

EXCLUSIVE

CHAIRMAN MAO SAYS GOOD-BYE

In a fascinating chapter from her new book of interviews with noted men and women, Julie Nixon Eisenhower describes an extraordinary experience: her audience with China's dying "Red god," Mao Tse-tung. Listen as the ill, lonely old man, who died last September, expresses to young American visitors his disenchantment with China's youth—and offers his harsh vision of the future.—The Editors

On New Year's Eve, December 31, 1975, my husband and I watched the clock pass twelve, ushering in 1976, in the presence of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the revolutionary leader of China's 900 million people. Our audience marked the last New Year of his life, and one of the most extraordinary moments of ours. In Mao's study, deep within the Forbidden City where he dwelt, as he told Andre Malraux, "alone with the masses," we found not a remote, godlike figure, but an old man, unself-conscious and eager for a conversation.

By an odd combination of circumstances we were the second to last Americans to meet Mao Tse-tung. In September of 1975, a young friend of ours from the 1968 presidential campaign days, wrote to us from Peking about his month of travel in China. Because of the many references to my father's trip in 1972, which had established relations with the People's Republic after 23 years of non-communication, our friend suggested that the Chinese would welcome a visit from us.

The more we thought about the outlandish idea of taking three weeks off between David's law school semesters to fly about 8,000 miles in the dead of winter to a country we never dreamed we would be able to visit, the more exciting the idea became. A week later I called my father in San Clemente and asked him to help us obtain a visa by contacting Huang-chen, the head of the Chinese Liaison Office in Washington. Ambassador Huang had paid a friendship call on my father only a month earlier. Within 24 hours of our request, we received an invitation to visit China as the "personal guests" of the ambassador.

The sole hint that our trip would be regarded as more



Mao greets Julie & David Eisenhower. The sudden call to

than a simple courtesy acknowledging my father's 1972 initiative came immediately after President Ford's return from Peking in early December. The Liaison Office inquired whether we had objections to "meeting our leaders alone," meaning without the presence of members of the American Mission in Peking. We assented, attaching no particular significance to the request since we were going to China as private citizens and had no contact with the State Department.

Not until we actually landed in Peking at one o'clock in the morning of December 29th, and were met at the

"Young people are soft. They have to be reminded of the need for struggle."

airport by Mao's personal interpreter, Nancy Tang, did we sense that there was a greater interest in our visit—and a greater power behind it—than the nameless, faceless offi-

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by Julie Nixon Eisenhower

[from her book, "Special People"]

By JULIE NIXON EISENHOWER



meet the Chairman found Julie already in her nightgown.

cial of the Chinese foreign ministry. And when we were then escorted by Ambassador Huang to a luxurious government guest house rather than to a hotel, we realized that the trip was indeed destined to be far from routine. Within 48 hours of our arrival, we were summoned for a private visit with Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

The night of that meeting, Ambassador and Madame Huang-chen had hosted a small dinner party for us in our guest house because, as they said, "We don't want you to be alone on New Year's Eve." Despite the Chinese custom of dining early, the party did not begin until 9 P.M. We lingered over dinner until finally I feared I would fall asleep and, at eleven, explaining how tired I was, I ended the evening. I realize now that the ambassador and his wife, and one of his aides—who had been called to the telephone four times during the course of dinner—were aware of the plans for the midnight meeting.

We had been in our bedroom only ten minutes when

we heard a knock. Since I was already in my nightgown, I hid behind the closet door while David went to see who it was. The protocol officer spoke only seven words: "Chairman Mao would like to see you." It did not seem necessary to ask how soon the car would arrive. As quickly as we could we changed into what we had worn to dinner. I remember finding my watch so I could note the exact time of our meeting, and I carefully carried a manila envelope with a personal letter from my father to Chairman Mao.

It was a freezing cold night as David and I rode alone in the back seat of a large, black, Chinese-made limousine, very much like a Rolls Royce. We were enclosed in the heavy, tank-like car in a cocoon of black net curtains that covered all the windows except the driver's front view. We did not see another car on the road. The only vehicles were horse-drawn wooden carts filled with farm produce and some military vehicles. We drove in silence through the labyrinth of streets that form the old part of Peking. As we passed miles and miles of walled city, we were acutely aware of being very much on our own and cut off from the sleeping millions.

