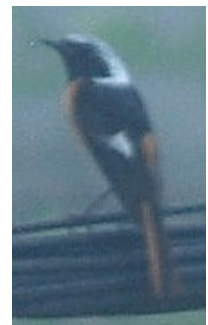


Arrival in Beijing

My trip to China was from Denver to San Francisco (June 28) to Hong Kong (over Midway Island and west coast of Taiwan) to Beijing (June 29 and 30). I met the four new and young members of our Xining team in the late afternoon at the San Francisco airport, and we started working well together immediately. The trip across the ocean started at 1:20 AM and was supposed to be 13 hours, but the lighter headwinds on that route trimmed off perhaps a half hour. The dawn was just breaking in Hong Kong after a total darkness flight.



The morning of July 1 most of the group of 121 teachers and team leaders were taken to the Great Wall. I had previously been there twice, but this time I was able to ride up in a gondola rather than an open chairlift. That was good because there was intermittent light rain, total fog, and initially some distant thunder. At the top there was no way to see to the next tower along the wall. So we all missed out on any scenery. Down in the foggy village there was a colorful bird with a beautiful song - a Daurian Redstart.



Our days here in Beijing have been filled with training sessions. Nearly two-thirds of our people are new. Those of us who are alumni got a review from the sessions and offered insights to the first-timers.



Sunday morning we attended meetings at one of three locations. It was already full when we arrived and we had to sit on benches in the basement looking at large TV screens. (The photo was taken after the end.) The main talk was given by a man younger than I have seen at other locations. The Supper was served. The music was all familiar to Western culture. No translation to English was provided at our location, though it was available at a different one. The fourth photo shows myself and the rest of the Xining team.

Ed Holroyd, 5 July 2011