

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

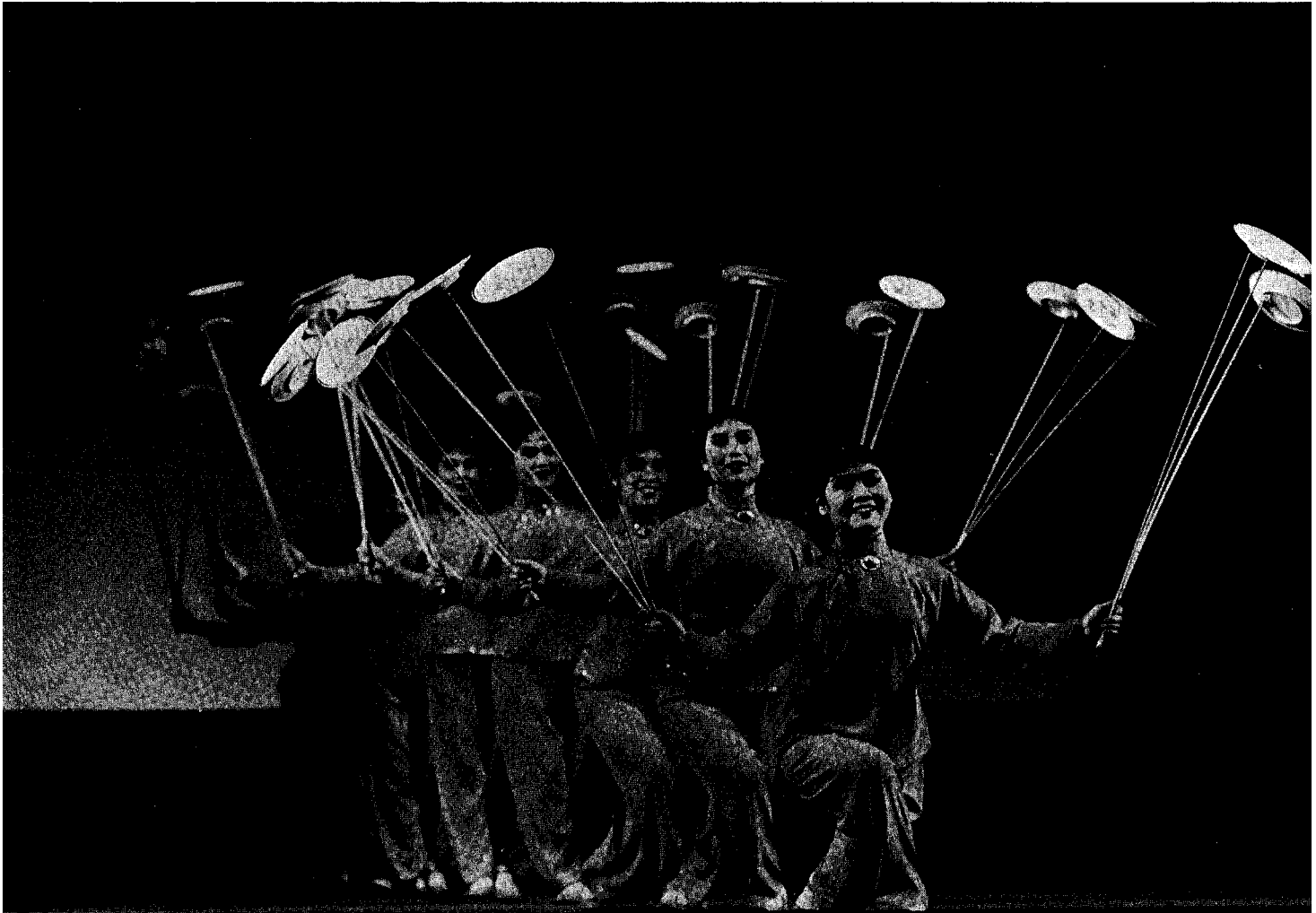
WITHOUT WRITER'S CONSENT

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

RB-2
Touring

846 Broadway
Saugus Mobile Home Park-lot #49
Saugus, Massachusetts
11 January, 1973

Mr. Richard H. Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017



Dear Mr. Nolte:

On December 16, 1972, the Shenyang Acrobatic Troupe of China began their American tour with a week's visit to Chicago. To call this group acrobats is somewhat misleading, because when we think of acrobats we are likely to conjure up visions of gymnasts or high wire circus performers. The Chinese troupe is full of finely tuned gymnasts, but the impact of their show depends on the delicate balancing, precision timing and

unfamiliar nature of their many acts. A traditional Chinese lion dance, the whirling Diabalo, and groups of girls balancing while spinning plates delight and amaze the audience. The performance ends with a large banner proclaiming "Long live the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples."

