alcoholism, abnormal personality, chronic mental illness, hypochondriacal symptoms, and a history of suicidal behaviour in the past. Nevertheless, spouses with good outcome did suffer after the suicide. One spouse, now happy, said that though relieved she experienced waves of grief that completely overcame her, but their frequency slowly decreased. At the time of the first research inquiry the interviewer was pessimistic about her future. She found that visit so helpful she now thinks that interviewing spouses after suicide should be "an essential social service."

The validity of the finding about the helpfulness of the first research interview could have implications for the counselling of bereaved spouses. The benefits of catharsis, reflection, and explanation suggest that the chances of a good outcome might be improved by giving such help soon after the death.

Bereavement through suicide is accompanied by shock and distress, but the worst effects that might be expected, increased mortality, psychiatric ill health, social criticism, and social dysfunction were not observed. The spouses of suicides resemble more the widowed from all causes, but may be polarized into those with good and bad outcome to a greater extent.

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Medicine in China

Medicine and Society

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Western attitudes to Chinese medicine have changed very quickly in the last two years. First there was incomprehension and disbelief, when the early reports emerged of features such as acupuncture and of the eradication of diseases such as cholera and syphilis. Later, when observers confirmed that most of the claims made were soundly based, there was a swing of the pendulum, and some enthusiasts claimed that China had solved all the problems of population control and health care facing developing countries. Most of what has been written (and more is published every month) is based on brief visits to China by official or semi-official delegations who have been shown the best features of medical care in China. Are there any valid conclusions to be drawn?

China certainly seems to have avoided the more obvious mistakes made by some other countries. By concentrating on preventive medicine and public health measures in the early years, the state has laid the essential foundations for satisfactory health standards; and the emphasis on immunization campaigns and the elimination of major disease vectors has paid obvious dividends in the control of endemic disease. But these achievements—just like the effective population control and the decentralized medical system described in earlier articles—are firmly based on the political system in China.

The organization and delivery of medical care cannot be separated from the whole way of life in the People's Republic. In fact the main impact on a doctor visiting China may well come from the society rather than the medicine.

Peking

Peking itself is an amazing experience. Arrival at the deserted airport (only a handful of flights each day) is followed by an hour-long drive through the suburbs to the city centre. Peking is low and sprawling—in former times no ordinary citizen's house was allowed to overlook the high red boundary wall of the Forbidden City, the central complex of imperial palaces. A few massive hotels, government offices, and exhibition halls built in the last 20 years punctuate the sky line, but the vast mass of Peking is made up of one or two storey houses, themselves protected from the cold winds of winter by high courtyard walls. One enormous avenue, wider than the Champs Elysées, runs east to west, straight as a die for 24 miles from one side of Peking to the other (fig. 1). At its midpoint is the entrance to the Forbidden City, through the Gate of Heavenly Peace (T'ien An Men). This imposing entrance gives its name to the 100-acre square, flanked by the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of the Revolution, that seems to be the natural centre of Peking. Indeed until very recently the square was used for ceremonial meetings and parades—but these now seem out of fashion. Whenever we passed through the square it was almost deserted except for a few Chinese families up from the country having their photographs taken.

Away from the formal buildings, however, Peking lived up to our expectations of teeming millions. No private

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FIG. 1—Main avenue in Peking leading away from T'ien An Men Square.

individual is allowed to own a car in China. Taxis are available, and rickshaws in the south; but almost all of the 8 million inhabitants of Peking seem to have bicycles and use them. During the daylight hours every street we visited was a bustle of activity. Cyclists competed for roadspace with carts drawn by a donkey and horse in tandem, single-wheel tractors pulling loads of farm produce, military vehicles, heavy lorries, crowded buses—and cars carrying visiting foreigners. All the motor vehicles hoot non-stop to clear a way through the cyclists, who themselves ring their bells at the pedestrians. The dawn chorus in China is the mixture of motor horns and bicycle bells generated by the morning rush hour. The crowds out shopping or simply travelling to and from work seemed to us good humoured; few people were standing around idly chatting or soaking up the spring sunshine. Everyone seemed to have a job to do and got on with it—but in a relaxed way. This even pace was evident in factories, on farms, and in hospitals, where doctors seemed to have ample time to deal with their patients.

