

Sybil Ory Morris
2354 Myrtle Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70806
504-383-3395

China Markings

By

Sybil Ory Morris

The warm smile on the face of the young Chinese guard on the bridge quickly thawed a chilly feeling of diffidence and trepidation I had as he offered to pose for a picture. We were crossing the bridge between China and Hong Kong at the small border town of Shumchun. My camera which had been discreetly concealed came out. Behind my subject was a large sign which read "Long Live The People's Republic Of China", and opposite him was another, "Long Live The Great Unity Of The People Of The World."

Early that morning fifty-six members of Pan Am's China Tour Number PF0831 had left Hong Kong by train from the Kowloon Railway Terminal. We rode for about an hour and a half to LoWu, the end of the train's destination to begin a China adventure!

In Hong Kong the night before we had met our leaders, been divided into three groups, the red, white, and yellow teams, and had been thoroughly briefed on how to travel in China.

The entire ambience of the "entrance into China" scenario was so exciting it demands description. After my pleasant encounter with the guard I joined the group being ushered into the railway station to the first waiting-room to begin the "customs" procedure.

The room was strongly reminiscent of the front parlor of a convent. Sofas are covered in pale blue cotton; drapes in a darker shade of blue complement the pale blue walls, and the woodwork is done in cream. Coffee tables are placed in front of the sofas, and from the white ceilings hang four three-bladed fans. Orthodox literature in several languages is placed in racks, and I wish I knew what was written on the huge sign on the wall! It is a large dramatic-looking scroll written in black and white calligraphy.

Various orderly, polite, and courteous groups of tourists passed through two long lines and matched the orderly, polite, and courteous personnel handling admittance. Echoes of the convent rang again because for some reason we seemed to use hushed, reverent tones. Asia House in New York featured an exhibit of photographs this summer entitled "Imperial China - 1846-1912." One of the photographs left an indelible image in my mind - it was of three women locked

in a cangue for infractions. No fear! The attitude of the aforementioned guard and the efficient, dignified manner of the officials created an immediate impression of the friendly, warm open-minded people we were soon to know.

For a health check we went to another room: dark cream walls and chairs covered in green material. An office, a clinic, and rooms for "ladies" and "gents" are also in this area. From here we passed through an open area where many young people in uniform sat writing at desks; then we went into waiting-room number two.

The large calligraphic-looking sign in this room is rectangular. Cream-colored covers are used on the sofas and chairs and the antimaccasars are immaculate. After a short wait we were ready for waiting-room number three.

Attendants in olive green uniforms checked our carefully prepared declaration slips, kept yellow copies, and returned white ones for our personal bookkeeping which were to be returned when we departed. Through a large room with two large paintings in pastel colors of welcome themes - faces of peoples of the world - we entered the money-changing rooms. We discovered another curiosity which amazed us. The abacus! It is consistently used throughout China. Nimble fingers spin beads and juggle yuans to come up with quick sums with computer-like accuracy. Astounding!

On the way to a huge final resting place - waiting-room number 4 - I glimpsed several separate dining-rooms and waiting-rooms which appeared to be private. The game of musical waiting-rooms was interesting, and I belabor the point because, frankly, I was fascinated with the ingenious nature of the Chinese to handle groups as large as ours as though we were parlor guests. The walls in this room are cream-colored and sofas and chairs are covered in dark beige cotton, dutifully protected from the oil of Macassar. Drapes are green silk. White lace panels show intriguing designs of bamboo and pandas intermingled. Lacquered bamboo coffee tables are placed in front of endless rows of sofas and chairs, and we were served another ubiquity - Jasmine tea! The view from the window showed our first sight of Chinese people at work and play.

Next came our first prodigious Chinese lunch! Our dining-room had about six large round tables for ten, and the room was private. What fun it was to pass the endless platters of Cantonese specialties lazy-Susan style: rice, bean sprouts and duck, green beans and shrimp, sweet and sour garrupa, crisply fried old eggs, soup with mustard greens, beer, orange Kool-aid, and tea. Forks were offered to those inept at using chopsticks.

