

Special Places and Promotions

On our third Sunday we went to the old church. The street was dark because the trees formed a thick canopy over it. We arrived for the first of two services, and this one was very full of people. The singing was lead by a team of young people and had an attractive modern musical style. On our fourth Sunday we went to the new church but needed to return to this one afterwards in order to purchase bilingual books from their small book store outside.



Our afternoon trip that third Sunday was to the vinegar museum and factory. Zhenjiang has several specialties. Vinegar production, a specially cured pork, and noodles are the famous foods, and eyeglass lenses are another.



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The museum showed some old equipment. The photo display showed the modern production process. The display case showed the many styles of dark flavorful vinegar in which foods like pork are dipped at dinner.



The following Saturday morning Cathy, a teacher in my class, brought five of her 7th grade students for a 2-hour session, sometimes called English Corner. Their use of English was excellent, and the topics of discussion were widely varied. It was likely inspirational for them to successfully use their English with a real foreigner. We met in a small hilltop shelter beside our hotel. At the base, near the pond, we walked by this decorative stone which had a naturally carved heart-shaped hole, shown by the green tree behind it.

In the afternoon we five American teachers were asked to judge an English speech contest of almost 20 high school students. A final contest in December would select five of the winners for trip to America. The students initially gave a prepared speech about Pearl S. Buck, the Nobel Prize winner who wrote about her life in this city of Zhenjiang. Then they selected at random a topic from a list and had to speak without preparation. We American teachers asked 3 more questions. Finally, each student showed some special talent, which included additional speaking, singing (one wrote her own song), and or playing traditional Chinese instruments which are illustrated here.



Earlier in the week a television crew visited our classrooms and interviewed some of the Chinese teachers. After editing to form a promotional documentary of our English training program, the story was shown on local television. (We missed seeing it.) We are likely to get copies later to see what they selected for presentation. The local education authorities were so impressed with our training that they arranged both the TV crew visit and the speech contest.

Ed Holroyd, 3 August 2014 (delayed because of work load)