

Teng's westward drift bodes well for U.S. travelers eyeing China

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

On Jan. 1, 1979, according to our western calendar, the United States of America and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations after 30 years of silence.

It is the year 4676, the Year of the Horse, on the Chinese calendar. On Jan. 27, Chinese New Year, it becomes the Year of the Sheep. For many Americans who dream of walking in the land of the Great Wall, it might be called the year of the China traveler.

A few travel pioneers have visited the Forbidden City and the Ming Tombs with delegations invited by the Chinese government since television cameras showed us thousands of bicyclists in Tien-An-Mien Square during Nixon's visit to Peking.

A few airline officials have walked across the Sun Chuan Bridge from Hong Kong to lead the small number of tour groups flown by regular airlines during the last two years.

Thousands of Americans have reserved the limited number of travel spaces allotted by the Chinese government for 1979, leaving few travel opportunities this year unless new options are offered.

One such travel option is being explored by Pan American World Airways, which has applied to the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to fly the first direct flights from the U.S. to mainland China.

If the CAB, and thus the U.S. government, and the Chinese government approve, Pan American will fly three times a week from San Francisco to Peking, parting the Bamboo Curtain

for travelers who have only dreamed of names like the Yellow Gardens of the Purple Gods of Autumn.

Pan Am also also is reportedly spending \$500 million on luxury hotel accommodations there.

THE LOGISTICS of China travel are determined by the Chinese government, which encourages a small flow of American travelers. They control the number of travelers by allotting blocks of potential visas to specific airlines.

Pan American was allotted 2,500 for 1978 and 5,000 for 1979. A few seats are still available for winter and fall of 1979. Reservations are being taken for 1980, although the allotment for next year has not yet been determined.

Japan Airlines was allotted 1,500 visas for 1979. The New York office assigned a proportionate number to regional offices, which in turn assigned a quota to districts. About 50 were assigned to the Detroit area. All seats for 1979 are filled, but a waiting list has been started.

Other airlines which fly Americans to China, via Hong Kong or through Europe and Asia, include Canadian Pacific, Iran, Pakistan, Varig and Air France airlines.

Americans who apply directly to an airline, or through a travel agent, are given visa forms which are returned by the airline to the Chinese Liaison Office in Washington. Visas will not be issued to travelers with passports stamped by the Nationalist Chinese government of Taiwan.

Travel itineraries are not determined by tour operators, but by the

Chinese International Travel Service, an arm of the Chinese government, which usually sends out the itinerary before the tour leaves.

Travelers typically visit schools, factories, communes and other aspects of modern Chinese life as well as the royal palaces and tombs, the imperial gardens and the Great Wall of China's past.

Ramon Carvallo of Livonia, a Pan American account manager who led a team of tourists into China in November, believes that cities are probably chosen because they have tourist space available at the time a group is traveling.

Like other tour group members who enter via Hong Kong, Carvallo took the train to the Chinese border and walked across the Sun Chuan Bridge into the People's Republic of China. The group went by train through the rice paddies of the Pearl River delta to Canton, now known in China as Kwangchow.

"It was a clean, modern train and every seat had a table with a live, potted Bonsai plant and covered cups of tea," Carvallo said. "A waitress refreshed our tea regularly."

The tour group flew to Shanghai, the largest city in China with its 12 million people. Their itinerary, which was not known to them when they crossed the border from Hong Kong, included Nanjing, the capital of the south, and Peking, the capital of the north and of China itself.

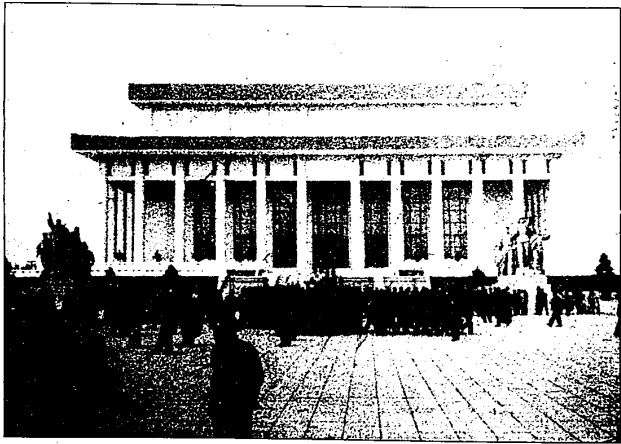
"I have traveled around the world eight times, but this was the travel highlight of my life," Carvallo said. "We visited the Forbidden City, walked the Great Wall, went to the Ming Tombs, watched thousands of Chinese bicycle and read posters in the square in Peking, and visited Mao's mausoleum."

