

Nixon Walks on the Great Wall'Worth Trip To See It'

by Bob Considine
Special to The Examiner

Peking - President and Mrs. Nixon made a pilgrimage today to the only man-made object age today to the only man-made object on earth that is visible from the moon, the Great Wall of China.

Wearing only a Key Biscayne tan to protect his face and head from the biting cold, the President strode about 200 yards along the parapet of the partially restored Pataling section of the serpentine barrier that winds in broken sections some 1500 miles west from the Yellow Sea and, if straightened, would stretch some 4000 miles. Parts of it date from the 5th Century B.C.

In deference to Mrs. Nixon, the President did not make the knee-cracking climb to the next two-storied lookout tower, and there was no thought of going to the tower at the dizzying peak of the Pataling section, but the sight of it, against a frozen blue sky, suggested a thought as he summed up his reaction.

'Do Not Want Walls'

"We do not want walls of any kind between peoples," he remarked.

"And I think one of the results of our trip -- we hope -- may be that the walls that are erected, whether they be physical walls like this or whether they are walls of ideology or philosophy, will not divide the peoples of the world. That peoples, regardless of their differences and backgrounds and philosophies, will have an opportunity to communicate which each other, know each other."

He said that while "many things" made it worthwhile for him to have come to China, "I would say, as I look at the wall, it is worth coming 16,000 miles just to stand here and see the wall."

The President and Mrs. Nixon were sped to the wall over generally hair-raising twisting roads, some of them hardly built for a limousine of the dimensions of his Chinese-built Red Star.

Their host and guide was vice premier Li Hsien-nien.

As he looked toward the Ba Da Mountains along which the wall marches, Nixon said:

"Imagine climbing all those mountains carrying stones."

Today, diesel-drawn trains move along the craggy mountains.

Ming Tombs

Next stop was the valley of the Ming Tombs.

Like pharaohs of ancient Egypt, the Ming Dynasty emperors (1368-1644) feathered their eternal resting places well in advance of death.

The tomb the Nixons visited, that of Emperor Chu Yichun (1573-1620) and his two empresses, is the 10th of the 13 tombs in the area and the first to be excavated after the Communist takeover of the land.

It is called Ting Ling. The marbled vaults are six stories below ground level. They yielded a treasure in pottery, gold and silver and jade objects of art, and superb brocades.

The People's Republic of China has carefully preserved all this under glass at a neighboring museum -- and has made an interesting propaganda point at the same time.

Right next to the emperor's exquisite table service, for example, are crude bowls and cups used by the peasants of that dynasty.

Fantastic Cost

Signs near the last resting place of the emperor and his ladies note that 30,000 peasants worked each day to build the tomb and that it cost a sum, which if spent on rice, could have fed a million Chinese for six and a half years.

"I think it would be very valuable and worthwhile for Americans, and for that matter, people in all countries, to be able to visit China," Nixon said.

Solemn but expansive as he dwelt on the necessity "to think of ourselves as members of the family of man," Nixon added:

"And when you speak of Asia, the great country of China is a country we have not known long enough.

"That communication has been cut for the last 20

years, and in the future I would hope one of the developments that would occur as a result of our trip is that apart from the relations between the governments, that people will be able to come here, and that, of course, Chinese people would be able to come to the United States.

"I don't mean to suggest that the exchange of people solves the problems of the world or problems between governments. But it so enriches the lives of people to know other civilizations and not to live simply on their own little island."

Li smiled and shook his head approvingly as an interpreter whispered Nixon's remarks into his ear.



President Nixon uses his left hand to greet small fry in Peking

—AP Photo



The Nixons and Secretary of State Rogers at the Great Wall of China

—AP Photo