

November 21, 1974

INSERTPOOL REPORT
NIJO CASTLE

The President arrived at the Nijo Castle. He walked through the gate and it began to sprinkle. When he arrived at the Big Hall building he paused at the entrance to remove his shoes. Waiting on the red carpet were several pairs of leather sandals. He bent down, untied his laces, removed his shoes then slipped into the slippers. Dr. Kissinger did the same. Most in the entourage removed their shoes and walked on the carpet barefoot. Just inside the door were rows of sandals for those who wanted them, but there were not enough pairs for everybody.

Inside the castle the President was shown each of the rooms, audience chambers. The guide spoke in Japanese and that was interpreted for the President. (For details of the history of the castle and the art work in it see the fact sheet in your bible).

One room contained mannequins with the shogun, Yoshinabu Tokugawa seated in white on the floor. The other 14 figures were also seated on the floor facing him and they were in costumes of many colors.

The scene depicts the moment when the shogun summoned the feudal lords and informed them he would return his sovereignty to the Emperor thus abolishing the Shogunate government. The guide said the shogun was 18 years old and the President was surprised on hearing that. "Eighteen!" he said. The President wanted to know what year that occurred and the guide was confused for a moment trying to remember when Dr. Kissinger volunteered "1868." That caused a ripple of laughter in the entourage. (The official sign posted in another part of the building said 1867).

The party arrived at a doorway, the doors sliding were opened and the President admired the garden. About that time he exclaimed "I'm about to lose my shoes." He was referring to his slippers which kept slipping a bit. It then occurred to Dr. Kissinger that he had left his shoes at the entrance and he wondered out loud "I hope somebody picked them up." Several of the men in the party were carrying two pairs of shoes, their own and somebody else's and later when they left the building there were enough shoes for everyone.

The tour continued to another room where mannequins were used again to depict the shogun seated on the floor and five ladies in waiting, dressed in kimonos, were poised ready to attend to his needs. "He left his wife in Tokyo," the guide volunteered. "Very smart," the President commented with a smile.

As the President left the building, there was a brief shower and he and the others walked under umbrellas, some of paper and wood, but most of them regular cloth umbrellas. They walked through the garden, and across it by five stepping stones. Then to a concrete bridge crossing the stream where the President and his guides clapped for the fish -- golden carp. The rain stopped, the sun came out again.

Four girls stood by and the President and Dr. Kissinger posed for photos with them. "Are those kimonos?" the President asked. The guide said yes. He wanted to know if the young women were in school. The guide said they were already graduated from high school, but now they are students at a music school learning to play the koto -- the long stringed instrument that was played later for the President. The President then went to a small stage where a group of six women entertained with music played on the koto. All were dressed in kimonos.

(MORE)

He sat on the stage, alongside one of the players and offered to try his hand, placing the pick on his second finger of his left hand. As he started to strum, the pick flew off, landed in the grass, everybody laughed, and he got another pick from one of the women. He played up the scale on the stringed instrument. "You are a very good player," one of the women complimented him.

The girls in kimonos had been standing back when the photographers urged them to go near the President. They hastened to stand near Kissinger. Robert Hartmann saw that, commented, "They always head for Henry."

The President then complimented the musicians and began to comment about his visit in a little speech.

White House will provide transcript of President's remarks.

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Barry Schweid, AP

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