At a checkpoint guarded by People's Liberation Army

"My last glimpse was of a weary man turning, attempting words with his nurses, then being led away to be alone again."

soldiers, we entered the Forbidden City. Suddenly, out of the blackness, we came face to face with a huge, crimson billboard, perhaps six feet tall, brilliantly lighted. In Chairman Mao's calligraphy was his injunction, "serve the people." Quickly, we swerved left into the winding, lake-side road that led to Mao's house. Later, when I saw a Chinese news clip of our visit with Mao, I realized the sign was brightly lighted so that television cameras could film the arrival of our car. The front of the Chairman's house was also lighted for television, and in going from the darkness of the night to the glare of high-intensity lights I felt disoriented and was able to determine only the bare outline of the modest-sized house.

But it was not only the late hour and the sudden change from the intense dark into the floodlights that disoriented me. It was also the strangeness of this world of subtleties and double meanings. And I was genuinely awed by the prospect of meeting the man who, as described by the "official" history of the People's Republic given to tourists, enabled the Chinese to "succeed brilliantly in every field"—whose philosophy the Chinese press even credited with the successful testing of the hydrogen bomb.

A single attendant opened the (continued on page 135)

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door. He had a young face and was dressed in a Mao suit like the other Chinese officials we had met. Silently, he took our coats and those of Ambassador Huang and the foreign minister, and then stepped aside. We did not pause for conversation. The man who came forward to formally welcome us to Mao's private home was China's chief of protocol. I recognized him from the day before, when he had escorted us to our meeting with the foreign minister.

He hurriedly proceeded to usher us from the small reception area at the entrance into a room lighted only by an open door beyond. This dark room contained several chairs and a ping pong table. Through the doorway we could see Mao's study. When we crossed the threshold, I saw the Chairman at the end of the room. He was sunk into a large, overstuffed armchair, the center seat of six identical pieces that formed a semi-circle. My first impression was of a man with vacant eyes and an open-hung jaw. Mao's yellow skin looked eerily translucent. It was of wax-like consistency and almost totally unlined. He struggled to his feet with the help of two young female attendants dressed alike in gray Mao suits. For a moment he tottered and then the women stepped back and he stood alone. David and I sensed a movement behind us. A television cameraman and an assistant holding lights had slipped into the room. The crew filmed the scene as Mao leaned forward and gave me, then David, a firm handshake. Then they were gone as quickly and silently as they had appeared.

The protocol official motioned for me to sit next to the Chairman. After two days of intensive lectures from workers, soldiers, peasants—from party cadres and the foreign ministry, I expected a homily from Chairman Mao, but certainly not a dialogue. Consequently, I mentally relaxed and began to absorb all the details of the stark room—the floor-to-ceiling-high shelves filled with looseleaf books and scrolls; the strange, six-foot-tall lamps equipped with enough intensity for TV coverage; the cylinder-shaped tins of Panda cigarettes (Mao was once an “inordinate smoker,” according to China expert Edgar Snow); the delicate cups of green tea and warm washcloths on the tables between the huge armchairs. I was most intrigued by the white spittoons beneath each table. I concentrated on all these details and waited to listen, for I found it difficult to look closely at the Chairman. Despite my eagerness to meet Mao, once in his presence I somehow felt it was an intrusion to see him exposed as the 82-year-old shell of the man he once was. His immaculate gray Mao suit hung

loosely on his body, his long arms and large hands seemed dead weight at his side and, when he spoke, the sounds emerged as grunts: harsh, primitive, labored.

In the two days before our meeting, we had spent time with Mao's interpreter, 32-year-old, Brooklyn-born Nancy Tang. We had found her to be a pleasant but unyielding Maoist who, despite the first six years of her life in New York, had dismissed America as a country that “expects people to accept their lot in life.” Nancy, her face youthful despite her severely bobbed hair and steel-rimmed glasses, seemed at ease in her seat next to the Chairman. In order to determine exactly what Mao had said, she frequently consulted with two other interpreters who sat directly behind her in straight-backed chairs. After these quick conferences, she would repeat the Chairman's words back to him. If the precise sense of his thought was incorrect, Mao, in frustration, would grunt corrections and tap with his fingers at Nancy's notebook.

The interplay between Nancy and Mao was bantering at moments. She seemed almost playful as she submitted to corrections. In a starkly asexual society, I sensed the first hint of coquettishness. It was obvious there was rapport between the aged warrior and the young interpreter.