Hard Work for All

The working week in China is Monday to Saturday, even for schoolchildren. Sunday is the day of rest, but the shops, restaurants, and cinemas are open—their staff have a day off in the week in lieu. Religious observance seems to have disappeared totally. There are six national holidays such as May Day, but no one seems to have even a week of annual holiday.

The day starts for most people very early—about 5 o'clock—with exercises and perhaps a run round the block or through the park. This is followed by breakfast and then work; an 8.00 a.m. start seemed usual in the hospitals we visited. Factory and farm workers attended for an hour a day at political thought sessions, which include subjects such as health education. Hospital staff have one or perhaps two political sessions a week, partly as a form of internal audit. At these sessions there is self-examination to assess the plans and achievements of the unit against standards such as "service to the people" and "stress on the rural areas." The day finishes early, and by about 9-10 p.m. everyone in Peking seemed to have gone to bed, except for the night shift workers.

Earnings

The value of earnings in China is difficult to assess by Western standards. Accommodation is rented very cheaply from the state, and the society does not yet seem strongly consumer-orientated. On an agricultural commune, for example, we were told that most families were content now that they have a radio, a sewing machine, and one or more bicycles. Few households, even those of university staff,

seemed to possess Western-style luxuries. Stores displayed gramophones and, in Peking, television sets; but most people seemed to be shopping for food or clothing. The food shops had no queues, and in city markets a wide range of fresh and dried fish, meat, and live ducks and chickens was offered for sale. Greengrocery stores seemed to offer little choice—the week we were in Peking almost the only fruit available was apples and there was masses of spinach but few other green vegetables.

Clearly there was some spare money about. Children were bought ice-lollies or sweets to eat as they shopped with their parents; people were queuing for the cinema, and the restaurants and hot-food counters seemed to do a brisk trade (and very attractive the food looked, too).

An agricultural worker or factory hand might earn about 50-60 yuan (£12-15) a month, we were told: that is only half the price of a bicycle. But there is no income tax, no inflation (prices have dropped since 1957), and the necessities of life are cheap. There are differentials: a consultant in a city hospital may earn four or five times the salary of a newly qualified doctor working in a small commune hospital, who himself earns little more than the rate of the unskilled farm worker. Country folk still have their own small sidelines, however—most families seem to keep a pig or two, which when fattened is sold to the state.

We were told that the current trend is for the higher salaries to be frozen while the lower ones are raised, so closing the gap between different sorts of workers.

Traditional Courtesies

The all-pervading respect for Chairman Mao's precept—"hard work and self-reliance" has not obliterated the traditional courtesies of behaviour. Hotel staff and indeed everyone we met were polite, friendly, helpful, and cheerful. The inscrutable Chinese of Western legend turned out to be a sympathetic, happy human being. Wherever we went—city hospital or farming commune—we were led into a room with one or perhaps more long tables lined with teacups and cigarettes, and everyone would sip their tea during the speeches of welcome and the introductions. Tea is indeed the Chinese drink. On workbenches in factories, on lockers in hospital wards, and in postcard kiosks at tourist attractions, every Chinese, man or woman, had a tea cup (with lid) and a huge brightly-painted vacuum flask full of hot water. Tea is made in the cup, and more hot water added as needed. The fact that almost all water drunk in China has first been boiled must contribute to the control of disease.

Respect for tradition is also seen in the care that has been given to the preservation of the palaces and temples and monuments in and around Peking (fig. 2). Many have been restored with painstaking attention to detail and magnificent craftsmanship. They are open to the public, and in many cases the historical background is explained in display cases.

FIG. 2—Approach to the Ming tombs outside Peking.

Education

China is a literate country: so much is obvious from the numbers of people to be seen reading the explanatory displays in museums and galleries. We were told that all children go to school, and every commune we visited was proud of its record of school building.

