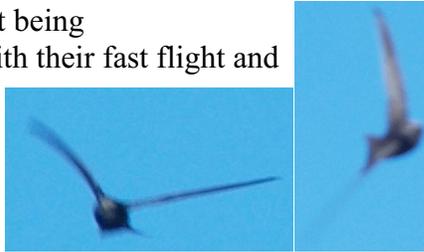


Transition

During Thursday morning, our last full day in Beijing, many of us teachers visited the Summer Palace. A cold front had passed by during the early morning before sunrise, delivering rain with an hour of thunder. So the air was clean, visibility excellent, and the temperature just right under sunny skies. Thousands of other people were at this park-like area, some taking boat rides on the lake and others walking the paths and viewing the buildings. There were also museum exhibits showing beautiful artifacts from the past couple thousand years. Rooms were devoted separately to bronze, jade, porcelain, scrolls, and miscellaneous other carvings in wood and ivory. The buildings are finely decorated. Even the stones of the pathways have designs. I eventually climbed to the top of the northern hill and down the back side. There were only four species of birds, with the Common Swift being most noticeable with their fast flight and screaming voices. They moved so quickly that they are blurred in the photos.

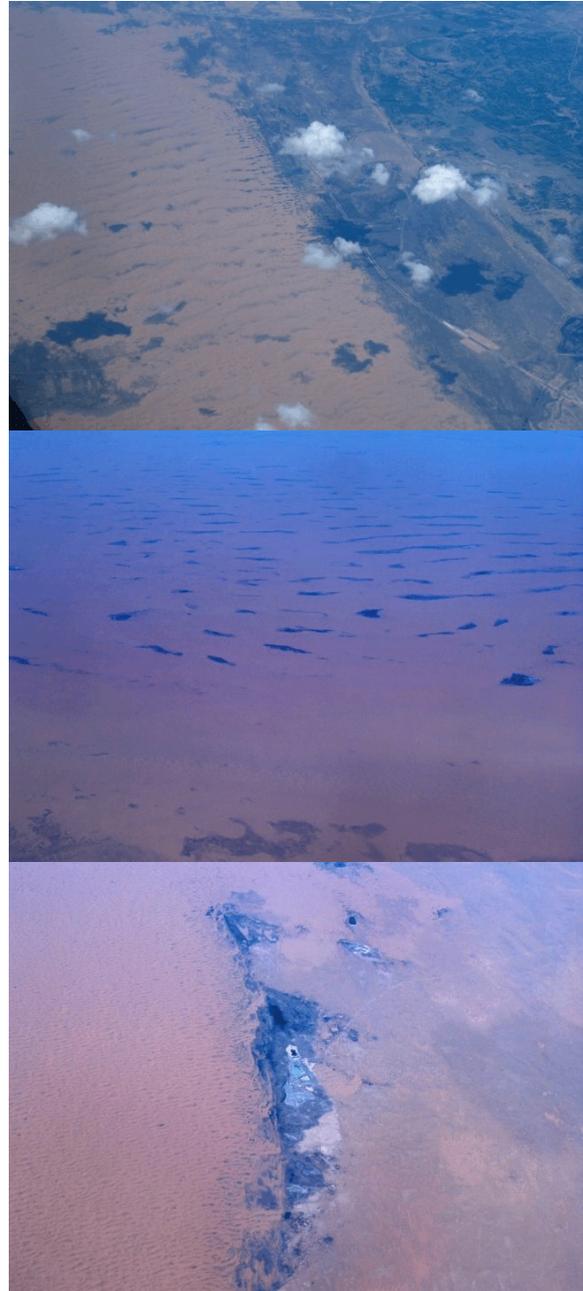


Our flight to Xining on Friday went well. I got to take many more photos, some shown at the right, of the Gobi Desert as we passed over it.

When we arrived on campus I selected the same dormitory room that I had last year. After dinner our team took a walk through the neighborhood to show our new team members important stores and the Internet café.

This morning, Saturday, it is raining. I measured the outside air temperature at about 14 deg. C (57 F). There is a drain pipe in a corner of my room which is noisy when rain drains from the roof. So I could easily tell it was raining outside during the early morning when it was still dark. Today we will arrange our classrooms in the morning and possibly go shopping for supplies in the downtown parts of the city in the afternoon.

The photos below show last year's view from my room, with my laundry drying and the room itself.



Ed Holroyd, 9 July 2011