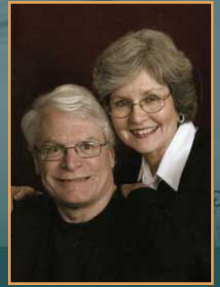




TEACHING ENGLISH AND 'GOOD NEWS' IN JINGZHOU



Gary/Terry Davenport's China Experience



With warmer weather comes cute boy, pet



Discovered this craftsman working with an axe on drinking containers; will buy one to take 'home' one day



Life cycles are the same worldwide, and life goes on

Do your own thinking. Be selective. You are worth it. Your mind is important. Protect it. Feed your mind only what is beneficial.

Greetings from Terry: Wednesday, March 30: We got to eat dinner with Ron and Evelyn Mc Farlin in their apartment on the South Campus. They are the American foreign teachers from the Nashville/Murfreesboro area. We had a delicious meal and good fellowship. They have been a real encouragement to us since we arrived.

Friday, April 1: This is a warm, sunny, "one layer" day. One layer of clothes, that is. I discovered a yellow forsythia bush in bloom; just like they have in Tennessee. There are several rose bushes swelling with buds and cherry and peach tree blossoms filling out the trees. The city buses are more crowded this week as people enjoy the good weather and family fellowship of the Peach Festival in one of the area parks. I have heard it said that if you attend the peach festival the tradition is you will meet your Mr. or Miss "Right".

This week end one of the teachers lost his uncle to cancer and one of my student's grandfather passed away. Four of my students returned home for various reasons. Life cycles are the same worldwide, and life goes on.

Last night at English Corner a female student asked if I thought it was better to wait until after graduation to get married and if a couple did get married during school, then realized they were not right for each other what could they do? Needless to say, this opened up a very beneficial discussion on preparing for marriage, counting the cost, being selective and living by God's direction because He made us, loves us and knows what is best for us. All of which was made as "I

statements based on the "American Culture" I come from.

This week's text lesson was *Novels and Movies*. One of our vocabulary words was "glamorous". I told them just because a movie star (sports figure) looks glamorous drinking, smoking, gambling and living as if married when not married does not mean that life style is good for you to imitate. Movies sometimes lie. They don't show or tell you how much drinking, smoking, etc. ruins your health, messes up your family and brings a nation down. Do your own thinking. Be selective. You are worth it. Your mind is important. Protect it. Feed your mind only what is beneficial.

Saturday, April 2: I taught two classes today making up for the classes that will not meet this Monday because of the national holiday when they honor their dead ancestors. The Tuesday classes will not meet either but they will not be made up.

We were blessed to have several more students into our home to practice their English and visit. I continue to be impressed with their maturity and thoughtfulness. *Love, Terry*

Greetings from Gary: I discovered a wood craftsman in one of the hole-in-the-wall back market spots. A professional man, he had a large pile of wood carvings in the corner. With an axe in hand, he was carefully shaping a piece off wood to be used in what appeared to be a drinking container. Wish I had the words to spend some time with him...bet he has some enchanting stories...plan to find an interpreter and go back soon...and will buy one of those containers to take home on day, even if I have to hold it on my lap for the 26-hour trip home.

I give some details of the national Qingming (Pure Brightness) Festival on page three. It was a new learning experience for us and offered some unique 'talking

(Continued on page 2)

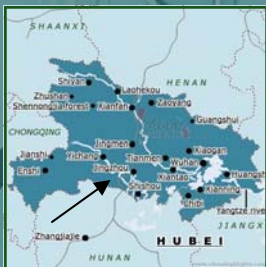
(Continued from page 1)



No, have not been tempted to eat chicken feet!



Looked like squid in 'nice neighbor' market



We're in Hubei province



This was our transportation on this day; 6 people in a small container on the back of a scooter

points' with our students. I used the occasion to discuss the grief process with my students upon their return to classes, hoping to open doors to other equally important subjects.

We are teaching several students weekly to give glory/praise and be thankful. It is also true for daily items that prove successful here...the internet worked great and I was able to enjoy the March Madness games...and also some baseball, through mlb.tv. Not a big deal to some? Of course. But for a former sportswriter with a longtime love for sports, it has been a blessing. Go Cubs! Also found iTunes has episodes of NCIS for \$2.99 each, which is allowing me to follow the guys from afar.