Since virtually every woman has a job—six days a week—children are sent to nurseries from the age of 2 and to kindergartens at 4. Many small children are apparently weekly boarders. Some mothers are able to hand their children over to a grandmother rather than a nursery (and those that can do so seem to prefer it). In the kindergarten (fig. 3) we visited the 4-year-olds were very busy, learning in the traditional Chinese way. A drawing of a ship on the blackboard was being carefully copied in one room—no self-expression here—and elsewhere the children were learning parts for a play. The same pattern was to be seen in a children's "palace" (a hobby or club centre where children spend the two hours between leaving school and their parents' leaving work). Exquisite embroidery and skilled painting was being done, but based on a copyist tradition.

Children go from primary school to middle school and those who are selected by the revolutionary committee and their contemporaries then go on to become students. There is strong practical emphasis on the need for students to

FIG. 3—Kindergarten in Shanghai.

retain contact with the workers. Many spend a year on the land or in a factory between school and university. When we visited factories we found students doing a month's work there (and they quickly sought us out to practise their English). In the same way some of the waiters at the Bin Zu hotel (one of the few used by foreigners) were language students.

Like the adults in China, children work hard but apparently enjoy it. Those we saw were happy, well-nourished, and well-dressed. Tiny children in China wear trousers with a split at the rear, and when they crouch their bottoms emerge—so that no nappies seem necessary. We soon learnt that foreigners in China are enough of a novelty for all the children to stop what they were doing and stare. While we watched the pandas at Peking Zoo, the children watched us. At the same time their discipline is impressive. To cross the road, thirty or so children would line up in a 3 × 10 formation, and each with a hand on the shoulder of the one ahead they would move across like guardsmen.

Increasing Prosperity

This, then, is a society which expects a lot from its members and requires from them a lot of self-discipline; but it seems to be one in which the people support State policy with enthusiasm. "Before liberation" was the recurrent phrase in conversation, as we were told how bad things had been before the Communist take-over—little food, poor health, poor sanitation, and industry and agriculture backward and under-mechanized. So much has been achieved within the life-time of much of the population that every comparison favours the present day.

Stress is laid in the political teaching on service to the community, but another important aim is a steady improvement in the standard of living. Each commune we saw proudly showed us how its prosperity had increased year by year with bigger harvests or increased factory production. This prosperity had had direct benefits for the commune in terms of more tractors, more schools, better houses, and so on. Rebuilding programmes are, of course, easier to achieve when there is a low rate of population growth, but in this and other ways some of the fruits of their labour are obvious to the workers in their daily lives.

Consent of the Population

The pioneering spirit was very evident in the areas we visited. People worked hard and long—but everyone did so, and it seemed to us that they were convinced they were building a new, just society. It is because that state of mind has been achieved that we should not be surprised at what else has been done—for with the consent and co-operation of the mass of the people it is possible to have a society in which by consent no family has more than two children; and in which there are no flies even in the heat of summer; and in which university doctors go out each year to the country areas in mobile medical teams.

On the other side of the coin, one can wonder how long this pioneering spirit can last. Chinese society has so far asked its people for big sacrifices in individual freedom. There has been hardly any contact with the rest of the world—evidenced by the curiosity shown whenever we walked about the streets—but the doctors we spoke to seemed to have little interest in our way of life. They asked endless questions about the medicine but hardly any about Western society, though many spoke very good English and needed no interpreter. Foreign books, foreign gramophone records, foreign clothing—none of these are available even in large cities. Though there seemed a genuine desire for friendship with other countries, evident at all ages and levels of society, this was combined with a conviction that China can be self-sufficient and does not need any outside help.

At present everyone seems to conform to the accepted attitudes. The education of children stresses the importance of service to the community; and while academic performance at school is important just as much emphasis is given to the development of character and personality in accordance with Mao's teaching.

We in the West can only watch and wait to see the development of Chinese society in the next generation. As that society improves its standard of living and the memories of the past fade, changes will occur. Their system of medical care has been highly effective in the context of an evolving Communist society of a particular pattern. It could probably not be duplicated in other developing countries with different political systems.