Mao in control

It was not until my father's letter was interpreted that I realized how very much in control Mao was, despite the apparent stroke that had partially paralyzed his mouth. He seemed pleased by my father's personal message and told me, “Mr. Nixon is welcome in China.” Then he took the letter from Nancy's hand and, to my astonishment, distinctly and precisely read in English the date at the top: “December 23, 1975.” It was an effective way for the Chairman to tell us that his physical handicap had had no effect on the agility of his mind.

After the letter was translated, Mao announced that the chair in which I was sitting was the same one my father had occupied during his visit almost four years earlier. I got up from my armchair and told the Chairman I would like to switch places with David so he could say that he, too, had occupied an historic seat. As we made the quick change, the Chairman laughed heartily. His first question was, “How is Mr. Nixon's leg?” David launched into a description of the effects of phlebitis. When I saw that Mao was looking straight ahead and not at us, I uneasily thought that David might be giving too long and detailed an account. But as the meeting progressed, I discovered that Mao rarely looked in our direction, concentrating his energy instead on those interpreting for him.

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The atmosphere in the room was warm and friendly. I showed the Chairman a small, round pin with his profile on it that Ambassador Huang's wife had given me that evening. Though Mao had seen literally millions of men and women wearing similar tin medals, he reacted with a childlike delight and impulsively clasped my hand.

Perhaps because of his age and the humbling and dependence on others for the most basic needs that comes with illness, Mao had an unexpected gentleness. He did not posture. He spoke self-deprecatingly about a poem on struggle that would be published to mark the New Year. "It is nothing. I wrote it in 1965." I found it impossible not to compare his attitude with that of other all-powerful dictators I had met. I thought especially of Russia's Brezhnev, who often spoke in a pompous, conspiratorial whisper so that his audience had to hang on every word; who enjoyed clapping his hands while people laughed and smiled on cue. And Greece's Papadopoulos, who received visitors in a room 60 feet by 30 feet, and, as if a caricature of a movie scene, seated himself behind the fortress of a huge desk while visitors were assigned low chairs

in order to listen with proper respect. In contrast, Mao and Nancy interacted as grandfather and granddaughter. Ambassador Huang-chen appeared relaxed and slightly absentminded. In wonder, I saw that he did not lean forward in his chair to catch every word the Chairman spoke.

As the time neared 1 A.M., I twice rose from my chair in an attempt to leave—I could not ignore the foreign minister's signals from across the room as he tapped on his wristwatch to remind me of the lateness of the hour. And twice the Chairman protested, motioning with both of his hands for us to remain.

Not utopian society

Astonishingly, Mao Tse-tung was the first person we had met in China who dropped the pretense that the People's Republic is a utopian, perfect society. He actually sounded skeptical and disappointed in his people, especially the young, untested generation. "Young people are soft. They have to be reminded of the need for struggle." The Chairman did not hide the fact that he keenly sensed his mortality. When he spoke of the future, he spoke of a future out of his control, without even the certainty of the guiding light of "Mao-Tse-tung thought." I remembered that Mao had rated the chance of permanent success for his revolution less than 50 percent.

The Chairman told us, "There will be struggle in the party, there will be struggle between the classes, nothing is certain except struggle." For the first time since we had entered the room he became animated, like a young man. He vigorously used his forefingers, jabbing at each other, to emphasize this struggle. Then suddenly he asked, "What do you think?"

The beginning of a dialogue was so unexpected that both David and I paused, and then, at the same moment, spoke: "I agree. . . ." Our voices were hollow echoes of each other. There was a silence as Mao waited for us to say more. Finally the Chairman spoke again. "It is quite possible the struggle will last for two or three hundred years."

It was oddly moving to witness the effort of the grunts of this old man as he spoke of struggle. Mao urged his people to read the little Red Book of his quotations whenever they felt in need of strength. But to whom and to what did the Chairman himself turn in moments of doubt?

As Mao Tse-tung spoke of struggle, I had the undeniable belief that the Chairman, in spite of the infirmities of 82 hard-lived years, was more mentally vital and eager for struggle than young China. As if responding to a question he posed often in his own mind, Mao described how he had dealt with the op-

ponents of his revolutionary struggle in the past. "We are not terrible. We recognize people commit errors and if they understand their errors they are fully restored to their former positions." And then, defensively, as if asking for the approval of two alien Americans from a country he never had visited, he said, "We don't shoot people." For a moment he paused, then said, "We forgave several Nationalists the other day." He was referring to the release of some of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist soldiers who had fought the Communists during the Civil War. We realized that Mao was fervent in his belief that man could be reformed. But he must have been conscious of the irony of his statement because of the many times he resorted to mass executions instead of re-education.

