. Our class provided three participants. Our monitor, Glen, (half Tu minority) sang. The daughter (recently enrolled at a military university) of our oldest teacher played excellent keyboard. Michael played his bamboo flute.



Glen



Michael

Several Tibetans provided dancing and singing. Our younger American teachers demonstrated Tibetan dances that they had learned here.



Kurt

Individual classes had outings with their American teachers during this past week, typically eating together somewhere. Our class chose a “tea house”, with a lovely courtyard with an abundance of small trees and flowers. Some of us took a walk into the adjacent hillside.



As usual, the rotatable tabletop had an abundance of Chinese food dishes. The relaxed atmosphere brought out different personalities from what we displayed in the classroom.

The final closing ceremony included presenting certificates to each Chinese teacher. The school gave a gift to each of the American teachers. It was a decorative teapot. The body was the rare white jade (used in the Olympic gold medals), and four decorative scenes in gold leaf were wrapped around the sides. The scenes were some tulip flowers, Tibetan antelope, Qinghai Lake gulls, and the Lamasary monuments. My class presented me with a cross-stitch message “Be happy and healthy” in the Tibet language. A high school graduate, Shalley, who was in my class, gave me a Chinese fan with a classical illustration.



During my final walk into the “wilderness” valley I photographed three birds. The native Ring-necked Pheasant is common in America but this variety has different head and neck colors.



Ring-necked Pheasant



The trip home was normal.
Ed Holroyd, 13 August 2011 Eurasian Cuckoo



Little Owl