Finally, thoroughly indoctrinated in Chinese calm, courtesy, and custom, we boarded the train for Canton. It was quite an event. The train was immaculately clean and

unusually comfortable. Long legs had ample stretching room between seats. Kelly green velvet drapes and white lace panels framed the windows. This time the seat covers were done in khaki-twill. Antimaccasars? Of course! Service was assiduous. Young girl attendants with no make-up and no-nonsense expressions wore blue pants and long-sleeved, Peter Pan collared white blouses. A red star insignia decorated the small off-face blue berets, and these were perched to the back of the braided heads. Another fascination was the type of shoe worn - a soft, black Mary Jane-style shoe, buckled and flat. The girls served Jasmine tea and cigarettes and swabbed the aisle in the meantime. The meridional landscape featured lush rice paddies being tended by women wearing stylish-looking two-piece work garb and fetching black sun hats, large-brimmed and decorated around with a deep ruffle. All the while we were entertained with classical music, operatic voices, readings or orations which could have been political admonitions, lectures on hygiene, or whatever, but to me they sounded like mellifluous poetry of Tu Fu. A polemical point of Lu Hsun came to mind. In 1919 he wrote, "Throughout the ages, the Chinese have had only two ways of looking at foreigners: up to them as superior beings or down on them as wild animals. They have never been able to treat them as friends, to consider them as people like themselves."

A feeling of expectant exhilaration and excitement characterized our arrival in Canton. We met our first Chinese guides at the station (ours was Mr. Wong). Two large photographs hung high in the station overlooking the lobby. One was of the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the other was of the present chairman, Hua Kuo-feng. Outside we walked to a bus through two large groups of people. Wonderingly, they stared as curiously at us as we stared curiously at them. Homo sapiens!

Canton (Kwangchow) is on the Pearl River and has a population of about 3,000,000 people. Its history of almost 3000 years dates back to 860 B.C. under the reign of Yi Wang of the Chou Dynasty. As a strategic outpost in China's contacts with foreigners and their proselytizing influences, Canton naturally nurtured unorthodox lines of thought and subversive movements from time to time. Far removed from Peking, the Cantonese had a strongly regionalistic spirit which at times approached chauvinism.

Old-world elegance might describe the lovely Tung Fang Hotel. The rooms in the older section of the hotel are not air-conditioned. The electric fan on the dresser stirred the mosquito nets around our beds, and we wondered what we would ever do with the huge thermos of hot water beside it. Women working in the gardens of the hotel exchanged shy glances with us as we tried our first ni hao's.

Two interesting things impressed us as we drove around Canton: there were no automobiles on the streets, only bicycles, and men and women dressed exactly alike in dark blue or gray pants and jackets. However, I glimpsed colored blouses under women's jackets.

The 600-year old Chenhai Tower or Five-Storied Building was originally a citadel. It is red in color and rectangular in shape, and each of the five floors have separate pagoda-type roofs. From the gallery of the fifth floor we enjoyed a lovely perspective of the city as we sipped tea. The five floors of this present-day museum contain exhibits on Canton, its industrialization, and its role in the Communist movement, as well as prehistoric exhibits. Various dynasties, particularly the Ming, are represented. The Manchu Dynasty and European involvements are well explained because of the part the Cantonese played in destroying thousands of cases of English opium which eventually led to the Opium Wars.

An encased painting stood out, and I longed to discuss it with Mr. Wong, but our communications system was not first-rate. It is a painting of a single figure looking upward at a waterfall. It reminded me of "In Front of the Waterfall" which is attributed to Ma Lin, who was a member of the Sung Academy. A porcelain painting sitting on a marble-inlaid stand is striking. A brightly colored ceramic fish with a brilliant turquoise tail attests to the extreme

virtuosity of the old Chinese potters. Among the museum visitors were a man and his young son, and they formed a charming present-day picture! In a glass case is a huge symbolic horned-figure riding an animal. The boy held a small model in his hand, and the pair moved round and round the original as the father explained every minute detail to the boy.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen was born near the city of Canton so fittingly a handsome blue-glazed tile-roofed building in his memory is located here. Its architecture is unique inasmuch as there are no beams supporting the ceiling. Inside is a theater that seats 5,000 and outside on the former grounds of his residence, a statue of Sun Yat-sen stands mutely surveying the results of his spiritual leadership of the revolutionary nationalist movement against the Manchus. Once he wrote, "The Chinese people have only family and clan solidarity; they do not have national spirit. Therefore, even though we have four hundred million people gathered together in one China, in reality they are just a heap of loose sand."