"The mausoleum is open three days a week, and the Chinese line up to go in," he said. "Foreigners don't stand in line. They are always taken to the front of any line in China. We felt uncomfortable about that, but the people who were waiting clapped for us, a traditional Chinese kind of greeting."

MOST CHINA travelers are people who have already been everywhere else, said Joe Clark of Bloomfield Hills, a Japan Airlines executive, who recommends that people with heart conditions stay home.

"It's a fast, hard tour," he said. "I was really puffing by the time I got to the top of the Great Wall."

Clark didn't see much comparison between the China he saw this year and the China he knew when in Shanghai during World War II. "There's not so much poverty now. It



Chairman Mao's mausoleum attracts considerable attention from the Chinese. (Photo courtesy of Ramon Carvallo)

just looks like a different country," he said.

Clark's group visited Kweilin, where the Reed Flute Caves and the misty mountains of traditional Chinese painting are seen in southwestern China. He also went to the smaller cities of Changsha and Shaoshan: "The difference between these places and Peking is like the difference between New York City and Albuquerque," he said. "I'm a country boy. I like small places."

Both Carvallo and Clark entered China via Hong Kong. Several other area travelers with Hong Kong on their itinerary were given the option of applying for visas to China while they were in Hong Kong. Art Emanuel of Plymouth, Mary Alice Zaffina of Birmingham and Dick and Betty McGowan of Rochester, took a quick trip to Canton this way while touring the Pacific in July.

Artist Jean Hassell of Grosse Ile, who traveled with other trustees of the Archives of American Art, entered China from Karachi after flying 30 hours around the world from New York with Pakistan Airlines.

Mrs. Hassell and her husband, Jim, visited Peking, Shanghai, Hangchow, Nanjing, Yangchow and the Long March Commune which produces food for Shanghai.

"Hotels were either old and grand, or new and simple," she said. "The Peace Hotel in Shanghai had huge rooms with walk-in closets and a place for beaners to sleep—if you had beaners. At Westlake Hotel in Nanjing, we were on a lake fringed with almond and cherry blossoms, dotted with temples. An imperial park on an island is now a public place, as are all the old royal facilities of China."

WILL GUIDES let you deviate from your route? Although some travelers complain that "they only let you see what they want you to see," Carvallo said that people in his tour group were free to leave the group and wander as they pleased.

Mrs. Hassell agreed. "We told our guide that we didn't want to see any more factories, we wanted to see art being made. He promptly changed our itinerary and took us to a village where they carved jade and lacquer boxes as well as traditional Chinese paper lanterns and scroll paintings."

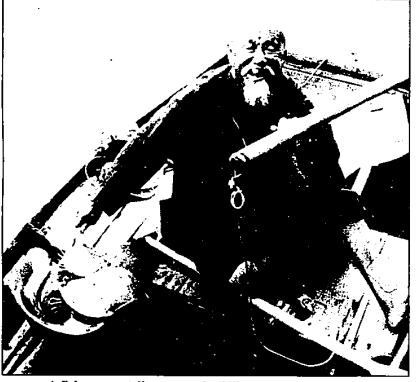
The future of China travel will probably be determined by the speed with which China develops hotels and other travel facilities.

The treaty signed this week between the United States and China opens the way for China to import other technological improvements, including tourist facilities. It will probably be two or three years before these begin to increase on any large scale.

Although China travelers rave about food and tour sights in China, they warn that hotels are presently not deluxe by world standards.



Livonian Ramon Carvallo stands atop a section of China's Great Wall.



A fisherman strikes a pose for Milan Emanuel's lens.

TRAVEL LOG

of Iris Jones



Tours for the masses on travel agent's minds

Travel agent Robert Davis of Bloomfield Hills hasn't been to China yet, but he thinks that the opening up of the Bamboo Curtain is the most important travel event of the century.

