Medical Development of China Receives Impetus

A Study in Contrasts on the Basis of Public Concern Regarding Health Conditions

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IF ANYONE doubts the value of medicine and its application to the health of the people he should visit such a country as China and see the appalling results of the lack of scientific attention to public health. Smallpox patients, with disease in active stage, are about the streets; typhoid fever, which is being eliminated in the West by sanitation of water and milk supplies, is rampant; blindness, trachoma, and other diseases of the eye are everywhere in evidence on the city streets; the infant mortality is shocking; anemia, resulting from hookworm and other intestinal parasites, seems to be well nigh universal. No one who has not seen the disease, suffering, and death among a people who neglect public health can realize the tremendous advance that has been made in America and Europe through diligent, painstaking, and scientific efforts towards the control of disease.

The progress of medicine in China is marked by three distinct stages: (1) Medical care by foreigners, chiefly medical missionaries, in the form of small hospitals and dispensaries dotted here and there throughout the country; (2) the development of medical institutions for the training of Chinese physicians; and (3) the beginnings of Chinese control of their own medical and health work as trained Chinese personnel and leadership evolve.

The earliest infiltration of western medicine came through the physicians attached to trading companies and through medical missionaries. In the year 1805 Dr. Alexander Pearson, surgeon to the East India Company, introduced vaccination in China; in 1820 Robert Morrison and Dr. Livingston of the same company opened temporarily in Canton a dispensary, dealing chiefly in Chinese drugs, and in 1827 Dr. Thomas Richardson Colledge at the port of Macao founded the first permanent institution in China for the purpose of bringing the benefits of western medicine to the suffering Chinese, the Macao Ophthalmic Hospital.

Peter Parker, a Yale graduate and representative of the vigorous Yale Mission Board of those days, the first medical missionary ever appointed as such by any mission board, began in 1834 the great work under missionary auspices which for three-quarters of a century gave to China most of its medical service.

The medical missionaries began from the first to develop hospital facilities. With small resources and with scant equipment they renovated houses, put in beds, accepted patients, and gave such medical and nursing care as they and their families could offer. Catholics and Protestant alike have fostered this scientific and humanitarian work. At present between two and three hundred mission hospitals are scattered throughout practically every province of the immense country. Not only have these institutions given medical relief to individual patients; they have served also as centers from which have radiated knowledge of western medicine, respect for modern science and the beginnings of appreciation of public health.

The second step in the development of medicine in China has been the establishment of medical institutions of high standard for the training of Chinese physicians, nurses and technicians. For many years a few Chinese have been studying in other countries. A number have been trained in America, and small groups in England and the countries of Continental Europe. The chief place for foreign education, however, has been Japan. Unfortunately, on account of language and other limitations, the Chinese have found it difficult to enter the great Imperial Universities of Japan. Trained at the inferior special schools, the Chinese physicians, who are largely in charge of government positions in army and provincial and municipal posts, do not represent the best in Japanese education.

Study in foreign countries cannot solve the problems of a nation's education in any art or science. The establishment of medical schools in China has therefore been regarded as the most important aspect of the direct contribution of the West to this great country of the East. The Hunan-Yale School at Changsha, Central China, the former Harvard Medical School at Shanghai, and the Med-



This admirable institution, erected and managed by Chinese initiative and with Chinese funds and staffed with Chinese personnel, represents the most encouraging evidence of the application of scientific medicine and of modern methods by the Chinese themselves.

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ical Department of the Shantung Christian University at Tsinan have been for a decade giving a creditable



Ward in Central Hospital, Peking. This arrangement, light, and ventilation in this Chinese hospital, erected and directed entirely by Chinese, are beyond criticism. The medical and nursing care is of high standard.

medical training to ever increasing numbers of Chinese.

Peking Medical College

The latest addition to the forces of medical education in China is the Peking Union Medical College. This institution, founded on the basis of an earlier school organized under a union of American and British missionary societies, has been taken over by a group of Trustees representing jointly these original societies and the Rockefeller Foundation. An entirely new institution including modern laboratories and ward buildings has been erected and is being maintained by funds from the China Medical Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Peking Union Medical College was formally dedicated to its service to medicine in China in the autumn of 1921. At the time of the dedication there were held in Peking meetings of the Trustees of the college and an international medical congress including representative men of science and educational leaders from France, the British Isles, America, Canada, Japan, Java, the Philippines, Korea, and practically every province of China.

An Interesting Group

The new college has been in course of construction since 1917. Sixteen buildings, with sweeping green tile roofs and great overhanging eaves house the laboratories, hospital wards, and auxiliary structures of the institution proper. Adjoining are the buildings of the pre-medical school which gives three years of intensive training in the chemical, physical, and biological sciences preparatory to medicine. Nearby in the Tartar City are situated in two residence areas groups of modern brick houses —the homes of the members of the faculty and their families. The institution has been erected in architecture characteristic of the best in Chinese classic and sacred building. It is maintained in accordance with high standards of western science.

It is recognized that neither this institution nor any number of schools which one agency might maintain would be able to train the great body of medical practitioners needed by the Chinese. The purpose, therefore, in establishing this college has been to set standards, to train leaders, to demonstrate what an adequate medical college in China might represent. Thus, by a single institution, it is hoped to influence an entire nation. It is because of this purpose that so great significance was attached to the attendance at the dedication last autumn of the large body of medical men from all parts of China, and to their expressed desire to share in the opportunities for cooperation and for advanced study.

Looks to Future

The budgets provided for the college and hospital for the years of the immediate future, while slightly below those of similar well-established institutions of high standing in the United States, are so much above those of the other colleges and hospitals in the Chinese republic as to make this institution unique in all China, in some aspects unique in the entire Far East. This places upon the faculty a responsibility for leadership in medical teaching, in nurse training, in hospital management and in the advancement of medical science and public health, to which they are alive. Few medical schools, few faculties, have ever had before them the opportunities or the challenge to high endeavor which now confront the Peking Union Medical College.

Personnel and Leadership

Finally, and most encouraging of all, the Chinese through their own leaders and their own trained personnel are beginning to organize and to man their own hospitals and to make beginnings in the establishment of their own medical schools. The most farsighted of the education leaders from the West have recognized from the beginning that only by developing Chinese personnel and Chinese initiative could the medical problems of this great country be met. The new medical college at Peking, the Hunan-Yale school at Changsha, and similar institutions have had as a major purpose the development as rapidly as possible of Chinese scientists who would begin to take the responsible position in teaching and in management.

An Outstanding Work

The Central Hospital in Peking is a most encouraging example of the present stage of development. The Central Hospital was erected by Chinese funds as a result of Chinese initiative; it is maintained by a Chinese Board of Trustees and supported by contributions from the Chinese. It is a striking instance of the fulfilment of Chinese promise in medical science and medical service.



Section of the great wall of China. This wall is a symbol of the "closed door" which China maintained for centuries and which kept out friend and foe alike. Only recently are new ideas and modern science beginning to transform the ancient and great people.

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An interesting adaptation of sheet iron construction in the dispensary at Wuhu on the Yangtse River.

To such men as Dr. S. P. Chen, the director of this hospital, Dr. Fu-chun Yen, dean of the medical school at Changsha and a small group of men is now being handed the torch of medical leadership in China.

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