

1. Haworth/China 3-12-17

Sunday, March 12, 2017

Dear Family and Friends:

Greetings from Huaihua (Why-Wha) University in Hunan Province, China! I have been here a little over a week and am finally just starting to get my days and nights in the right order. The 14-hour time difference was rough. I tend to be exhausted by 7pm and then am rarin' to go about 2am.

I am at Huaihua University for six weeks this spring as part of the Chinese National Overseas Teaching Program. I am teaching a course in Ethnomusicology for about 200 students



View from my hotel room - always foggy

here and giving four big presentations at different universities in this province. In addition, this school got some small African djembes so we will be playing some Guinean music as well. It is a pretty busy schedule. I am living in a lovely, western-ish hotel across the street from one of the campuses so that has been nice. (AKA "Sit-down toilet"!)

The hotel serves a Chinese breakfast each morning and then I eat the other meals in the 'canteen' on campus. I have two English-majors who translate for me – Holly and Kama. They have already done a wonderful job and I have really appreciated their talents and hard work. They are basically with me any time I am outside of my hotel room. Huaihua is considered a "small" Chinese city – with only 5.2 million people. Thankfully, we are on the "fast-train" route. I flew from Los Angeles into Shanghai and spent the night before taking the all-day train ride to get to Huaihua. I understand that we are up in the mountains but I have not seen any mountains yet. It has been 100% cold, rainy, and overcast since I got here. Looking out my 11th floor hotel room window I can see 2-3 blocks at the most. It has been extremely foggy every day.



I love the big scooter tires!

Several months ago I got my schedule and the topics that I would be presenting on. Three days before I left, I got a different schedule and totally new topics! Since I got here, I think everything on the schedule has been changed yet again. Thankfully I'm prepared to be flexible! If you are a fan of Chinese food, you might have recognized Hunan Province as a source of extremely spicy food. I am learning to recognize and pick off as many hot peppers as I can! I also learned how to say "No spice, please" in Chinese. (One of those 'essential' phrases.) The lifestyle here is very different from what I experienced further north in Changzhi last year. This University is a good 30-minutes by cab away from



Welcoming me as a professor from Bemidji State



One of the few Chinese flags I have seen



My translators: Kama & Holly

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Symbol of the University

‘downtown’ here and there doesn’t seem to be any infrastructure to support the 19,000 students except on campus. This is a low-key, slow-paced, largely military town that is far enough inland to not get many tourists or foreigners. Everything is quite kept-up and clean.

So far I have been invited to several dinner parties around town. Most things that I eat I do not recognize – but so far everything has been quite tasty. [Although I have renewed my commitment to no-more-chicken-feet -- even though they are considered a delicacy.] Last night I had a dish that was described to me as “pig’s ears” – thin, brown, maybe ¾” by 3” in size – with a long bright white strip through the middle. It was very crunchy so I asked if I was supposed to eat the white part. “Oh, yes, that’s the bone and it gives it texture!” Some things I figure just don’t translate well. Where we ate a lot of seafood further north, this year I have had duck, pig, and lamb already quite frequently. Hunan pork is supposed to be quite the specialty. (As are their radishes.) Boiled peanuts have been served with several meals so I asked if we were supposed to eat the shell or not. All the Chinese laughed hysterically at my question – but I thought it was worth asking! You just never know.

Being gone in the middle of the semester took a lot of effort and graciousness on the part of my administrators, colleagues, and students back in Bemidji. Before I left I had to have all the classes prepared so that things could continue. My internet connection was improved today so I spent several hours grading papers online. I hope to get caught up before they get back from Spring Break.

Hopefully it will be warmer and sunnier here soon! Much to see and do!

Janice Haworth



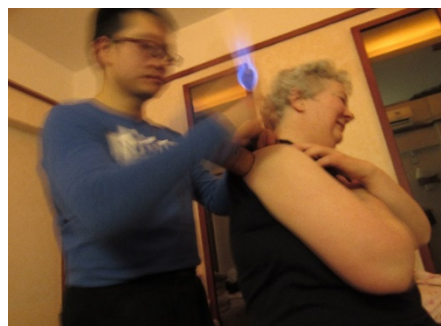
One of my 5 classes



Chop-Sticks and unknown vegetables



Trying Chinese medicine on my bad hip



Massage, Acupuncture, Cupping



I feel like a Transformer...