The troupe came to America to do more than perform; they came on a goodwill tour. This same good will first took them to Canada, and will take them to Mexico, Chile and Peru. I spent the better part of a week in Chicago with the Shenyang acrobats, and would like to compare and contrast the type of visit they had in Chicago with the tours my wife and I took in China. There were some obvious differences in the premises under which we operated- the Chinese came as a large group and were here mainly to perform; my wife and I traveled alone and were in China mainly to learn about Chinese society. Still, given that framework the Chinese tours concentrated on contact with people whereas the American tours concentrated on contact with institutions.

In America making arrangements for a tour meant dealing directly with the institution the visitors wanted to visit rather than the government. Some institutions were accustomed to visitors and had their own standard routine, while others had little experience. Because of this there was a wide latitude on what was seen and how it was seen.

The first big visit for the Chinese tourists was to U.S. Steel's Southwork plant, located on the Southern edge of Chicago. Since the Chinese are from Laoning, a major steel producing province, they had expressed a keen interest in visiting a steel plant. Getting permission from US Steel to visit their plant was no easy matter. Having unsuccessfully tried to visit US Steel previously as a photographer, I was not surprised. What was surprising was that they required a list of all the people going on the tour, including the State department's security people, so as to run their own security check.

We were informed on our trip out to the plant that no pictures would be allowed anywhere in the plant. We could, we were told, take a group photograph just inside the gate but other than that we would have to leave the cameras in the buses.

The troupe was greeted at the door and everyone went up into a welcoming room. Coffee, juice and doughnuts were served while the group was formally welcomed. As the public relations man began talking, most of the Chinese took out notebooks or pieces of paper to take down notes. Used to the vast numbers of statistics given in a Chinese factory, they were, I suspect, prepared to do a lot of note-taking.

However, very little factual information was given during the slide show that followed the welcoming speech. The slide show gave an overview of the Southwork plant and focussed on

the waterpollution control effort US Steel Southwork plant was involved in. The governing structure of the plant, the plant's daily or annual output, were not discussed, nor were salaries, vacation plans, or health benefits.

The slide show finished, the group was led back downstairs, and after taking group pictures we were split up into two groups for the rest of the visit. We were once again reminded not to take any pictures during the tour .

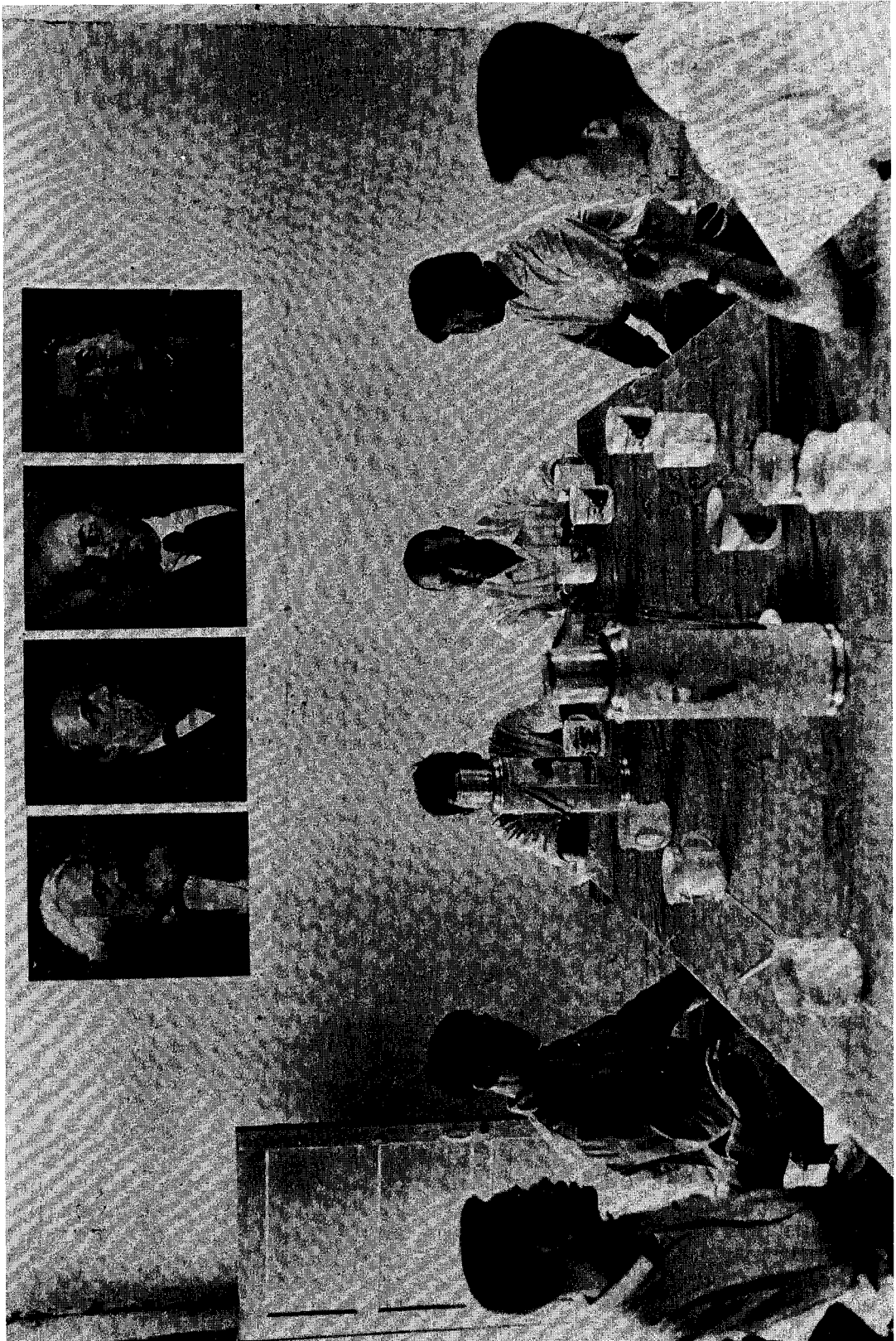
We spent the next 45 minutes watching two of the principal steel-producing operations. My group first saw hot steel ingots being pressed into shape. There was no explanation of the process, just a quick walk through. This was somewhat changed when a foreman at the tapping area took more time and interest in explaining that process.