The drive to Fushan (Foshan) through the countryside early one morning was a scene busy as a Brueghel but more reminiscent of the Huhsein peasant paintings come alive! Fushan is an ancient city 10 miles out of Canton. In reference to statues that have been made there since the year 900, Fushan means Buddha Hill. Crowds of people, on

bicycle and on foot, in buses and in trucks, wended their way to work. Dressed alike, in blue or black pants, white or pale-colored shirts, and Cantonese straw hats tied in place under the chin, they looked like a large cast for a production of "The Good Earth." It seems obvious that there is no unemployment in China. Every person seems to be occupied: men and women assisted by water-buffalo work in the rice paddies, girls and boys lay bricks, do carpentry work, repair roads, plant trees. . . no one is idle. Women in the fields wear the chic-looking black trousers and black mandarin neck-line blouses and a certain hairstyle that looks like the Diana Vreeland hair signature. We saw rice shelters made of straw and pig sties made of brick.

According to the principles of Maoist doctrine "Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China" and "Let a hundred flowers blossom and weed through the old to bring forth the new," the Shihwan Art Pottery Factory of Fushan has enjoyed a renaissance. Shihwan sculpture is an ancient art, and during its history of 700 years many splendid works of art were produced. After a period of degeneration and decline, the pottery factory now employs more than 530 workers (through the amalgamation of over 30 individual handicraft shops) to produce artistic ceramics of figurines, birds and animals, miniature landscapes, and

tableware. Much of the natural color of the original clay is retained which is a tradition of Shihwan pottery.

The Foshan Art Studio was similarly set up in 1955 under a ukase of Mao to further develop area folk-art and to employ about 250 workers. Folk art also has a long history which included near extinction until its revival. Four main artistic products are made here: Chiou-se (papier mache), lantern art, paper-cutting, and carving. Each process requires painstaking work and Pavlovian persistence on the part of the worker to snip and color, and paste and chisel various materials to create veritable little gems of art.

The Fushan Ancestral Temple was first built in the reign of Yuan feng in the Sung Dynasty, but today as the Foshan Municipal Museum it serves a different purpose. It has become a tourist attraction; it is a means "to expose the crimes of the reactionary ruling class in deceiving and poisoning the minds of people"; it serves "to criticize the reactionary theory of 'Heaven's will'"; and it "conducts education on historical materialism." There was a spirogyra-laden pond with a stone frog in the middle. One had to hit its nose with a coin while leaning from the railing in order to insure a return to the temple. The life-like pottery figurines lined up along the ridges on the roof, the exquisite brick carvings and wood carvings covered with gold leaf, the grand-looking stone carvings and

unique-styled lime mortar sculptures, and the magnificent bronzes made me happy I had made my mark.

After an elegant lunch in a private dining-room we left the modern, spacious Canton Airport for Peking! No-frills air travel must have been initiated by the CAAC (Civil Aviation Administration of China). To accommodate our large group six extra rows of seats were squeezed in the back of the plane. During our 1200-mile flight to Peking, besides cramped legs, we had tea, hard candy, magazines in Chinese, and Double Happiness cigarettes. An announcement made by a stewardess, "to insure your safety, firearms, ammunition, explosives, poison, and radioactive material are not permitted on board. If they are already on board, please give them to the stewardess" placed us on the honor system. It is said that the CAAC has a good safety record. In the event of bad weather, flights are canceled and airports are closed. I remember seeing only two planes at the airport. Fifty or sixty people, including our three guides, waved enthusiastic good-byes until our plane left the runway.

The Peking Hotel is on Ch'ang An Ta Chieh (Avenue of Perpetual Peace), a boulevard almost as broad as the Champs Elysee. Besides being located near T'ien An Men Square, it is at the corner of Wang Fu Ching, a widely used shopping street. The lovely hotel was built at the beginning of this century after the old one was badly damaged during

the Boxer Rebellion. The old part of the hotel is rather European-looking but the new wings have less appeal. Activity prevails at the Peking Hotel it seems because we saw a great many VIPS getting in and out of window-draped limousines. During the rush-hours in the morning and evening the sight on Ch'ang An is unbelievable: platoons of bicyclists swarm up and down the wide street creating the kind of traffic jams we have on our freeways. It is an incredible sight!

