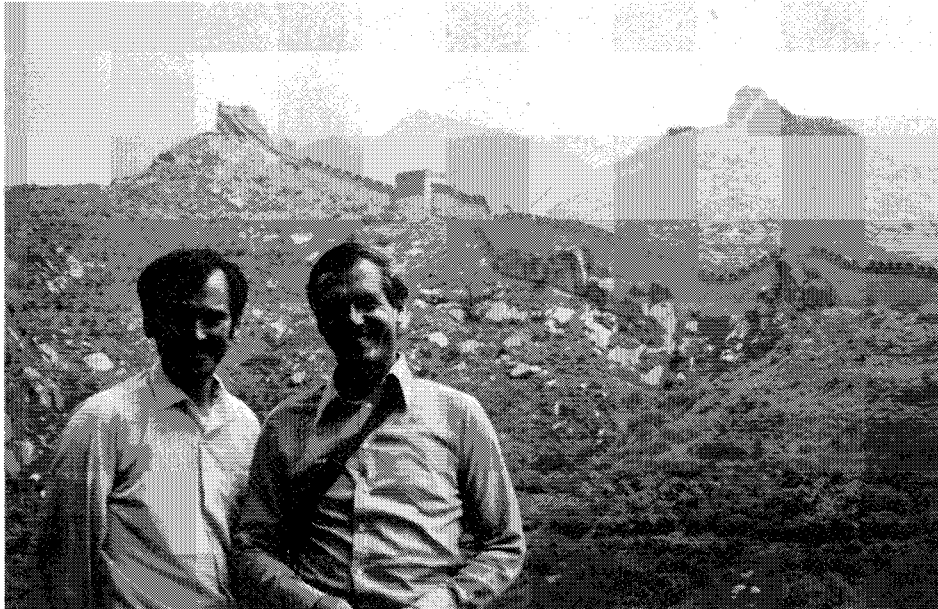


On Bascom Mall and the Great Wall



Cliff Thompson (right) and Jerry Harrison during their 1973 visit to China. Professor Harrison is now Dean of the University of Hawaii Law School.

Dean Cliff F. Thompson

This past October, I visited the Peoples Republic of China along with the law school deans from Georgetown, N.Y.U., Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, U.C.L.A., Berkeley, the University of Washington and Stanford. We traveled as the guests of the Chinese Ministries of Justice and Education, and with the support of Columbia University's Committee on Legal Education and Exchange with China. Over a two week period, we met with law faculties and government officials on a daily schedule which usually ran from seven in the morning to past ten at night. There was, of course, some time for seeing great monuments, but on the run: "All right, you've got ten minutes for the Temple of Heaven!"

The meetings at law schools and legal institutions provided more extended opportunities to become acquainted. Overwhelmingly, the Chinese showed keenness on two topics: international economic law and the possibilities of legal training in the U.S. In exploring these interests, we were frank in noting the severe constraints on both public and private universities in any effort to provide training positions.

For me, the most fascinating aspect was the contrast with my visit in 1973, when the "Cultural Revolution" was still boiling, and there were no law schools to be shown. One consequence was the loss of a whole generation of law teachers and legally trained personnel. The PRC is now embarked on a widespread legalization of its national economic apparatus, which will have a significant but difficult to predict impact on its society.

It is clear that those who are now being trained in this country and elsewhere will be among the top leaders in China in the coming decades. Chancellor Irving Shain recognized this at an early date, and acted upon it, with the result that the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a pre-eminent institution in the U.S. for the overseas education of Chinese students and scholars. Now that law has joined the list of suitable subjects, the Law School hopes to have at least a modest role in this extraordinary educational enterprise.

Finding outside funding to support our effort will be the most difficult step. Finding members of the faculty with deep interest and experience in legal developments outside our national boundaries will be easy. I hope you saw the article in the Fall 1985 GARGOYLE which summarized the amazing variety of foreign expertise possessed by our professors. The pattern of faculty experience is consistent with what I've found to be characteristic of the success of the University of Wisconsin: getting two for the price of one. All of the faculty are established teachers and scholars in domestic legal problems, and the familiarity with foreign systems is an "extra."

The value of this "extra" may be noted from another angle. Because we realize that the best destination for a domestic product may be a foreign port, the real market place is global. At a time when Wisconsin is actively seeking trade opportunities in Europe and the Orient, we are fortunate that we have a faculty capable of being responsive to the law issues of an interdependent world.