Throughout our visit with the Chairman, I was fascinated to watch his two young attendant-nurses. They sat close behind Mao and carefully, even tenderly, monitored his every movement. They seemed to breathe with him. As we prepared to leave, the Chairman leaned forward to rise from his chair. One of the girls, swift and graceful despite the bulky diamond shape of her Mao suit, ran a comb through the Chairman's hair so that he would be ready for the same cameras that had filmed our first handshake. She had an extraordinarily serene and beautiful face. Her hair was softly curled, unlike the hair of any other woman I met in China. Her assistance was a poignant reminder that a once powerful man was physically dependent on a circle of attendants. Jealously protected against stress and strain, he was isolated in his environment.

A human man

As we prepared to leave Mao, there was firmness and determination in his voice when he told me, bringing his arms down heavily on the sides of his chair in emphasis: "When your father comes, I will be waiting." And there was bravado and an air of unreality when Ambassador Huang-chen assured me, as we departed through Mao's ping-pong room, that the Chairman did not just watch the game, but still enjoyed playing. And there was the sad moment of realization that the Chinese god, who stood in the doorway with his two nurses, was a human man who had said a decade before: "Men do not like to bear the burden of the revolution throughout their lives."

Why were David and I given an audience with Chairman Mao on New Year's Eve? Was it because of some sort of personal warmth in the relationship between Mao and my father? He is the president the Chinese refer to as a "man ahead of his time" in his vision of Sino-American relations. All his other actions are insignificant next to this "vision." In the words of Premier Teng Hsiao-ping

to me on New Year's Day, 1976, "We have never attached much importance to the Watergate affair." David and I traveled to China on the wave of good will created by my father's trip in 1972, and the effort to "build a bridge across sixteen thousand miles and twenty years of non-communication." The Shanghai Communiqué, jointly signed at the end of that trip, remains today an important insurance the People's Republic has that it will not be swallowed up by the Soviet Union.

Despite this good will, however, David and I were given, in the words of French correspondent Georges Bianni, "astonishing" treatment, "unprecedented for people without high rank"—not for personal reasons but for the cold realism of world politics. The Chinese used our visit to send a message to

Washington that they wanted the relationship, symbolized by the Shanghai Communiqué, to continue. At the same time, the Chinese expressed the unhappy opinion that current U.S.-U.S.S.R. negotiations were, in reality, Soviet victories. Ironically, despite the years of constant diatribes against American imperialism in Vietnam, Mao feared that, in the aftermath of the war, the United States would become isolationist. It was fascinating for us to realize that conservative Ronald Reagan was popular in Peking because of his outspoken opposition to the "new isolationists"—and to those who favored cuts in defense spending.

We were in China as private tourists, without diplomatic passports, and yet the government was sending us home with an urgent message: (*continued*)

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Beware the grasping hand of Soviet imperialism. Perhaps they overestimated our ability to spread the word. At the New Year's Day dinner hosted by Premier Teng, David joked with our hosts about entering politics. The Chinese teased in return, "Maybe Americans do not approve of President Nixon, but we'll vote for you." Quick subtraction of non-voting age Chinese meant, with that kind of backing, David would carry the nation by 478,000,000 votes!

Whatever the reasons for the semi-official stature of our trip, there clearly was one personal element that far transcended practical politics: Mao's attitude toward my father. We witnessed a dramatic expression of this attitude when Ambassador Huang gave an emotional toast at the small farewell banquet he hosted for David and me in Shanghai. He spoke bitterly of the broken promises of the Soviet Union and how, in 1960, "our friendship was torn up like a piece of paper"—the Sino-Soviet pact that Mao had declared in 1950 was "eternal and indestructible." Without Soviet aid, the gasoline situation then was so desperate that at one point China's buses were propelled by balloons. In unspoken contrast was the

knowledge that my father had, throughout his presidency, opposed Soviet adventurism against China as well as against other nations.

Finally the Ambassador spoke of my father's words to him during a visit to San Clemente in 1975: "When I left office, I discovered who my friends really are." The Ambassador's aide, who was translating, had tears in his eyes as he added, "The Chinese do not forget their friends!" His words were moving but they were also jarring. So much has been written about Mao's loyal friends and comrades: Kao Kang, eliminated in 1953; Liu Shao-Chi, disgraced in 1966; and Lin Piao, who died mysteriously in 1971. Perhaps, however, friendship with my father could be idealized because he was no longer in power. His relationship with China was part of history, unchangeable.