Simon Leys wrote in his "Chinese Shadows" that "in the People's Republic today, the whisper of the wind in the pines is a reactionary and subversive music, looking at the moon is a feudal leftover toward which one should adopt a clear and strong class position, a taste for being alone is an individualistic, petty-bourgeois - maybe worse, counterrevolutionary - tendency." Though Mr. Leys did more to demystify China for me than any other author, I was mystified by those words.

Early one morning I was wide awake at 5:30. I dressed quickly, went down to the lobby of the hotel, and negotiated with a young male clerk at the front desk. I did a few steps of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan for him, and he got the message. He ordered a taxi for me, consulted at length with the driver, and off I went to the Shen Wu Men gate of the Forbidden City to see the early morning T'ai-Chi Ch'uan exercisers. Here at this Gate of Heavenly Powers, while

my driver nonchalantly slept, I gazed upon a scene I shall never forget! With the Shen Wu Men gate, the moat, and red-lacquered palaces in the background, a Broadway-like spectacle began to unfold. Twenty or thirty people on the way to work parked their bicycles and banded together to form an exercise group. Under the guidance of a leader the group in unison began the mental and physical exercise which was once a martial art - T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Movements of the group were as precise and graceful as a chorus line. Those who arrived late used the moat-bridge wall like a ballet bar for limbering up. Several men enacted the martial art while holding wooden swords. With the image indelibly impressed in my mind, the cab driver and I drove back to the hotel. I paid him, bid him ciao, and he cheerfully uttered his first words to me, "Good-night!" I wondered whether he found me individualistic, petty-bourgeois, or counterrevolutionary!

Before I visited T'ien An Men Square there were two times in my life when I felt dwarfed by sites: while approaching St. Peter's in the Piazza Vaticano, Rome, and while walking among the obelisks and statues at the Karnak Temple of Amon, Luxor. T'ien An Men Square is colossal in scope! The driver of bus number 7 waited patiently while we flitted around for pictures and perspective. The 100-acre square is bounded on the east side by two huge buildings, the Museum of Chinese History, and the Chinese Revolution

Museum, and on the west by the Great Hall of the People, the equivalent of our Capitol. South of the square is the Ch'ien Men Gate (Straight Towards the Sun), the gate which was used only twice a year and only by the Emperor when he went to the Temple of Heaven to pray. In the middle of the square is the "Memorial to the People's Heroes," a granite obelisk, 120 feet high, with bas-relief carvings around its base. The north side of the square is special of course because it is marked by the T'ien An Men Gate (Gate of Heavenly Peace) from which the square gets its name and which is the popular entrance to the "Forbidden City."

At one time in Chinese history only emperors and their retinue were allowed inside this sacrosanct area, but on this bright, sunshiny day in September, 1978, we entered the Forbidden City which is no longer forbidden with crowds of Chinese tourists who shared our curiosity and excitement. The gate is spectacular! It is a long vermilion-bricked building topped with a pavilion with large red columns and a canary-yellow double roof.

Once inside this gate one is on the threshold of the 250-acre area, surrounded by a wall and moat, which was once called the "Forbidden City" but what is now known as the "Imperial Palace." During the seventeen years that Marco Polo spent in the service of the Mongol emperor, Kublai Khan, in a description of this area he wrote, "It is

enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length; that is to say, the whole compass thereof is four miles." Bewildered, we followed our leader through another gate, along a long avenue lined by persimmon trees laden with ripe fruit the color of a flame, and finally through the Wu Men Gate (Meridian Gate) which is the main entrance to the maze of palaces, halls, bridges, gates, pavilions, libraries, concubine quarters, and private apartments. These are aligned around elegant courtyards. One courtyard in particular must have inspired Simone de Beauvoir to write, "There was one time when, wandering at random, with nothing of old history or myths in my head, I fell in love with some abandoned secluded courtyard."

