




二〇〇九年一月

Dear Family and Friends:

Happy New Year...soon to be Happy Valentine's Day! 

January has absolutely been a blur! I hardly know where to begin so this month I'll let the pictures do the talking. Keeping it "vanilla"...

I love you all and am grateful my boss takes such good care of me! Thanks to all of you who keep me in mind! Your thinking of me matters much!

Love,
A

P. S. -- Something interesting to share with you before I forget. I've been teaching kids for years about how to listen with their sprtl ears, right? Well, I was challenged to take it up a notch personally in January. So to encourage my listening skills, I forced myself to listen to as many things as possible. I listened to what people are really saying to me, I listened to the news, I listened to the Word (MP3), and I've listened to a few good audio books. Although I am ready to start using my eyes a little more, it was a good experience. I discovered I don't listen with my natural ears nearly as well as I thought...practice makes it better. And as for my sprtl ears, well, I'm still practicing...every day.

P. S. S. – The new study out by Beth Moore on Esther is really good! ;o)~



Two "Queens"

GOLDEN APPLE FLOWER AWARD



This month I was awarded the "Golden Apple Flower" award. Out of 14 schools I was one of two foreign teachers to win the award. Not only did I get a certificate, but also a bonus (red envelope). Just what I needed! I had to ask around to get the full explanation of the award...after a few days this is what I pieced together. It went to someone who is always on time, does a good job in class and has no problem with parents or administration. I thought it was funny that I didn't have a clue – apparently it's a sought after award.

JINGLI STREET

I took some new friends to this area for some shopping.



We enjoyed the flute-guy; he could make the smallest flute sound like it's own orchestra. This other guy was busy writing an English name for a friend's niece on a **single grain of rice**. It was amazing how legible it was when he was finished.



This picture shows the process of how a "woven look" is formed around a ceramic jar. Some of the lanterns for the Spring Festival in a little pond. It looks much cooler at night!



No, I'm not engaged! (*Sighs of relief!*)

FROM HOME...



Sichuan version of pork and beans! (It tasted "so-so.") Getting a workout on my friend's new toy.

THE KIDDIES!

You guys always love it when I include pics of my "peeps." So, eat your heart out...



First in Vocab and First in Numbers for the day – very proud. The boys hogging the mic for KTV in class.



Sam at left (monkey), Yukie in the middle (bee) and Sun at right.

Sam is an excellent student and loves me to death. Yukie, not so much...but she is adorable!! Sun is a little tiny shy boy (pictured here as a mushroom), but he's big in my eyes because of his grandmother! She wants him to have #1 English...no ifs, ands or buts about it.



These swans nearly made me swoon with laughter. They were hilarious swishing around in their tutus. The older kids did a sentimental performance about a shepherd who kept losing sheep to wolves – notice the trees in the background as well as the sheep in the white picket fence.

RECORDING STUDIO



I had a blast recording chants set to music for a new ESL curriculum. My boss and I made quick work of the 70 chants. It was like blitzkrieg! When were all done, the engineer adjusted our voices for each track so we sounded like children. It was a lot of fun! It will make teaching grammar so much easier.

HONG KONG – SPRING FESTIVAL



Hong Kong Harbor at night from a condo near the famous "Peak." Left was taken just before fireworks began and Right was taken before the smoke got too thick to see the detail.



A view of the harbor from the opposite side. Very cool! These pictures were taken on the famous Star Ferry.



Checking the harbor from the Peak. We rode the trolley straight up (like a Disney ride) and took a bus down.



All of Hong Kong's tourist spots Photoshopped into one picture. Behind me is the "Rice Bowl" building.



It looks like a dragon, but it's a lion. The lion and accompanying cymbals and drum players paraded through stalls at a famous outdoor market in Hong Kong. Shop owners gave the lion money for good luck in 2009. This billboard cracked me up! Not sure what it's for, but it's funny to me.



Baby Lana gives her mom a thumbs up! Aren't these kiddie t-shirts adorable (sunglasses and camera)?

Being single in China isn't so bad...



Red envelopes with money are given to single women by their married friends at the time of the annual Spring Festival (Lunar New Year). Not bad, eh?