At the end of the farewell banquet, we drank a toast to my father on the eve of his 63rd birthday, and then Huangchen requested that David and I telephone the Liaison Office in Washington when we arrived home, to inform Ambassador Han of our safe return. "Chairman Mao has followed your trip. He considers you part of his family."

Complete isolation

Despite the official blessing of Chairman Mao, most of the time David and I were in China we felt as if we were living on another planet. Our isolation was complete; we were unable to understand the language; for two weeks we saw only two other Americans; and we were insulated in government guest houses or hotels where we ate all our meals with the ambassador and the other four officials in our party. The strain was greatest in Peking, where we stayed at the former Austro-Hungarian Embassy, a columned mansion with bullet holes in the walls from the Boxer Rebellion and bathrooms larger than the kitchen in our Washington apartment. Because this guest house is normally used by the Russians during the perpetual Sino-Soviet border talks, we assumed that every inch was wired. As a result, there was lots of amateur sign language and facial contortions between us.

Then there were, as we put it, "the five minutes," that time at the end of each day when we permitted ourselves to reflect on where we were. Two Americans dropped down in an isolated, xenophobic and humorless society, cut off from America, even cut off from daily newspaper information. For five minutes at night we would stand at a window and look out over a vast darkness below, whether in Peking, Canton or Shanghai. By 9:30, everyone was asleep, and communities the size of Chicago were as quiet as an Appalachian farm. The only prominent light emanated from towering red neon character posters proclaim-

ing the slogans of China's revolution—the only steady light over a sleeping, weary population that would arise, expressionless, within eight hours, to resume the back-breaking work of building New China.

We experienced little to remind us of life in America. There was one memorable exception. At the zoo in Peking on New Year's Day, we not only saw the pandas but also ran into Rep. Margaret Heckler, who was on a tour of China with a group of congresswomen. She was holding a copy of the morning *People's Daily*, with the front-page photo of David and me shaking hands with the Chairman. "Wait until Bella [Abzug] sees this." She rolled her eyes. For a moment we were back in Washington.

Ironically, despite our efforts, we could learn little of a personal nature about our hosts and even less about Mao's private life. The Chairman's warmth and the reference to us as being part of his family made me curious to know more about his own family, especially his children. I wondered about his ability, in the midst of the consuming role as god and oracle of thought, to sustain personal ties with family and friends. But we found that Mao was a one-dimensional god; his likes and dislikes, his loved ones and acquaintances, were not discussed.

In his determination to supplant Confucian devotion to the family with loyalty to the State, Mao made it clear that he was creating no dynasty. There are conflicting accounts about the number of children he fathered. Edgar Snow, who had several long interviews with Mao, mentions two sons born to his first wife, and two daughters by the present Madame Mao, Chiang Ching, his fourth wife. One biographer, Stuart Schram, states that Mao's second wife, Ho Tzu-chen, bore him five children, including one on the 368-day, 6,000-mile Long March. I find it incredible that Mao divorced Ho Tzu-chen in order to marry Chiang Ching, for Ho was one of only 31 women who survived the legendary Long March. For one year and three days, the Chinese Red Army retreated from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. They crossed 34 rivers, 18 mountain ranges, walked on trails so narrow men and animals fell off, and through mud so deep men were simply swallowed up in the mire.

The Long March became central to Mao's existence; indeed, the most important part of the image he forged of his own greatness. He compared the Long March to the creation of the world: "Since Pan Ku [the mythical creator of the world] divided the heaven from the earth . . . has history ever witnessed a Long March such as ours?" Yet he eliminated from his personal life the woman who shared this adventure and this agony with him. It was as if (*continued*)

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he alone could comprehend the agony of 100,000 men reduced to 15,000. He alone could be the ultimate veteran of the Long March.

Mao cultivated the image of standing alone, godlike, with total focus on duty to the state. Madame Mao is an entity in herself, apart from Mao. She became a public figure during the Cultural Revolution for the sole purpose of rekindling revolutionary fervor. Last October, shortly after Mao's death, his widow was reportedly arrested in a purge of China's so-called radicals. Other members of Mao's family were invisible with the exception of his niece, 34-year-old Vice Foreign Minister Wang Hai-jung, but even she kept an identity apart from Mao. I thought it extremely odd that Wang Hai-jung dismissed our question of how exactly she was related to the Chairman with, "Some people say that I am related." In asking personal questions we simply met a closed door.

