

7 **Remarks at a Reception Honoring Members of the
Shenyang Acrobatic Troupe of the People's Republic of
China. *January 12, 1973***

Ladies and gentlemen:

We are very happy to welcome you officially here in the White House and to thank you for the splendid achievement that you have made in your trip in the United States. This is the first group of performing artists to come from the People's Republic of China to the United States of America in a quarter of a century. And I am sure that all of those who have had the privilege of seeing you will say the first was the best.

I can say that based on the reports that I have had from Mrs. Nixon, who was

there for the first night, and also from my daughter, who was there on the third night, you have, by coming such a great distance from your country to our country, brought us a very great gift. You have brought us the talent of great artists. But even more important, you have brought us a greater gift.

My daughter reported how impressed she was by your talent in your performance at the Kennedy Center. She reported how the audience stood and applauded after most of the acts. But she reported that the greatest applause was at the con-

clusion, when you held up a sign saying, "Chinese-American Friendship."

And friendship is the most important gift that one group can bring to another. It is a tragedy of this century that for 20 years a great wall of hostility has separated the 800 million people of the People's Republic of China and the 200 million people of the United States of America.

As a result of the meetings that I was privileged to have with Chairman Mao and Premier Chou En-lai in Peking early in 1972, that wall of hostility is now coming down. And we only hope in the future that young Americans will have the opportunity to go to your country and that they will be as fine ambassadors of friendship as you have been ambassadors of friendship from the People's Republic of China to the United States of America.

Now, since you have brought us these great gifts, your talent and your friendship, we have a small token of appreciation for you to take with you as you return

home.

This is the seal of the President of the United States which each of you can have and which will remind you of your visit to our country.

Now, Mrs. Nixon and I would like the privilege of greeting each of you personally to express our appreciation for your long journey, for your magnificent talent, but most of all for the friendship that you have brought to the American people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. Following his remarks, the members of the troupe were presented with ashtrays and pens bearing the Presidential seal.

The troupe, consisting of 40 performers and 12 musicians, toured the United States from December 16, 1972, to January 13, 1973, visiting Chicago, Indianapolis, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chang Ying-wu, director of the troupe, responded to the President's remarks in Chinese. A translation of his remarks is printed in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (vol. 9, p. 26).