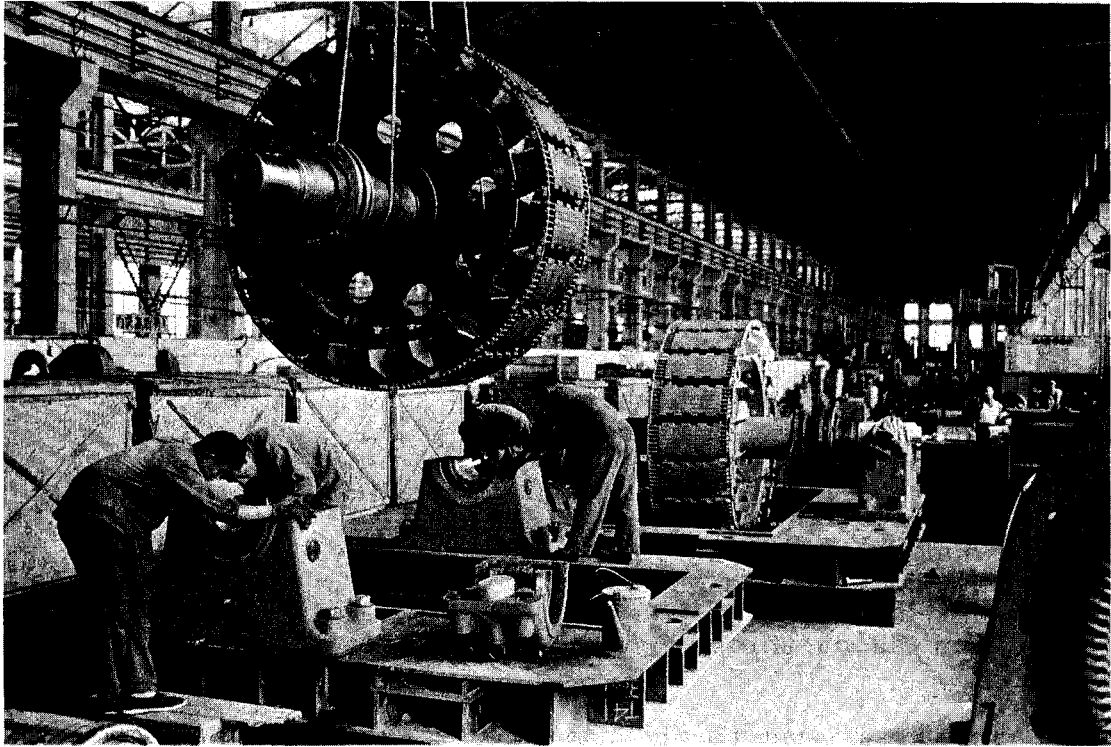
The tour was soon finished, and after returning the helmets and goggles supplied by the company the bus started back to downtown Chicago and the Hancock building. Just as several of the American hosts were beginning to feel angry and distraught over what they considered a less than adequate tour, the Chinese began singing. The security people, interpreters and other American guests applauded loudly, and sang back a loud if not tuneful version of Clementine. For the next forty minutes there was much singing back and forth between the back and front of the buses, first in Chinese, then in English. (Never being shy, even knowing that I have a bad voice, I was at least loud until one of the American interpreters interrupted me in the midst of what I considered a virtuoso performance to tell me that I didn't know the words of the song, and was off key, and as she said, "You just shouldn't sing." Having a deaf ear for such negative praise I continued singing, though I must admit my enthusiasm was somewhat dampened.)



A close parallel to the steel plant tour was my visit to a heavy machinery plant outside of Peking. Originally we, my guide- a young woman of about thirty-and myself, were scheduled for a morning visit to the plant. As always I asked to arrive early, so as to spend as much time at the factory as possible. When we arrived at the factory gate we were met by a group of seven people. This particular group included the vice president of the revolutionary committee, foremen and workers. Our driver was invited to join the tour. He decided not to, and stayed by the car with a couple of workers.