The only source for glimpses of the human side of the Chairman were in his official writings and poetry. All Mao's early writings have been unearthed, and they provide, perhaps unintentionally, flashes of a man of flesh and blood. For example, in 1919, following the suicide of a young girl forced to marry against her will, Mao wrote nine articles in 13 days denouncing the old society and calling for the "great wave of the freedom to love."

There are 57 million copies of Mao's poetry in print, a figure equal to all the volumes written by English-speaking poets from the beginning of time. It provides a revealing look at the man who could describe with sensitivity the sun casting shadows on the mountains

~~and, in the next line, write~~
"Bullet holes in village walls. These mountains and passes are decorated, looking even more beautiful today."

Death of Premier Chou

On January 9th, as David and I prepared to fly back home, China—whose power is entrusted to so few—suffered a blow that appeared to cause only a ripple: the death of Premier Chou En-lai.

We received the news of the end of Chou's four-year battle with cancer from an American correspondent thousands of miles away in New York. The reporter's telephone call awakened us in our bedroom in the Shanghai guest hotel at 7:30 A.M., but the jolting news was not confirmed until Ambassador Huangchen's aide came to our bedroom an hour later to formally advise us of the Premier's death. It was the morning of my father's 63rd birthday. Fourteen floors below us, outside our bedroom window, we heard the blare of loud-

speakers playing martial music, the very same music we had heard the morning before. It was as if nothing had happened. Despite Chou's death, the hotel staff brought in a beautiful ten-inch vanilla birthday cake for David and me, presumably to have with breakfast. And in a silk-covered box was an even larger cake, decorated with Chinese characters representing "Happy Birthday, Mr. Nixon," to take home to my father.

Despite the sorrow on the faces of the Chinese we came into contact with that morning at the guest hotel, life in the People's Republic remained unchanged. The message was clear: in the end, it is the masses who count, who rule, not the leaders; Chou's death would not change the inevitable course of history. Unspoken, but unavoidable, was the message that Mao's death would not change things, either. Mao had already passed into history. He was godlike, remote. There would be no personal grief. China's strength would not be diminished by her "god's" physical death.

Restless in solitude

Perhaps in his declining years, Mao became aware of history and his place in it. We felt so. Meeting with him in the middle of the night lent an inevitable impression of a man restless in solitude. The regrets and satisfactions he felt at the end he did not express to us. Nonetheless, his painful physical vulnerability poignantly reminded us of the hours we had spent with Dwight Eisenhower before he died. Sitting at his bedside at Walter Reed Army Hospital was a forceful reminder of our youth, the opportunities ahead, and of the roads we had yet to travel. It was also a reminder of how carelessly we live and how much can be lost and wasted by living life casually.

We experienced the same emotions in Mao's presence. The Chairman was drawn and spent. Yet, with each attempt we made to leave, he ordered us

to stay, clinging to visitors who possessed opportunities he may have wished were his again. Finally, when we were led to the door by the foreign minister, Mao walked with us. It was a gesture he had not accorded any visitor for over two years—and a gesture our entourage felt was significant.

I felt sad when I shook his hand in farewell. "You people are young," he said. "Come back to China. In ten years' time she will be great." He no longer smiled. The two nurses stood by his side, supporting him. He waved twice as we disappeared into the darkness of the next room. My last glimpse was of a weary man turning, attempting words with his nurses, then being led away to be alone again.

The man who was realistic enough to see China's shortcomings was perhaps realistic enough to see his own. In his last months he may have anticipated that his successors would eventually find fault with him, just as Stalin's heirs found fault with Stalin, and Khrushchev's heirs with Khrushchev. Mao's legacy, while great, is flawed and violent. He accomplished visionary goals. But his goals were achieved at a fearful price in death and destruction. His life, perhaps above all others, had given rise to the violent and rising revolutionary demands of the world's poor. He advanced a worldwide struggle that has and will continue to bring enormous dislocation and change, death and upheaval. But whatever history decides, it is certain Mao's life will stand as a striking testament to the power of the human will.

I like to think that when we said good-bye to Mao he was perhaps tempted to give advice, as only the old counsel the young. If he had given advice, I believe the words would have been those he repeated endlessly, and which were indeed the rhythm of his life:

"Ten thousand years is too long; seize the day! Seize the hour!" **End**