

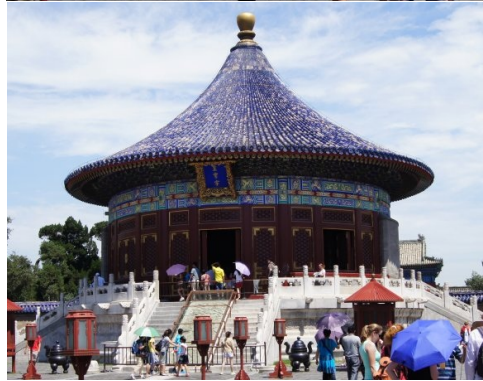
Temple & Tianjin

On Thursday we teachers had the option to visit one or several tourist areas in Beijing. I chose to return the Temple of Heaven where I visited a couple of years ago. It is a very large park area with some old buildings at which the former Emperors (until 1911) offered prayers and sacrifices for the benefit of the Chinese people.

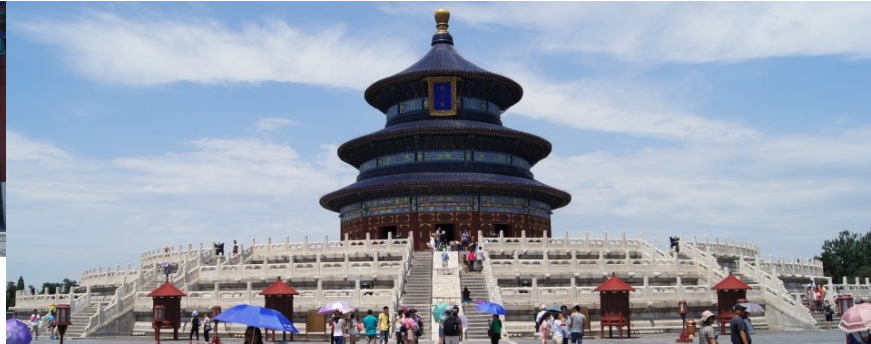


Our small group entered at the south end, where there is a large mound of white marble blocks that make an altar for the large sacrifices.

Nearby to the north of it is a small round building with two



rectangular buildings on either side of the plaza. The main feature inside is the blue plaque on the far wall, shown in the interior view and enlarged. The two lower right characters are Shang Di, the name of the monotheistic Creator God of China for the first several dynasties. The character above that is Heaven (in this context). So this small temple, built in 1530, is dedicated to the original Chinese God, whose attributes parallel those of the God of the Hebrews.



That same plaque can also be seen in the largest temple and the building to the far left in the

smaller photo above. I had not known from my readings that it was also in those buildings. In this large building the Emperor prayed yearly for good harvests. This building is in the north end of the large park area.



I spent about three hours in the park and had a lunch there in the shade of the trees. Of course I took photos of the birds. The bird at the left is an Azure-winged Magpie. On the right is the Eurasian Magpie, which looks nearly identical to the Black-Billed Magpie of





western America. The Yellow-billed Grosbeak, shown at the left, was nearby while I ate lunch. The Spotted Dove has spots on the back of its neck. Some Eurasian Tree Sparrows (not shown) and several Oriental Greenfinches were taking baths in a puddle of water in a rose garden.



The drive to Tianjin on well. The van from exactly 9 AM, as arrived at our campus of the Tianjin Polytechnic lunch in the faculty/staff lunchroom. At 3 PM we went to discuss our plans and visit the rooms we will be using. We need different furniture in our assigned classrooms for our style of teaching. Students will arrive and register on Sunday, at which time we will ask each a few questions in order to assess their abilities with English. Opening ceremonies will be at 10 AM on Monday with the rest of our program following thereafter.

Friday morning went Tianjin arrived at promised and we University in time for the classroom building

My room in the dorm/hotel is 521, on the same floor as last year and with the same facilities. I did my accumulated laundry soon after I purchased a bucket and detergent. Then when we started to go to our classroom building we had an unexpected and joyful reunion. I noticed the wording on a shirt on the girl walking in front of us and pointed it out to Ron, who also taught there last year. He mentioned the name, Yolanda, of the girl who wore that shirt last year (pictured at the left). She immediately turned around and recognized us. Yolanda was our official translator last year and also a student in the classroom of Ron. After some hugs and joyful tears we had the reunion photo taken. Our dorm/hotel is in the background. A month ago Yolanda started a job with the HP company.



Ed Holroyd
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