We went up to the meeting room for a brief discussion amidst tea and cigarettes. The meeting room, like meeting rooms in communes, hospitals, museums and schools had a picture of Chairman Mao on one wall and pictures of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin on the other. My interpreter, who was not especially good at translating but was sensitive to my desire to spend as much time as possible taking pictures and watching actual





production, explained my interest to the group before the discussion began. They seemed somewhat surprised, but said that that was fine and that they would make the description especially brief. It lasted thirty minutes and included the usual detailed information. At the end, as is customary, I was told that if I had any criticisms or suggestions following the tour they would be appreciated. I asked a few questions and then I mentioned the things that I would like to see, which included the manufacturing process, day care center, nursery, clinic, eating facility, and factory housing. It was, to say the least, an ambitious undertaking, especially for a morning of visiting.

Nevertheless we began the tour and at the first of several buildings we visited a sign was posted which read "Warmly Welcome Friends from America." Inside the building I was shown a very large turbine-producing machine manufactured in Sweden in the early sixties. The guide explained that this piece of machinery had cost the equivalent of one year's rice production on a certain commune. In the next room I was shown an identical machine, this produced by the Chinese themselves, which I was told had cost about three months rice production on the same commune.

The next visit was to the day care center, where a show was put on for me by the children. It was a splendid show which included singing and dancing and lasted nearly half an hour. It wasn't the first time I had been so treated, but nevertheless I was embarrassed that such an effort should be made for me.

After watching the show and attending a few of the nursery school classes it was already well past eleven and I hadn't yet seen all I wanted. On the way back to the conference room we stopped at the lunch area where the first group of workers were eating. I wandered through the kitchen and into the cafeteria, and then back outside where many of the workers were eating on this particularly hot day. At this point the vice chairman surprised me by asking if I would like to have lunch at the plant. I, of course, said yes, if it wouldn't inconvenience them. He assured me it wouldn't, and suggested we take a short rest before having lunch.

After sitting for nearly 1/2 hour we went to lunch. The vice chairman said it would be a typical meal since no prior arrangements had been made. The "average meal" turned out to be quite sumptuous, and not very typical. Since they did all this without notice, I wondered what would have been prepared had I told them a day in advance that I would like to eat there. Nine of us ate together; the vice chairman, the several foremen, the workers representatives, interpreters, and the car driver who finally joined us.

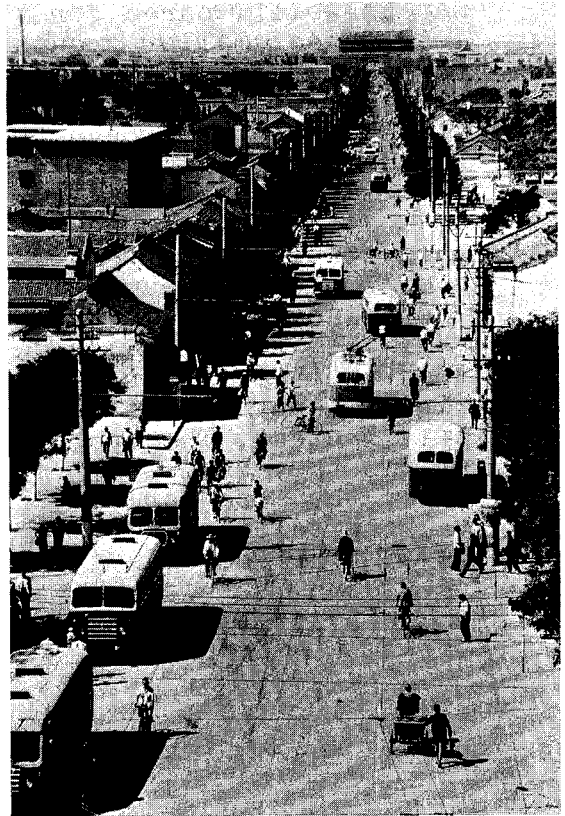
Following lunch we walked outside and watched some workers involved in games of basketball and volleyball. Others were just sitting and talking. We reentered the meeting room building and passed a room where the payroll was being counted. Having never seen such a sight, I asked if I could photograph it.

Certainly, I was told.

After this we went out to the housing built by the factory for a majority of its workers. We visited several different families, each of whom I asked about family size, income, the nature of their work and that of their children.

All this lasted until close to four o'clock. My guide looked tired and we decided we had seen enough for a day. The vice chairman asked me if I had any criticisms or suggestions and I mentioned how much I had enjoyed my visit.

Every city, both in the United States and in China, seems to want to show its guests a good view of the city. In Chicago this meant taking the troupe to the Hancock building. The people who manage the Hancock building had planned a little ceremony, including lunch, attractive posters as souvenirs for every member of the troupe, and what on a clear day is a good view not only of Chicago but of four states. Unfortunately cloudy weather prevented a good view on this day and on the two other occasions that the chinese cameramen tried to visit the Hancock building.



