



TEACHING ENGLISH IN JINGZHOU, CHINA

Gary & Terry Davenport

Number Two 2011

Our Address

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Website of Interest

Gary's Blog:

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**Terry recorded this man
stripping sugar cane for sale
on the street**

My heroes' status has only risen!

Terry has been my personal earthly hero since before we were married. I admired her determination and spunk back in 1970 when first seeing her at a distance as college students at Middle Tennessee State in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

I have said often "there is nothing she cannot accomplish if she sets her mind to it," and, believe me, she has 'set her mind' to many things over our 39+ years of marriage. Nothing has changed here in China!

There is age and decay everywhere but she adapts moment by moment to her physical circumstances and finds the 'greater good' in it all. This is an older city and it shows...and the responsibility to make necessary changes are ignored by all, except for the 'sweep ladies' on the streets, the only ones who seem to do anything about the piled garbage and careless litter on the streets. These 'sweep ladies' are at the absolute lowest level of human existence, yet are valuable beyond description.



Ignore date on the picture of our new bed, linens, draperies

Our two-bedroom, furnished, clean, heated, and much appreciated apartment is a safe haven, where we can retreat and recharge and thrive in our relationship. When we 'remember when,' we immediately realize we have heater units and hot water, which the students do not have. No one had lived in our place for several months, and they bought new curtains and new bed linens, to Terry's delight when she saw it.



We are provided a telephone and hot/cold water dispenser (water is 6 yuan: 97 cents)



Our living room/den (cable provided)...one English channel



TJ is a 'happy camper' ...she has found a willing listener (Seth, one of the two children of Dale and Lisa Taylor, two English teachers from Tennessee area)



Refrigerator and washing machine provided for us; we hang all clothes up to dry since no one has a clothes dryer

Our residence lets us remember our five children and three grandsons, and we have enjoyed bragging on each of them to the students, who visit our apartment, as they see pictures on the wall and on the computer's screensaver.

Terry takes a university bus to the West campus three days and a bus to get home (a 12 minute ride each way); she quickly embraced the challenge when it was revealed that this campus is the only one where freshman students are located. I am there for three of my six classes.

The first week: we had a heater in the spare bedroom, one hot-plate burner, and the internet and cable television not working, in addition to a water drip in the kitchen. Workers were sent and they were fix in a reasonable time frame (quite a nice process).

Those who have known me for only 10 minutes realize I enjoy sports and like to keep up with news events. The internet lets me observe/read anything I had in America. We also watch TV programs when we have time via online services like Hulu. I receive a USA Today newspaper as pdf email attachment daily (\$4.95 per month).

Daily 'surprises' we have found...

- Most major buildings on campus and in town do not have heat...and, yes, it is cold. The seasons here can be compared to Tennessee, we were told in our training. When the concrete blocks get cold, it takes a long time to warm up, even when the temperatures rise. The students have no hot water, where they live eight to a room, and electricity is turned off at 11 p.m. (how dare us even begin to complain about our situations).
- Wal-Mart is here and some 'foreign' foods are also in other stores, though nothing is convenient without a car (we Americans are spoiled). We sent out a 'wish list' of natural peanut butter, pinto beans, tomato soup, macaroni and cheese, and decaf tea bags to those who expressed the desire to aid our ministry through 'care packages.'
- I am glad we have found good bread, orange and grape juice, spaghetti sauce and noodles, tuna, and cheese (all American brands). I admit it...I am not as 'spunky' as Terry in food choices, though I have made some progress. She has found a good stir-fry spot on the streets, though it is considered 'peasant food' by the other local English teachers. One said he did not know of any 'foreigners' who liked it.
- We drink and cook with only the bottled water to preserve our bodily functions. Glad to have it at a good price! Food and transportation prices are great: 4 medium-sized apples are five yuan: 81 cents; a bus ride across town 1 yuan: 16 cents; a taxi ride across town (3 people) 15.5 yuan: \$2.50. I have already ridden more buses and taken more taxis than at any other time in my life, in just one week.
- Who would have thought even a year ago that we would have a checking account with a bank in China. We're handling the language issues daily and depending on others for much help along the way. Terry is going to keep Seth and Caleb one evening so Dale and Lisa can have a 'date night' out. ☺

We believe we are here for a reason: to reach out to the 18-20 year old university students in Jingzhou...to sow seeds of knowledge and understanding wherever possible. We know it will not return to us void. We have the opportunity to reach the future leaders of China, and to be 'stretched' ourselves in the process. Your prayers and support are deeply appreciated!

**Gary and Terry
Davenport**