Five beautiful white marble bridges across the Golden Water River make a most impressive approach to the major palaces. In harmony with the serious and respectful Chinese visitors, we passed through a final gate (Great Harmony) to the magnificent Hall of Supreme Harmony (T'ai Ho Tien), the Hall of Complete Harmony (Chung Ho Tien), and the Hall of Preserving Harmony (Pao Ho Tien). The T'ai Ho Tien is built on a fine marble terrace. Its three successive flights of steps are decorated with 18 bronze tripods representing the 18 Chinese provinces. Opposite the Hall of Supreme Harmony - at the back of the Hall of Preserving Harmony - is a stepping stone of white marble

carved with clouds and dragons over which the emperor was carried in a sedan-chair. It is a masterpiece of intricate detail and workmanship.

There were many Chinese people with the studious expression of their forebears, the scholar-officials. Others simply showed delight at being in the area that had been forbidden to their ancestors. All of us were enraptured with the whole experience. With intriguing names like Palaces of Heavenly Purity, of Earthly Tranquility, of the Culture of the Mind, of Cultivation of Character, of Intellectual Honors, and of Literary Glory, who could remain unmoved?

I longed to visit the Palace of Pleasure and Longevity (Lo Shan T'ang), an art gallery, but had to be satisfied with the "harmony" building which contains old porcelains of fine design, masterpieces of jade carving, and cloisonne objects. An added feature is the exhibit case which contains statues of three warriors and one horse. These were brought to Peking from Sian, the site of a spectacular archaeological discovery in 1974 of the guardian army - 6,000 life-size men and horses of terra-cotta - of the Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, the first emperor and builder of the Great Wall. These had been loyally standing guard for 2200 years before their dazzling discovery!

We emerged from the Forbidden City through the Shen Wu Men gate with silent appreciation to the 15th century

Emperor Yung Lo who was its architect and builder and to the present leaders of China for their generosity in allowing it to be visited. A kind of memory-kaleidoscope lingers in my mind with ever-ready images of ceramic creatures from mythology on eaves of pavilions, a golden dragon with a flaming pearl in its claw, gateways guarded by ferocious lions, gigantic bronze incense burners, a phoenix filled with hope, and a bald bronze elephant. We left behind a formidable feng huang who with the dragon, tortoise, and unicorn according to a Chinese myth guards over the empire and appears in time of prosperity and good fortune. This is our sincere hope for the China we know.

What a euphonious name for a summer place - the Garden of Clear Ripples! Emperor Ch'ien Lung of the Ching Dynasty originally built the summer palace and gardens to serve as his summer resort. Over the years the area had been damaged and destroyed until the Empress Dowager Tsu Hsi of the Manchu Dynasty embezzled funds intended for the development of the navy and rebuilt the 700-acre area renaming it the "Garden of Cultivating Peace."

One first sees the "Hall of Longevity and Benevolence" where the emperor conducted state affairs and gave audience to his ministers and officials. Nearby is the "Grand Stage" where we watched a tiny Chinese "ham" perform for his parents who clearly appreciated the talents of their prodigy

probably more than Tzu Tsi appreciated her entertainers. Her former residence is called the "Hall of Happiness and Longevity." Its interior decorations and furnishings are rich Chinoiserie. The thrones are covered in brilliantly designed brocade. From here possibly the Empress walked along the "Long Corridor," a long (2366 feet), narrow walkway with red-lacquered balustrades, along K'un-ming Lake. Quite possibly she remembered the days when she had been no more than a favorite concubine as she surveyed her buildings with splendid sounding names like the "Hall of Jade Ripples," the "Hall of Dispelling Clouds," and the "Temple of the Sea of Wisdom." Then she would reach her quixotic moored boat, the "Boat for Quiet Banquets," which led her nowhere.

The Sino-Albanian Friendship Commune is near Peking. In the community hall at a U-shaped table we met with the head of the commune who explained the workings of the group through a young woman interpreter who spoke flawless English. We were served tea and cigarettes as we listened. The commune functions on three levels; the commune itself which is like an administration center for grouping the various workshops, the production brigade, a kind of large village cooperative, and the production team, which decides its affairs. The doctrine of "self-reliance" is the principle taught at all levels. Salaries vary from 600 yuan a year to 420 for the workers and 200 for the less able.

The 32,000 members of this commune are divided into 28 groups. The commune is totally self-sufficient and supplies food and produce for other areas as well. Each member contributes toward making this system work. Schools, nurseries, health provisions, farms, small factories, and even entertainment, are included in the commune.

