

Second Week

In my previous report I did not mention that I had visitors last Sunday (17) evening. Two of my Chinese teachers from last year, Jenny and Rita, came here from Menyuan. It took a three-hour bus ride from this small city that is to the north of Xining. We almost missed each other because I was doing other things. So we had a joyful reunion. Perhaps we will meet again at the end of our program. I had wanted to visit the beautiful valley at Menyuan, but that is not possible this year. (Photos from last year)



On Tuesday afternoon we simulated a North American style wedding. I was chosen to be the “pastor”. It went well.



Friday evening my work was finished early. So I went a few blocks away to a large community park. Every evening there is Tibet style dancing, though most of the people are Han Chinese with some Hue minority. They dance around a large circle on what could sometimes function as another fountain in motion.

Many pieces of music are played over a loudspeaker, with or without words. The movements are generally simple: arm waving, turns, forward and backward steps, mostly at walking rhythm. Each tune has its own choreography which the crowd of dancers knows or can easily learn. Our younger American team members quickly joined such activity on previous nights.



The stone tiles on which they are dancing are polished.



This is the first weekend in which I had time for my bird hikes into the “wilderness” (last year’s view shown). My walk is usually to the end of what you see as the dirt terraces, a distance of a couple of miles. There are numerous graves along the route.

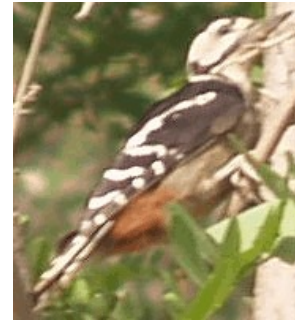
Here are some of the birds that I have been photographing there this year.



Coal Tit, like our Chickadee.



Godlewski's Bunting, a common sparrow.



Great Spotted Woodpecker.



Oriental Greenfinch.



Pale Rosefinch, male; the female is a pale tan all over.



Pere David's Laughingthrush.



Red-billed Chough. Similar to a crow. Unusual voice and spectacular flying styles.



Hoopoe. Note the crest which is sometimes fanned out across the top of the head.

Ed Holroyd,
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