

Pat's Day - - Pandas And Mrs. Mao's Ballet

Peking

Trailed by television commentators, Pat Nixon yesterday visited the Peking zoo, where she laughed at the antics of the black-eyed white pandas from Szechwan province.

Premier Chou En-lai is giving two giant white pandas to the United States.

"They're beautiful," she said, watching Shen Shen the panda munch on a candy cane. She remarked that pandas also feast on bamboo. "They're not meat eaters," she observed.

Last night Mrs. Nixon shifted from a soft green, black-belted jersey dress to purple flowered bodice and lavender skirt for ballet performance by the Peking Opera in the 10,000-seat auditorium of the Great Hall of the People.

COMPANION

Sitting near her in the fourth row was 57-year-old Chiang Ching, a former actress and fourth wife of the 78-year-old Mao Tse-tung. A slender woman with short, dark hair and wearing a navy blue tailored pants suits, Chiang Ching told Mrs. Nixon that she helped write the revolutionary ballet, "Red Detachment of Women."

"Everyone discussed it and put in their own opinion . . . to collect the wisdom of all," Mao's wife said. The ballet was written during the stormy cultural revolu-



UPI Telephoto

This was part of the action the Nixons saw in 'Red Detachment of Women'

tion, in which Chiang Ching was a central figure.

Earlier in the day, after a visit to the kitchens of the fabled Peking Hotel, Mrs. Nixon announced:

"I'm going to learn how to make Peking duck in the White House."

AWE

Mrs. Nixon was awed at the sight of 110 of China's finest chefs, outfitted in white Mao caps and jackets, chopping, kneading, slicing, stirring and whipping up their exotic, world-famous creations.

Told that it takes ten years to become a good Chinese cook, Mrs. Nixon sighed and said: "I've been trying all my life to cook, and I'm still not a good cook."

LAUGHTER

For more than an hour, the First Lady tasted, chattered and sipped her way through the delights before her. Her hosts and the press cheered as she deftly sampled breast of chicken and bamboo shoots with a pair of chopsticks.

She fed reporters a fiery

sweet and sour pickle, marveled at a turnip corsage, was startled at a dish of "hair vegetable" in chicken soup, and burst out laughing when she tried to shake hands with a cook smudged with dough he was rolling out in thin pancakes.

"Hi, there," she greeted a chef whacking away at a lamb with a cleaver. When a wok, a special Chinese frying pan, caught fire, she whooped and said, "Boy, you're cooking up a storm!"

Mrs. Nixon was escorted by Sun Hsin Ming, chairman



UPI Telephoto

Mrs. Nixon (far right) admired a giant panda named Shen Shen at the zoo

of the hotel's revolutionary committee and otherwise known as the head chef, trim and beaming in a gray Mao suit and wearing a red Mao button emblazoned with the party chairmen's profile in gold.

DIET

Surveying the Mandarin oranges, preserved eggs, fishes and a tray of two dozen rich hors d'oeuvres, Mrs. Nixon disclosed that her husband, whose favorite luncheon is cottage cheese and catsup, was "abandoning his Spartan diet while in

Peking."

Invited to sit down for an entire meal in the elegant, Victorian - style hotel, Mrs. Nixon demurred. "I just had breakfast," she protested. "If I don't watch out I'll have to buy new clothes."

As she was leaving, the first lady invited Sun Hsin Ming to the White House. "We hope you can come and visit us sometime and I'll take you in my kitchen," she said, promising to cook him a Chinese dinner.

The head chef simply smiled.

Mrs. Nixon then went to the summer palace, imperial estate of the Ching dynasty northwest of Peking and once the home of the fearful empress dowager, Tzu Hsi, who used public money to build a great marble boat.

Tzu Hsi might have been an "unwise ruler" but "I'll say she had good taste," said Mrs. Nixon, viewing cloisonne vases, peacock feather fans, sandalwood furniture and ornate jades in the Hall of Happiness and Longevity.

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