

Dear Friends and Relatives,

My Common Cold symptoms are essentially gone, faster than expected. I am back to full strength and caught up with my American students' homeworks. This past week we were using a new curriculum with our Chinese teachers and it went well. We will spend the next weeks with our old version which I used the previous two years.

On Sunday, July 10, we returned to the last location of last year, shown at the right with some of our team entering. The choir is still accompanied by a single violin, shown during the practice.



During the week both the American and Chinese teachers presented programs sharing our respective cultures. I gave a talk about American geography with numerous photos of our country and introducing the states from which each of us teachers come. The Chinese showed us the costumes and dances of the regional people groups within China. One night specialized in the Tibetan dances. Another had a variety shown in these photos. From left



to right: Tu (with colored arm bands), Tibet (with long sleeves), Mongol, Hui (a local Muslim group). Then our young American girls got dressed up in some of the costumes.



On Saturday we visited the Kunbum lamasary to see their practice of Tibetan Buddhism. I was there last year and so I did not take many new photos. The trip provided a good view of the countryside. A Black-faced Bunting was singing there with its yellow breast. I had not seen that species for the past forty-one years.





Saturday evening we went downtown to Xining Square. We were disappointed that the community dancing was not happening anymore. There was still a community band and choral group making music. Several people were flying kites thousands of feet into the sky, high above the skyscrapers. One of the most spectacular things was a special fountain with a tremendous variety of moving and artistic water jets. In this snapshot also notice the small clusters of water beads above the crown. The designs were obviously computer controlled and the program lasted a long time. A video camera would be needed to capture the entire performance effectively.

This past Sunday morning was in the illustrated building. Like last year, it was overflowing with more than a thousand people, twice or more the design capacity. We arrived late by bus. Some sat in the courtyard or in side and upstairs rooms with TV views and sound transmitted from the main room. I found a stool in an upper room with neither, only the sound coming weakly through the hallway to the dozen or so people in our room. The hour long talk was based on the story of the rich fool who had to die that night. We were not provided with an English translation of it. Last year scaffolding obscured the view of the front of this building.



Last night (Monday) we had an optional time of singing. We used traditional songs from our American textbook. Some Tibetan boys sang songs from their culture. In the last photo: to my left are our official translator (Ashley but spelled Asheely, 45), Shirley and Jim Goering our team leaders, and Carra. Asheely has been admiring things that she sees in our team and has



been asking significant questions. We met her 11 year old daughter recently.

We have a special demonstration by our American team this afternoon, a subject for the next report.

Ed Holroyd, 19 July 2011