Some have asked if we have eaten chicken feet yet? This from the internet: "Braised and deep-fried duck and chicken feet are Asian staples. Duck feet are bonier and have more of that pebbly webbing which at least makes look distinctly avian. Chicken feet, unfortunately, look a lot like a small human hand, minus a finger.

"There's almost nothing to sink your teeth into other than skin, which you chew and discard anyway, so why eat feet? "Because the taste is incredible," says Chris Cosentino of San Francisco's Incanto restaurant. Braising and deep-frying chicken and duck feet releases and concentrates the flavor in their bones, cartilage, skin and tendons. Getting a good gnaw-on is the only way to tap all that unctuous goodness. "You're not going to get that flavor any other way," he says.

Some of our new Good News students wanted to take us on a trip on one of our days off; 25 minutes away on a city bus....large fields of beautiful yellow flowers and peach trees blossoms (can't wait to eat the fresh fruit)...they looked after us...wanted to make certain we were not too tired after two hours...kept asking "are you too tired yet?".....when we would smile and say no, they would tell us "you are so healthy"....total strangers



wanted to have their pictures taken with us (hard to stay humble here :)....we took them out for dinner after a long afternoon...had a great time! (see pictures)



Statue at the Peach Village of a famous Chinese poet





Found fresh pineapple and planted the stem in a pot on the back porch



These were gourds allowed to dry; some painted..made good rattles



This woman had caught dinner



Art work on one of the blackboards

Our schedule

was changed last week due to

the national *Qingming (Pure Brightness) Festival*, one of the 24 seasonal division points in China, falling on April 4-6 each year. We moved weekday classes to Saturday for makeup...and had the three-day break; there will be two others this semester with similar schedule changes.

Here is some of its history: Qingming Festival is when Chinese people visit the graves or burial grounds of their ancestors. The festival originated from Hanshi Day, literally, Day with cold food only, a memorial day for Jie Zitui or Jie Zhitui. Jie Zitui died in 636 BC in the Spring and Autumn Period.

He was one of many followers of Duke Wen of Jin before he became a duke. Once, during Wen's 19 years of exile, they had no food and Jie prepared some meat soup for Wen. Wen enjoyed it a lot and wondered where Jie had obtained the soup. It turned out Jie had cut a piece of meat from his own thigh to make the soup.

Wen was so moved he promised to reward him one day. However, Jie was not the type of person who sought rewards. Instead, he just wanted to help Wen to return to Jin to become king. Once Wen became duke, Jie resigned and stayed away from him. Duke Wen rewarded the people who helped him in the decades, but for some reason he forgot to reward Jie, who by then had moved into the forest with his mother.

Duke Wen went to the forest, but could not find Jie. Heeding suggestions from his officials, Duke Wen ordered men to set the forest on fire to force out Jie. However, Jie died in the fire. Feeling remorseful, Duke Wen ordered three days without fire to honour Jie's memory. The county where Jie died is still called Jiexiu (介休, literally "the place Jie rests forever").

Both the Han and minority ethnic groups at this time offer sacrifices to their ancestors and sweep the tombs of the deceased. Also, they will not cook on this day and only cold food is served. On each Qingming Festival, a cemeteries are crowded with people who came to sweep tombs and offer sacrifices. Traffic on the way to the cemeteries becomes extremely jammed. The customs have been greatly simplified today.

After slightly sweeping the tombs, people offer food, flowers and favorites of the dead, then burn incense and paper money and bow before the memorial tablet. In contrast to the sadness of the tomb sweepers, people also enjoy hope of Spring on this day. The Qingming Festival is a time when the sun shines brightly, the trees and grass become green and nature is again lively. Since ancient times, people have followed the custom of Spring outings. At this time tourists are everywhere.



Chinese festival insignia and ceremonial grave 'duties'



Traditional Chinese Festivals



Longing for Love

Duty does not have to be dull. Love can make it beautiful and fill it with life.

I have always admired the spouse who said "I love you, not because you're perfect, but because you're so perfect for me." It reveals an acceptance and understand that is not shallow or weak.

Some time ago, I was blessed to be with a group of wonderful people in South Florida for a number of years. One of the group complained because of a distraction during a Sunday morning assembly. Two people were mumbling to each other, it seemed.