In Sian, ancient capital of China, there is an eight-story pagoda in the very center of town. The foreign guest, unlike at the Hancock building where one is whisked up 94 floors in less than a minute, has to walk the eight floors to the observation veranda. Luckily I visited the pagoda on a very clear day and could see far past the remains of the old city walls in all four directions.

Since the Chinese had performances every night but Thursday, they limited themselves to morning visits. However there was no performance scheduled for Thursday so there was a tour in the morning and afternoon, and a party planned for the evening.

At the planetarium there was a welcoming speech, and a very brief tour of the facilities. The bulk of the time, however, was spent in the dark. Since it was December the Planetarium was set up for its Christmas show, the story of the heavens during the birth of Christ. For the Chinese tour group the

Planetarium had erased the entire sky except for the planets.

It seems, so the announcer said, that Shenyang and Chicago are located on the same parallels, so the view of the sky is roughly the same. Everyone leaned back into the planetarium's comfortable black leather seats, the lights went off, and the sky began to light up with stars and planets. For the next thirty minutes we were shown and told about the changes in the sky produced by evening turning into morning. It was a tour enjoyed by all.

The group returned to the Bismarck Hotel for lunch and a short rest period before going to the Museum of Science and Industry. Unlike the Planetarium's staff the Museum's was not as wellprepared for the visit. After splitting the troupe into three smaller groups we started the tour. There is a lot to see in the Museum, too much for 1 1/2 hours. Those giving the tour didn't realize this until after they had rushed the Chinese troupe through the coal mine, and the captured German submarine. Luckily the tour began to slow down.

It would have been hard to predict before visiting the Museum what the Chinese would most enjoy. The group I was with spent most of their time with a penny arcade like driving test. The other things they seemed to enjoy the most were the talking telephones in which your voice is played back, the TV telephone, and playing tick-tack-toe with a computer.



Unlike the Museum in Chicago, where things were too rushed, visiting a museum in China is not something to be hurried through, as Eileen and I discovered. A good example of such tours are those given at the four residences of Chairman Mao in Yanan. My wife and I had gone to Yanan to look at the cave dwellings and visit the seat of the Communist Party after the Long March.

We were told that our itinerary included visits to all four residences, now turned into museums. That in itself had no effect until we visited the first museum. The museum consisted of a few small rooms in which Chairman Mao had lived and worked. The guide took nearly two hours explaining the nature of the rooms all their contents, and their historical

significance, plus a detailed history of the period. Even if one had a fascination with this period in Chinese history, one would be overwhelmed by the sheer weight of the information given.

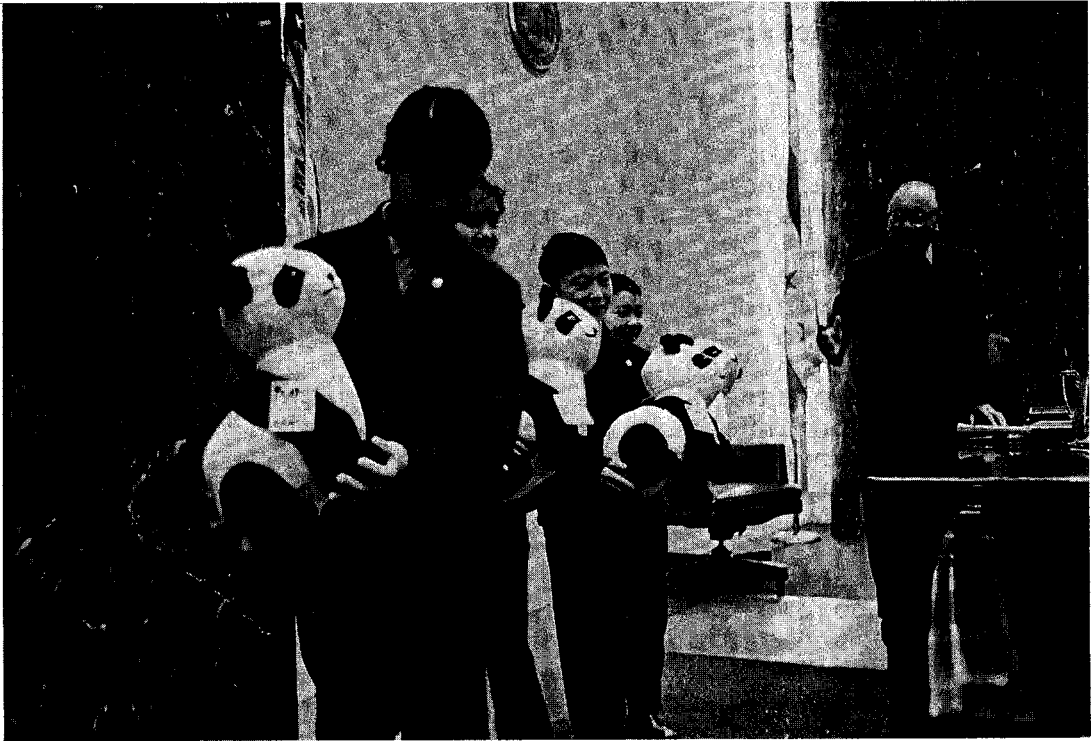
After the visit we told our guide, who like all our other guides had asked for criticism, that although we enjoyed the visit we had only a short time in the area and didn't want to spend the major part of it in museums. We did, we said, want to visit the museums, but hoped the descriptions could be less detailed. At the next three museums our guide tried to convey this to the museum guides. They seemed to agree but continued to give us long detailed accounts of every exhibit. My wife, who speaks Chinese, heard our guide ask the museum guide to hurry up please several times, and heard the guide agree, and then continue just as before. Even with our guide's prodding we were unable to alter the inexorable nature of a Chinese museum tour.

