

November 21, 1974

POOL REPORT
GOLD PAVILION
POOL #479

President Ford arrived at the Gold Pavilion accompanied by Jikai Murakami, abbot of the Zen Buddhist sect at Kinkakuji (Golden Pavilion), and a large party that included, in addition to the White House officials, an 11 year old boy studying to be a Zen priest.

The pavilion is a re-construction of the original structure which was destroyed by an arsonist in 1950. However, the new building is said to be faithful to the old - a three story pavilion that dates to the early 14th century. Each floor represents a different architectural period; the first, Fujiware - the second, Buke - zukuri, and the third, Kukkyo-cho. To an American layman, it may look more like an enlarged, gilded version of the Teahouse of the August Moon, situated on an idyllic small lake and backed by a carefully maintained grove of pine and maple trees. It was a striking setting as the President looked on: the sun was reflecting off the pavilion's gold colored roof and the lake was a mirror of the surrounding red maple trees.

Shortly, the President and most of his party (Hartmann, Rumsfeld, Kissinger, Hodgson) stepped to a porch of the pavilion and removed their shoes, replacing them with lavender colored slippers that had been set out. With the abbot as his guide, the President spent about 10 minutes inside the pavilion. We could not see or hear what was going on.

As the President left the building and began to put on his own shoes, the 11 year old Zen student - Hiroyuki Higashi - asked for and received his autograph. Just then the gong inside the pavilion sounded, and the American officials looked around quickly before breaking into laughter. Later, one of them explained that they were afraid it had been an American acting out a tourist's impulse. However, it was a member of the Japanese party.

Ford left on schedule for the next stop.

Incidentally, security was heavy here. More than 30 plain clothes and uniform Japanese cops were in the woods behind the pavilion, and a collection box outside the building was carried away so that it could be unlocked and inspected.

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