He has already booked clients on 1979 tours, but he has very strong opinions about what Americans want to see there. He doesn't think the tour has yet been designed for the average American traveler to China.

"I personally don't believe Americans go to China to see factories and communes, or any other facet of modern Communist society," Davis says. "I think they want to see Chinese antiquities and treasures."

"The only China trip I strongly recommend is that sponsored by the Society for the Preservation of Archeological Monuments, and that trip should only be taken by a certain kind of traveler." The Society offers unusual trips to remote areas of the world for people interested in the history of mankind.

They offer a Stone Age tour of Britain, Prehistoric Art in the Perigord cave regions of France and Spain, an expedition to Patagonia and other trips called Project Galapagos, Project Antarctica, Project New Guinea and Project Easter Island.

The Society offers two expeditions to China in 1979, both of which still have openings. Although the society buys its plane seats from those allotted to Iran Air Lines, it requests specific tour features from the China International Travel Service.

"We don't tour factories," says a spokesman from the society's Seattle office.

Although they have not received an itinerary for the June trip, the itinerary has been received for the 18-day trip in August 1979. The group flies to England for lectures and orientation at the

British Museum, travels to Peking, Hangchow and Shanghai and will return via Teheran, unless the political situation there prompts a change.

Davis, who was president of the Mid-American Chapter of the Society of American Travel Agents from 1972-76, and is a founding member of the Institute of Certified Travel Agents, traveled with the society on a houseboat trip down the Sepik River in New Guinea.

"We used the houseboat as a hotel and dining room between tiny villages along the river where tribes were still creating original primitive art," Davis said.

"A naturalist lectured about the area every night, and took us out on a nighttime canoe hunt for crocodiles, which were kept alive and shipped to universities for study."

"Early one morning we went aground and the 22 passengers helped to pull the boat off the sand bar. I was ready to leap to the second deck if I saw red crocodile eyes nearby, because they terrify me."

Davis says that this kind of trip should be taken only by travelers who are deeply interested in coming face-to-face with this kind of primitive life.

"When you are dealing with primitive people, you are dealing with primitive feelings and you can upset the whole trip for others if you haven't picked the right tour," he said.

The 17-day China trip costs \$2,150 for land costs and \$1,152 for air costs from New York. For information, see a travel agent or write to the Society for the Preservation of Archeological Monuments, P.O. Box 3088 University Station, Seattle, Wash. 98105.

For information, write Don Ceasar Beach Resort Hotel, 3400 Gulf Boulevard, St. Petersburg Beach, Fla. 33706.

Florida resort has extra parts to fill

For vacationers heading south to the sunny skies of Florida this winter, a chance to be an extra in the Robert Altman film "Health" is a possibility.

The Don Ceasar Resort in St. Petersburg will be the setting, as well as headquarters, for the production company during the seven-week shooting schedule. The film will star Carol Burnett, Glenda Jackson, Lauren Bacall and James Garner. Production

dates are Feb. 20 to April 15. Guests at the hotel will be asked to register for selection to participate in scenes shot in and around the hotel. The film is a comedy set in the midst of a national health foods convention. The story was conceived by Frank Barhydt who is collaborating with Altman on the original screenplay. Said hotel manager Austin Mott: "While not all guests will be able to

appear in the movie, the opportunity to observe the production process firsthand affords an exciting dimension to their vacations."

And there is always the possibility of bringing back an autograph or two for Anne Sophie or the little ones back home.

Steve Petix MID-WINTER SALE NOW IN PROGRESS

Sale running thru Jan. 13, 1979

TIES • SUITS • SHIRTS
SHOES • SLACKS • TOPCOATS
SPORT JACKETS • SPORT SHIRTS • OUTERWEAR

Excellent selection of shorts
38 to 44... Regulars and longs to 50
Prices reduced up to 35%
(except custom and tailored-to-measure suits)

Special groups of Suits and
Sport Coats 50% off
Not all sizes available.

Come in early for the best selection
All Sales Final - All Credit Cards Accepted
Open 9-6 daily, (9-5:30 Saturday), 9-9 Thursday

The complete
men's store
Ample Free Parking

31455 Southfield Road
between 13 & 14 Mile
Phone: 645-5560