Behind events or a tour there are always plans. Most of the time almost no one not directly involved in the planning becomes aware of the bargaining, the mishaps or the smoothness with which arrangements are made. A group of twenty of the Chinese troupe were invited by the Mayor, Richard Daley, to come to a city council meeting at which he would welcome them to Chicago. At about 9:45 AM twenty members of the troupe including the leader, assistant leader, secretary and four small children walked over to city hall, less than three blocks from the hotel. They were quickly shown into the auditorium where they passed out pins depicting Peking's Tien An Men square. Throughout their Chicago visit the Chinese passed out these pins. The Mayor didn't actually arrive until 10:20.

Soon after the Mayor called the meeting to order the leader of the Chinese troupe was called to the front. The Mayor said how proud Chicago was to be the first city that this great show was visiting. He then made a presentation to the leader, after which the leader offered some small presents to the Mayor and explained how glad the troupe was to be in Chicago. Then the Mayor distributed four fluffy Pandas to the four children and the ceremony was over almost as soon as it had begun.

The presentation over, the Chinese returned to their seats picked up their hats and coats, and began to leave. Just as they were picking up their coats a councilman got up and said, "Mr. Mayor, as the councilman who represents Chinatown I would like to say that I have a great interest in the visit of the Shenyang Acrobatic Troupe." That was all I heard as I followed the Chinese troupe out the door to the elevator.

The children held their pandas all the way to the hotel and all the way up to the ninth floor. They disappeared down the hallways with the four pandas still in their arms.



The story behind the four pandas is very interesting. It seems that the Chicago zoo, like many zoos, would love to have a panda or two. The Mayor decided that it would be a good gesture to buy each member of the troupe a panda. Colonel Kelly, who was in charge of the arrangements had someone buy them all, and then noticed that these talking pandas had labels which said Made in Taiwan. He first thought of just cutting off the labels, not wanting to offend the guests. But he decided he ought to check the insides of the pandas, and cut one open only to discover that the voice machines also had Made in Taiwan on them. These pandas were scrapped and much to the city's credit, the four new non-talking, non-Taiwan made pandas were purchased.

Only once in our entire stay in China did I see a slip-up. In Canton arrangements were made for us to visit a paper-making factory. We arrived at the factory and were not greeted by anyone. The guide found this very strange and round up a stray member of the Revolutionary Committee, who didn't know who we were or that we were expected. He was obviously quite distressed over the whole matter, talked with our guide for a few minutes, disappeared into an office, made several phone calls, and came back outside smiling but certainly still very distressed. No one ever told us that a mistake had been made. The previous conversation had been carried on in rapid-fire Chinese. In English our guide said only that the factory was very busy. The tour which followed, noteworthy enough, was no different from tours where we had been expected.

The last official Chicago tour was to two hospitals. The Chinese had asked to visit Cook County Hospital. It is, if I remember correctly, the largest public hospital in America, and certainly handles the greatest number of poor patients in the Chicago area. Several members of the Chicago welcoming committee were disturbed by the choice, afraid that it would give the Chinese the wrong view of what American hospitals were like. They insisted that the troupe visit the more modern, private, Children's Memorial hospital. The issue was debated and after much heated discussion and some manipulation it was decided that the group would split in two, one half going to Cook County, the other to Children's. Each group would bring a set of performers to put on a short show for the patients.