Any dairy farmer would have been astonished at the size of the Holstein cows. Peking ducks were evident at every stage of growth. The most curious one was the "forced-feeding" stage! The duck was placed with an open bill before a forced-feeder (resembling a faucet), and a worker squirted formula into its mouth. Eureka! The stomach puffed up immediately like an inflated balloon.

There was a striking similarity between us following our leader around the commune and the flock of Peking ducks waddling behind theirs. Some of the crops raised are rice and wheat, sugar cane and peanuts, corn and every kind of vegetable imaginable, as well as a variety of fruit trees.

A large number of women are employed in the small factories. At the jade factory women cut, chisel, and shape jade into jewelry and art objects. Our leader graciously allowed us to take souvenir pieces of jade from the huge chunk in the yard. At another small factory thongs were produced in an assembly line process. Many of these are exported and the rest are for domestic use.

We were guests in the home of a 72-year old man and his family. He remembered life before the revolution as a peasant farmer under a landlord. Now he enjoys the title "agriculture technician." Two rooms were on display: a bedroom and a sitting-room. In the sitting-room was a large platform-like place to sit. It was covered with a straw mat and neatly folded blankets were tucked in a corner. Colorful pictures, a radio, two exquisite old vases, and a most cordial host who invited us all to sit down and talk with him, made a charming moment to remember.

Our leader profusely thanked the leader of the commune and the family we had visited for their warm hospitality. We clapped for them to show our appreciation, and they clapped back for us in reciprocity. It was with an inexplicable tinge of sadness that we waved adieu to one another. . .they waved until our bus disappeared from sight.

During the question and answer period at the commune a member asked, "Does a worker have the option to quit his work at the commune and go to the city to find different work?" The reply was "that since this is a socialist country every person contributes in the work and every person is happy to contribute to this common goal. If a person who wants to leave has a valid reason for leaving, he may present his petition to a committee who passes upon it, and if it seems to be a reasonable request, he is allowed to leave the commune."

Recently the People's Daily of Peking acknowledged that "thousands of Chinese youths who have fled back to the cities from their mandatory tours of duty in the countryside are creating a problem that is familiar in the West but brand new to China - teen-age unemployment." The Chinese party in the past encouraged urban youths to get a taste of work on the farm and, in fact, Chairman Mao made this idea mandatory. "It is necessary for educated young people to go to the countryside to be reeducated by the poor and lower-middle class peasants," he decreed. The policy under the new regime seems to recognize problems which ensued following this order. In January The People's Daily reported that some of the 16 million "sent-down youths" would be relieved of field work and transferred to new jobs in industry, trade, education, and communications.

It is said that the only man-made structure the United States astronauts could positively identify on earth from the moon or heavens was the Great Wall of China. Two hours and a half by train from Peking is Bataling (Pataling), the place from which one is shuttled by minibus to the base of that part of the wall which is open to tourists. At this point one faces a decision: to walk along the top of the wall to the left or to the right. If time nor energy are factors, try both. The climb to the right up the steep incline to a tower affords a magnificent view of the serpentine-like wall curving over the mountains, its line

interrupted every two hundred yards or so by a stone watchtower. The wall was begun 2500 years ago during the Chou Dynasty and finished in the T'ang. At first it was a rampart of stone and earth running for over 2000 miles. The Ming added cement bricks and blocks of stone to make it a real fortification against barbarian invaders.

To walk along the Great Wall of China is an awesome experience! Gazing out over the wide Mongolian landscape evoked varied responses in our group. One woman was moved to tears when she remembered the reason the Great Wall is sometimes called "the longest cemetery in the world" - the bones of thousands and thousands of forced laborers who built the wall were crushed and buried beneath its massive gray rocks. Another felt the presence, the power, and the promise of God as she had never done before. A marathon runner among us decked out in his race togs and ran up and down the wall perfectly oblivious of the disbelieving stares which followed him up and down. A poet mailed picture post-cards of the wall to her children with words of advice from Samuel Johnson to his friend James Boswell inscribed on the back. Boswell related, "Johnson talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it. He expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the Wall of China. I caught it for a moment, and said I really

believed I should go and see the Wall of China had I not children, of whom it was my duty to take care. 'Sir,' said he, 'by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a luster reflected upon them from your spirit and curiosity. They would be at all times regarded as the children of a man who had gone to view the Wall of China. I am serious, Sir.'"