Because I knew the situation, I was able to offer a quick and adequate explanation: "Forgive them," I said. "I need to explain that one of the people is a new member and doesn't speak much English, so the message is being translated."

Something similar also occurred: a young man was wearing a baseball cap during a class...one of the group commented on it to me after class ended. I explained calmly that the person had just concluded chemotherapy and was conscious of the fact that he'd lost most of his hair. To that person's credit, there was quick retreat from his words and thoughts.

All of a sudden everything changed. Patience replaced impatience. Why? **Because patience always hitches a ride with understanding.**

Love for God is not difficult, because all us need to do is be aware of how He has loved us -- in creation, in the supply of all we need, in leading and putting us in various places with various persons. But above all else He has loved us in having given his Son

Kindness is the opposite of "having a chip on one's shoulder. A chip on one's shoulder predisposes one to hostile action with only the slightest provocation. But kindness in one's heart predisposes one to helpful action which only requires the hint of a need before it takes action.

for us, having redeemed us, having forgiven us, having healed our inner hurt.

If we have the love of God in our hearts, then we can be patient; we can be peaceful; we can be good, loving, faithful, gentle, kind, and all these other qualities. But without love all we can do is imitate these qualities, and that is what produces a phony love. One of the most deadly enemies of the Christian cause is phony love.

History tells us that no one treated Abraham Lincoln with more contempt than did William Stanton. He called him "a low cunning clown", he nicknamed him "the original gorilla" and said that Du Chaillu was a fool to wander about Africa trying to capture a gorilla when he could have found one so easily at Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln said nothing. He made Stanton his war minister because he was the best man for the job and he treated him with every courtesy. The years wore on. The night came when the assassin's bullet murdered Lincoln in the theatre. In the little room to which the President's body was taken stood that same Stanton, and, looking down on Lincoln's silent face, he said through his tears, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen."

The patience of love had conquered in the end. We might occasionally respond the way an elderly couple in a nursing home did. They were constantly fighting, arguing, yelling at each other as they had from the time when they were first married as young people. They would argue and fight from the time they got up in morning until they fall in bed at night. Finally one day the wife says to her husband, "I'll tell you what, let's pray that one of us dies. And after the funeral is over I'll go to live with my sister."



Some of my favorite pictures of Brinson (with water hose in hand) and Aiden from a few years back: they played hard and then loved each other just as earnestly!



Can't forget Colton !

If patience is the passive side of love, kindness is the active side. Kindness is: "... a word suggesting goodness as well as solicitousness. They are interested in true goodness, actively interested in the welfare of those about them. Obviously these people are doers; they do not claim good intentions but then plead helplessness because of weakness or apathy."

Kindness is the opposite of "having a chip on one's shoulder. A chip on one's shoulder predisposes one to hostile action with only the slightest provocation. But kindness in one's heart predisposes one to helpful action which only requires the hint of a need before it takes action.

In a world that is saturated with harshness, a kind disposition is a refreshing breeze. There is many a woman who would trade a handsome husband for a kind one. Kindness would stifle the plague of child abuse.

Farmers in ancient Israel used to train an inexperienced ox by yoking it to an experienced one with a wooden harness. The straps around the older animal were tightly drawn. He carried the load. But the yoke around the younger animal was loose. He walked alongside the more mature ox, but his burden was light. In this verse Jesus is saying, "I walk alongside you. We are yoked together. But I pull the weight and carry

Kindness is the opposite of "having a chip on one's shoulder. A chip on one's shoulder predisposes one to hostile action with only the slightest provocation. But kindness in one's heart predisposes one to helpful action which only requires the hint of a need before it takes action.

the burden."

C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* wrote, "Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. There are many things below it, but there are also things above it. You cannot make it the basis of a whole life.

"It is a noble feeling, but it is still a feeling. Now no feeling can be relied on to last in its full intensity, or even to last at all....

"In fact, the state of being in love usually does not last....But of course ceasing to be 'in love' need not mean ceasing to love. Love...is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by the grace which both partners ask and receive from God....They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be 'in love' with someone else.

'Being in love' first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enable them to keep their promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it."

If you have love in your heart, you always have something to give. No one ever said it better than C. S. Lewis: "To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal.

"Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness.

"But in that casket -safe, dark, motionless, airless -- it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable....The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love... is Hell."