

Yushu horse festival (7/24/2007-7/26/2007)

We left Ganzi at dawn on the one and only bus to Yushu. The day started out on a bit of a sour note as Josh got his pocket picked while boarding the bus. The bus ride was a long one to begin with but it was made longer by the poor condition of the back left tire which needed repair not once, not twice, but three times on our journey and we arrived in Yushu about 15 hours after we left Ganzi. Josh had brought a tent specifically so we wouldn't have to worry about finding accommodation during the festival. We met a German girl and a Taiwanese girl who were also planning on camping on the bus so the four of us headed out to festival grounds and set up camp in the dark. The neighbors were amused by our small tents; especially since there tents were fully stocked with a fridge, stove, beds, and even a TV. Perhaps because they felt pity for us ill prepared foreigners, the neighbors more or less adopted us, inviting us to meals and allowing us to use their tent to store our bags. While Josh had a sleeping bag, I didn't and the first night while I wore a lot of cloths it wasn't enough as it dipped below freezing. The second night I wore every piece of clothing I had with me, 3 pairs of socks, 3 pairs of pants, one long sleeve shirt, three T-shirts, a fleece, and a rain jacket; that was better. On the morning of the first day of the festival was the opening ceremony, where a parade of elaborated dressed Tibetans and monks filed, danced, and performed in front of the stands on the festival grounds. Unfortunately there were many more people than viewing areas, so the crowd was too deep to see the actual performance. Rather than peering through gaps in heads, I walked around and took pictures of the performers before and after they went on. In the afternoon we were more fortunate as we managed to get ourselves in to the press area for a great vantage point of the traditional dances. The second day we went out to watch the horse races that were being held at on the grasslands further out of town. At the finish of the last most important race the crowd rushed the winner and draped it in silk scarves. I felt like one of those photographers at the end super bowl rushing to get a shot of the MVP as I tried to get a photo of the winner. The next day we were planning to head to Manigange and as luck would have it we ran into a couple of Brits who were also headed that way. They were staying at an orphanage not far from the bus station. Since we had to be wake up early to catch the bus and transportation from the festival grounds to the bus station that early in the morning was doubtful we decided to stay with them at the orphanage. It was great to play with the kids although we didn't get to spend that much time with them since we arrived in the evening and left early the next morning. The guys who ran the orphanage were really great people and went above and beyond to make us comfortable.



The first time our tire needed to be fixed on the way to Yushu.



The second time our tire needed to be fixed on the way to Yushu.



At least the scenery was nice along the road to Yushu.



The third time our tire needed to be fixed on the way to Yushu.



Josh next to our tent (the orange one in front) at the festival in Yushu.



The valley filled with endless tents at the festival in Yushu.



Josh, myself, Sunny (from Taiwan), Svenja (from Germany), and the neighbors, in the neighbors tent, Yushu.



Tent at the festival in Yushu.



**Performer at the festival
in Yushu.**



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Monk at festival in Yushu.



Performers at festival in Yushu.



Woman with prayer wheel at festival in Yushu.



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Tibetan man smoking at festival in Yushu.



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Performer at festival in Yushu.



Kampa (Tibetan) dance at festival in Yushu.



Kampa (Tibetan) dance at festival in Yushu.



**Tibetan dance at festival
in Yushu.**



**Tibetan dance at festival
in Yushu.**



**Tibetan dance at festival
in Yushu.**



**Tibetan dance at festival
in Yushu.**



Horse race at festival in Yushu.



Winner of the horse race at festival in Yushu.



**Head, shoulders, knees,
and toes with the kids at
the orphanage where we
stayed the last night in
Yushu.**