Nowhere are the great excesses of pre-revolution China more pervasively apparent than at sites of burial places or tombs of former emperors. Although there are three groups of tombs in the Peking region, we visited only the area of the "Thirteen Tombs" of the Ming. The true founder of Peking, Yung Lo of the Ming Dynasty, chose this softly rolling valley 30 miles from Peking to be the place for the thirteen tombs. Some of the tombs are at the foot of a mountain, others are in the valleys, and the whole area is called Shi San Ling. Each tomb is surrounded by red walls. Each is an architectural grouping in itself: it consists of a Soul Tower, a Sacrificial Hall, and an Underground Palace.

The approach to Chang Ling (the tomb of Yung Lo) is formidable! The first structure to come into view is the Triumph Arch, a large white marble memorial archway (p'ai-lou) on which are fine bas-relief carvings. The gate of the tombs called Ta Hung Men or Great Red Gate comes next. Nearby

stand ornamental pillars and the Tablet Pavilion or Pavilion of the Stele. On this spot is a fourteen-foot statue of a turtle made from a single piece of marble. Further on is the romantic, wide avenue, the Sacred Road, which is a charming playground for tourists. It is lined on each side with massive marble symbolic sculptures. There are twenty-four stone animals - lions, camels, elephants, horses, and beasts of mythology, Hsia Chei and Chi-Lin - four of each kind. Also there are twelve statues of humans - military officers, civil officials, and officers of merit - four of each kind. The female of each species is seated and the male is standing. To see tourists gleefully cavorting, climbing camels, mounting horses, fondling elephants, evokes an image of happy, playful children on a playground. Is Yung Lo chuckling? Astrid, our Pan-Am leader, even rewarded us with lollipops!

The tomb of Yung Lo offers the tourist a view of buildings in exceptionally fine harmony of form and color. Through a red gate one enters a wall-enclosed courtyard. In the middle is the Gate of Holy Favors (Lung En Men), a marvelous example of classical Chinese architecture. Beyond this gate in another courtyard is a lovely palace standing on a sculpted marble terrace. It is called the Palace of the Holy Favors (Lung En Tien). The sight of Chinese-red buildings surrounded by tall pines, cypresses, and junipers resembles a scene on a Chinese lantern!

Of all the thirteen tombs, only two are open to visitors. One is Chang Ling and the other is Ting Ling, the only tomb which has been excavated so far. Ting Ling is the tomb of Chu I-chun, the 13th emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who ruled for forty-eight years. One descends into the underground palace by an ornate stairway. I remember it being terribly crowded. There is a front hall, a central hall, and the rear hall. The palace is entirely an arched stone structure without beams or columns. The doors are carved from marble. In the central hall there are three white marble altars (the first two are for the empresses and the last one is for the emperor), and in front of each altar are placed various altar paraphernalia and lovely blue and white porcelain urns known as "everlasting lamps." When first discovered the urns contained sesame oil and a wick. There are two interesting pictures on the wall which seem to be of Chinese builders, planners, and workers. The rear hall is high and spacious with three coffins, plaster replicas of chests, and a map of the whole tomb site on the wall. There are treasures to be examined in the exhibition rooms but with a concert planned in Peking for the evening, Mr. Yang, our guide, urged us on.

It was a house full of soldiers, workers, tourists, and perhaps a quota of officialdom, the night we were guests of the people at the "People's Concert Hall." The orchestra of Chinese instruments created a collection of exotic sounds

quite unfamiliar to the western ear. The suona is a wind instrument, an erhu is a kind of fiddle, the cheng is a plucked instrument which sounds like a cross between a piano, a harp, and a harpsichord, and the pipa resembles a lute.

This year the Performing Arts Company of the People's Republic of China visited New York. At this concert in Peking we heard several of the same renditions that were given then. Since the program was written only in Chinese I could not learn whether or not the soloists were the same ones I heard at Lincoln Center. The bamboo flute soloist who played "Herdsmen's New Song" and "Morning on the Miao Hills" was Yu Hsun-fa; a pipa soloist, Lin Teh-hai, played "Ambush from Ten Sides"; the suona soloist, Hao Yu-chi, rendered "Celebration of a Bumper Harvest." A folk song of Sinkiang, "Mayila," about a beautiful Kazakh singer, was sung by Kuo-Shu chen.

