

First Steps of a Long March

..... From its inception, the visit was orchestrated by the Chinese, with a unique mixture of elegance and simplicity, propriety and warmth. It was not so much a case of Mr. Nixon's visiting China, as it was of China's receiving him as royalty might receive a powerful commoner. There was always just a hint of noblesse oblige in the Chinese attitude.

.....

At the outset, readers of the diplomatic tea leaves found cause for worry. Descending from his jet, Mr. Nixon began to applaud - the gesture of a man who had been told that, in China, polite visitors always return applause. But, unhappily, none of the waiting Chinese officials were clapping. And that fact, coupled with the lack of cheering crowds, stirred apprehension in Mr. Nixon's ranks.

.....

Confessed one Nixon aide: "Chou had a faint come-to-me smile and I was afraid they were going to portray the President as a supplicant."