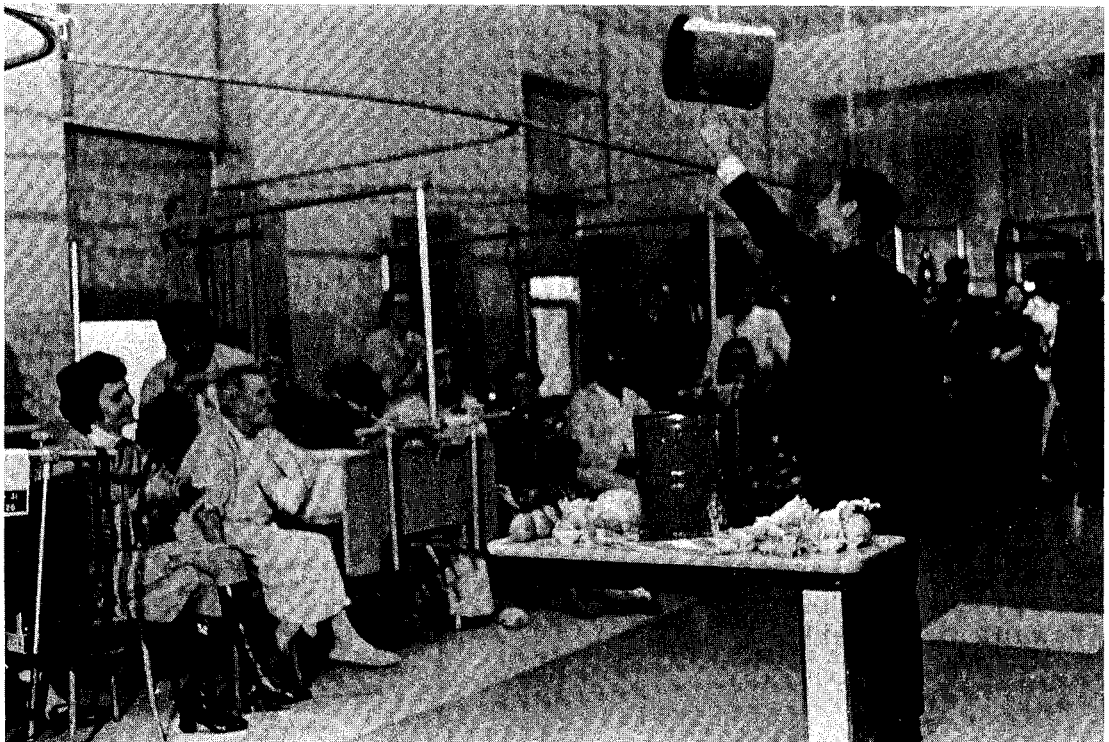
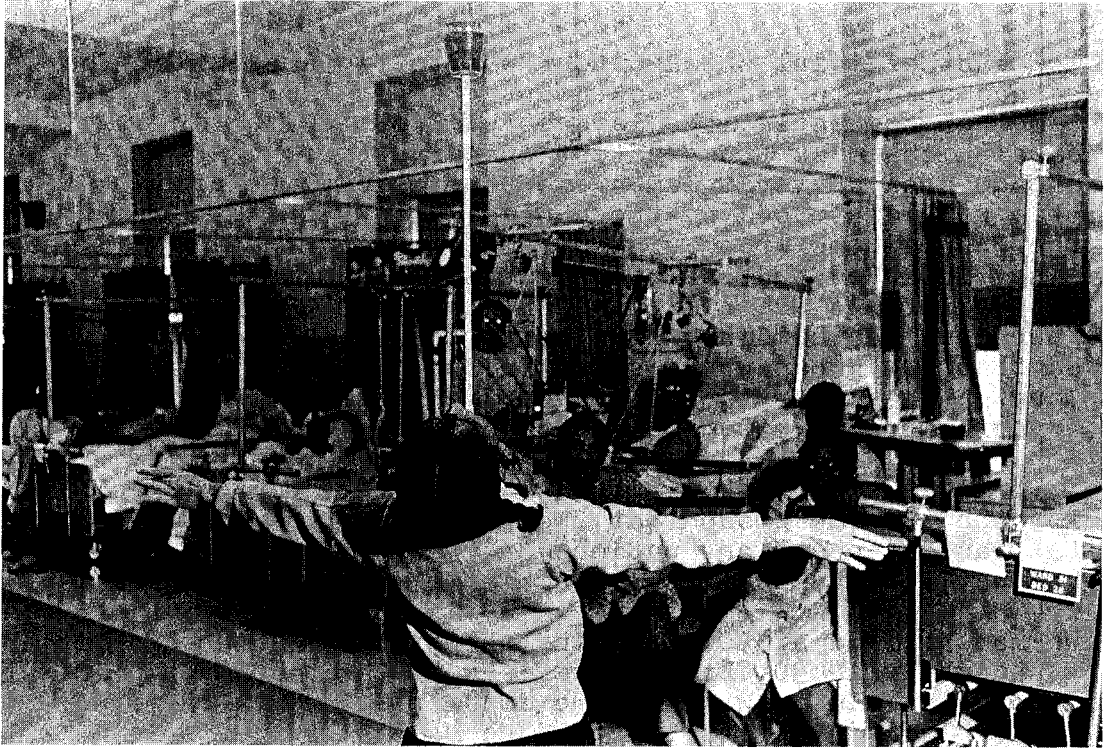
I went with the Cook County group. We were met by Dr. Specter, who explained to the group that the philosophy of Cook County hospital was to accept any patient and then to figure out how he could pay, or who could pay for his medical care.

