

November 19, 1974

POOL REPORT
Dinner at the Imperial Palace

President Ford arrived at the Imperial Palace at 7:30 p.m., for the dinner given by the Emperor.

We were stationed at the entrance. A moment before the President arrived, the Emperor descended a long flight of stairs and waited at the entrance for the President to walk in. As the President approached, the Emperor, through his interpreter, said "Welcome, thank you very much for coming."

The President replied, "It is a great pleasure for me to be here." These remarks were exchanged as they shook hands. Thereupon, they walked into the palace and up the stairs to the dinner.

When the Emperor and President Ford entered the palace they went directly to a salon with deep plush lavender carpeting where 120 guests, all Japanese except for a few couples, were awaiting their arrival. Most of the men were attired in white ties and tails as were the Emperor and the President. But a few of the Japanese men, including former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi wore the traditional haori hakama, a long grey gown with a shorter black jacket. All of the Japanese women, and they predominated except for two American women, wore beautiful silk kimonos in pastel shades. The women hovered on one side of the room and the men on the other until just before His Majesty and Ford entered the room. Then they formed a long line with the husbands and wives side by side and the Emperor and Ford entered the room followed by other members of the Royal family with many low bows from the head and shoulders the Emperor shook hands with each member of the American delegation which was headed by a broadly grinning Kissinger. He was followed by Ford who has also learned to bow and shake hands at the same time in his brief time in Japan. Ford went down the lines shaking hands with each guest while the Emperor stood apart and only bowed to a few of his guests.

Then the guests entered the banquet hall which had rose-colored wall-to-wall carpeting and twenty-four glittering chandeliers.

There were banks of yellow and lavender chrysanthemums on the table which was shaped in the form of a gridiron, a long table of several other tables leading into it. The chrysanthemum is the symbolic flower of Japan and the same pattern of a chrysanthemum design was used in the pattern of the china on which the dinner was served. There were three wine glasses in front of each place setting.

The President sat on the Emperor's right and on Ford's left sat the Emperess who wore a pale lavender kimono and diamond encrusted combs in her grey hair which was piled up Japanese style. Other members of the Royal Family sat nearby and the anchormen at the end of the table were former prime minister Eisaku Sato and Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka. A full orchestra played light western melodies during the dinner.

The menu included consume, Managatsuo Oau Vin Blanc; mousse de foi gras; filet of beef a la renaissance, salad and ice cream parfets. The wines served were Meursault Charvet 1970; then Chateau la Faite Rothschild 1964; and Moet et Chandon Dom Perignon Bruit 1964. Ford appeared to be enjoying every minute of elegant eating. He chatted animatedly with the Emperor through an interpreter. They sat with their backs to a long wall of abstract murals.

Brokaw - NBC, Kilpatrick- Washington Post, Bob Schieffer-CBS, and Thomas - UPI

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