To the appreciative applause of Italian tourists in the audience a young woman with a Liza Minelli style and a Mongolian face liltily sang "Santa Lucia," "Neopolitan Folk Song," and "Funiculi Funicula." Another beautiful Tibetan-type girl from one of the autonomous regions of China delighted the audience with her charming rendition of "Brahm's Lullaby" which she sang in German coated with a strong Chinese accent!

The statement by Mr. Yang that "the Empress Tzu Hsi might eat as many as 125 courses at one meal" astonished us until we were guests for dinner at the famous Peking Duck Restaurant in Peking. There was an endless array of mysterious-looking hors d'oeuvres and entrees including multifarious duck involvement, shark's fin, swallow's nest soup, quail eggs, pig's liver, and round after round of beer, orange Kool-aid, tea, and wine. Toffee apple, a most enticing dessert was served. It is made by sugar-coating large pieces of apple, deep-frying these, and serving them piping hot. Mr. Yang advised us to dip these into cold water to preserve the crispness and flavor. A world-traveler with a sophisticated wit dipped hers into her wine instead of water. For some strange reason this provoked hilarious laughter in our guides. We responded with hilarious laughter! The evening ended with applause for the chefs and applause for the guests.

To shop in the Friendship Store in Peking is expeditious, but to shop in the State Store on Wang Fu Ching is an expedition! Only for tourists, the Friendship Store is adequate - the supply of tourist souvenirs is attractive and ample, and it saves time. Wang Fu Ching is crowded with thousands of Chinese people, no tourists.

A crowd gathered around to watch me buy a pair of Mary Jane sandals, the kind the Chinese women wear. Curiously they watched me try on several pair for size.

One pair fit. I nodded assent. When I asked for another larger pair, the group and the salesgirl were nonplussed. My daughter who wears a size larger asked me to bring a pair home for her. The ensuing fun and laughter all around was fun!

There are lovely modern paintings on silk, books, semiprecious stones, new satin brocade robes, lovely China plates and ashtrays, lacquered boxes, superb artists' brushes, and a variety of other objects, but a most treasured souvenir is a name seal (called chop). These can be made in a day. They are found in the Liu Li Ch'ang district which used to be an antique lover's paradise. The seal is made from marble or semiprecious stone and it is carved with your own name in Chinese characters. Don't forget the red paste to use with it!

The face of China has known many countenances throughout its long history. There is reason to believe that its posture is presently undergoing still another change. The distinguished Belgian Sinologist, Pierre Ryckmans, is an authority on China and its varying shadows. During the Mao regime he captured the essence of the crisis of modern China and how it faces the world when he wrote, "The faction which we may call conservative, idealist, reactionary, integrist, xenophobic, obscurantist - yesterday the Manchu aristocracy, the Empress Tzu Hsi, the Boxers; today the Maoist extremists - advocates sealing up the empire and

avoiding all foreign contacts, ignoring the very existence of the outside world, so as to keep its vision of Chinese order pure, intact, and unchanging. The faction we may call realist, cultured, liberal, progressive - yesterday the reformist intellectuals; today the pragmatic technocrats around Chou Enlai - proposes, on the contrary, to insure China's survival in the modern world, to learn from the latter and at least to borrow its weapons. For them, the famous slogan of Chang Chih-tung (1837-1909), 'to put Western technology in the service of Chinese genius,' is still relevant. But the conservatives object as pertinently as they did a century ago that it is impossible to divorce substance and function: if the Western function is adopted, the Chinese substance will be inevitably and irremediably affected. But when they refuse to face the reality of the external world, the integrists deprive China of its rightful place on the modern scene. Worse, they expose it once again to the danger of becoming a helpless victim of imperialist aggression. When this last becomes too threatening a possibility, the reformists are called to the helm, but they soon overshoot the mark and foreign technology begins to corrode the substance of Chinese national ideology, shaking the empire to its foundations, justifying the worse fears of the conservatives, under whose pressure all open doors are now slammed shut."

The doors to China are now open - or ajar. Have the people of China once again found in its leaders the "mandate of Heaven"?