

## **2007 TTP Photo Journals**

**Monday, July 2, 2007**

Attendance at the training was higher than it had been last week. I think the end is in sight and participants want to take full advantage of the opportunity. With most lower schools closed, we continue to get many children attending some classes. For many, it's the first time they have seen or spoken with a foreigner. It's easy for us to understand why their parents want them to take this opportunity to see us. One teacher brought in a script she had written for Little Red Riding Hood for her elementary school class to perform. Most teachers feel they don't have the time for this kind of innovation. I hope to get it copied so that all the teachers can practice reading it and see a good example of working outside their textbook with their students. We did have some absences because senior school exam results came out last week, with the attendant trauma of some low scores and some disappointed students who needed guidance from their teachers. The exam scores clearly affect the teachers as well as the students deeply.

**Tuesday, July 3, 2007**

Temperatures soared again today, and people are beset with colds. For the first time, we dined alone, which made for amusing interactions with the waitstaff. We didn't eat much, and word spread quickly, as we knew it would. Undeterred, we made a foray to the local supermarket for coffee milk tea, our morning beverage of choice. There, we discovered a third floor, which we had never noticed before. It led to new explorations of cds and household supplies. Meanwhile, the training program participants were recovering from a morning of idioms and pronunciation practice focusing on "supermarket" to replace "shupermarket". The college-age children of several participants are now in attendance, but the novelty seems to have worn off a bit with the under 14 crowd. The son of the deputy mayor has been a pillar of attendance, however. After dinner, we had guests in our hotel room. Alice and her mother delivered two beautiful manuscripts which Alice's father had written in classic calligraphy. Again, we were touched by their generosity. We shared what we could of ourselves with them by looking at family photos on our computers.

**Wednesday, July 4, 2007**

We celebrated the fourth of July in style. Mr. Mao invited a teacher from the program to join us for dinner at a coffee bar. They served Western-style food, so we feasted on French fries and steak, tomato soup, and coffee. There were no fireworks tonight, but there have been on several past nights. Many of the teacher-participants have missed a day or two this week dealing with the fallout from the exam results which were announced last week. One of the elementary teachers had written a skit for her class to perform based on Little Red Riding Hood. The "chorus" was a group of teapots. I recorded it onto her cell phone for her so that she and her class could hear the proper pronunciation. In addition, I asked Mr. Mao to photocopy it so that the whole class of teachers can read it and see what can be done beyond the textbook. After idioms and focused pronunciation practice, we discussed emergency calls for fire, police, and emergency medical care.

**Thursday, July 5, 2007**

Today, we ended the day on a special note. We were asked by the principal of Senior Middle #4 to meet his class of senior 2 students with the highest record of achievement. The class of 39 students certainly lived up to their billing. They were bright, engaged, and articulate. They wanted to compare their lives as students in China to the lives of high school students in the U.S. The role of exams in their lives was a frequent question, but topics ranged from our ability to speak Chinese to our favorite city in China. Once again, we felt like rock stars as we were handed bouquets and photographed with the entire class. We complimented them on their high level of English skill and wished them well next year as they face their university exams.

### **Friday, July 6, 2007**

Today was the last day of the training course. We had prepared normal lessons, but they were not to be. Michael Jiang had prepared a closing power point with photos from the session and then segments on Peking Opera and The Four Skills. We loved learning more about the culture as the participants spoke eloquently on both. We learned that white masks were evil characters, black masks were good characters, and red masks were brave characters. We lunched with the retired deputy director of research, Michael, and Mr. Mao. The closing ceremony included a speech by the Director General of the Department of Education. He told a personal story of knowing enough English words to pass a test but not being able to communicate using any of them, so on a trip to Egypt, he never left his hotel room. Then, there were many tearful farewells as participants departed for homes and loved ones.