We had arrived at 10:00AM, and the discussion was just about through by 10:30. Dr. Specter saw my cameras and those of the Chinese film crew, who were documenting the entire trip. He explained that there could be no pictures taken of patients in the hospital. He said, "I want to explain this to you. In this country we feel very strongly about a person's private rights. Even though a person is in this hospital and may be getting free medical care we can't give permission for you to take his picture. You would have to get his permission and that I'm afraid would be impossible." He was asked about the possibility of one or two patients being photographed to document the visit. He said well, yes, maybe and then said no.

Instead of being taken to wards to meet and see the patients, the troupe was first shown to the laboratories. When it became apparent that there was no great enthusiasm for the labs it was decided to go immediately to a ward. For some reason we were shown to the trauma ward in which there were two patients who could be seen. One had a bullet wound in his neck and the other was an old alcoholic who seemed to be having a severe case of the DTs. Luckily the group was taken quickly through this part and to a ward where they were expected to perform.

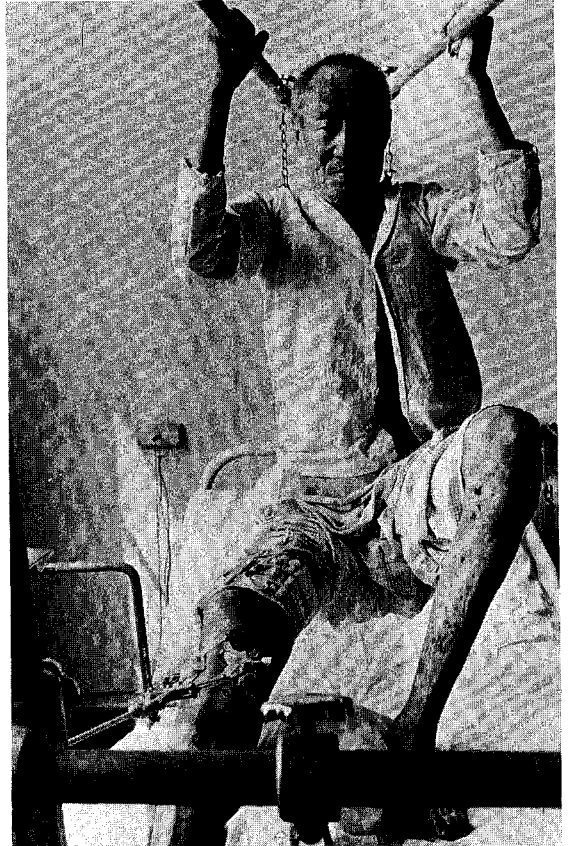
The group set up quickly. The performance began with a couple of songs by a woman including, what else, Clementine. This was followed by a balancing act, the diabalo (a spinning game), and some magic tricks. Both the troupe and the patients seemed to enjoy the show.

Dr. Specter told the film crew at the last minute that they could take some pictures of the performance, he just didn't want them zeroing in on any one particular patient.



I visited two hospitals in China. Both times I was hoping to see an acupuncture operation, which everyone wants to see. I went to a hospital in Peking hoping to see one, but it was too hot, and I had to wait till Canton, where it was even hotter, to finally see an acupuncture operation.

At the Peking hospital I was greeted by an older doctor who talked only in Chinese at first. As the conversation was fairly stilted because of the skills of my translator, the doctor began to talk more and more in English till we were talking exclusively in English. I was again given tea and we had a long talk about the history of the hospital, about the size and composition of the staff, about the salary scale, the use of para-professionals and the new interest in utilizing Chinese traditional medicine and herbs. After a lengthy time he took me around the hospital. I saw the nursery, several wards and two special patients. One patient had lost his hand and had it sewn back on. The whole time we were with him he kept rubbing it. He wanted me to know, he said, what a lucky man he was. He said that before Liberation if he had lost his hand it would probably have been thrown in the garbage. Now it had been saved and was of use to him. The other was a man with a broken leg. With him the doctors had combined Western and traditional medicine, using a Chinese splint rather than a cast for treatment.



These were all things I could look at, take pictures of and discuss. At one point while we were walking in the garden we passed a woman who looked hardly human. The doctor must have seen me involuntarily flinch, because he explained that she had had over 90 percent of her body badly burned saving a comrade from a fire. He asked if I would like to visit with her. I declined.

When I came back from China I was often asked if I had been allowed to walk around and take pictures. I explained that in all the cities I was able to visit I had freedom to walk around alone, take buses, and take pictures. Only once was I told I couldn't take a picture, and that was of an electric power plant outside of Sian.

During their stay in Chicago the Shenyang troupe was not allowed to walk freely around. After a rehearsal a couple of performers had wanted to walk back to the hotel, less than five minutes away, but weren't allowed to because of security.

The morning the Chinese troupe left Chicago a large group of people, mostly Chinese-Americans, came to send them off and wish them well on their trips to Indianapolis and elsewhere.



As the bus pulled away and everyone waved goodbye, I realized that to a certain extent the differences between the American and the Chinese tour styles reflected some of the values of the two societies. The American tours seem to concentrate on the products of production which this country is so rich in, while in China the tours tend to concentrate on human organization, China's greatest resource.

Richard J. Balge

Received in New York on January 12, 1973