

# INTERNATIONAL EXPLORATIONISTS

## The Importance of Cross-Cultural Understanding: China as a Case Study

by Dr. Richard J. Smith

### Joint Meeting with AIPN

International Explorationists Dinner Meeting – February 28, 1994

Social Period, 5:30 p.m., Dinner and Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Post Oak Doubletree Inn

As petroleum explorationists, we often slight the business aspects of exploring outside the United States. This issue is critical to the success of international projects.

As the world "shrinks," cross-cultural

understanding becomes ever more important. Modern technology may help to bring countries into closer and more regular contact, but it cannot easily solve fundamental problems of intercultural communication. This slide-illustrated lec-

ture explores the "culture" gap between the United States and China as an example and suggests, at least implicitly, some ways to bridge this formidable divide.

### RICHARD J. SMITH Biographical Sketch



Dr. Richard J. Smith, former Master of Hanszen College (1982-1987), is presently Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at Rice University, Houston, Texas.

Professor Smith is a specialist in modern Chinese history and traditional Chinese culture, and has travelled extensively in Asia, including India (once), Korea (once), Japan (four times), Taiwan (five times), the People's Republic of China (twenty-two times), and Hong Kong (twenty-five times). He has taught at the University of California, Davis, and at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is an Adjunct Professor

at the Center for Asian Studies at the University of Texas, Austin, and the former President of both the Texas Foundation for China Studies and the President of both the Texas Foundation for China Studies and the Southwest Conference of the Association for Asian Studies. He is also a member of many other scholarly committees and associations, including the National Committee on U.S. China Relations, the Asia Society, and the Association for Asian Studies. He has lectured widely in the United States, as well as in Europe, Asia, and the (former) Soviet Union.

Professor Smith has won nine teaching awards, including the Minnie Stevens Piper Professorship and the George R. Brown Certificate of Highest Merit. He has written numerous articles on China, and several books, including *Mercenaries and Mandarins*, (1978); *Traditional Chinese Culture*, (1978); *China's Cultural Heritage*,

(1983); *Fortune-tellers and Philosophers*, (1991); and *Chinese Almanacs*, (1992). He has also co-authored or co-edited four volumes: *Chinese Walled Cities*, (1979); *Entering China's Service*, (1986); *Robert Hart and China's Early Modernization*, (1991); and *Cosmology, Ontology, and Human Efficacy*. A revised and expanded edition of *China's Cultural Heritage* will appear in early 1994.

Professor Smith was born in Sacramento, California, in 1944. He had a brief flirtation with professional baseball before coming to his senses.