

remained vibrant, isolation from a world that has advanced technologically has left China with little capability to resist exploitation. (Further isolation followed when the present regime took power in 1949. It was not until 1972 that the People's Republic of China and the United States established diplomatic relations, beginning the slow process of opening the door to western technology and development.)

So, one should not assume China's need for western expertise, technology and capital resources extends to an acceptance of western cultural values. History and the official prevailing attitude may resist, as much as possible, any "cultural pollution," but as the door opens ever wider, western cultural values will have an influence on the Chinese people.

Change *is* taking place. Culturally, Chinese people have more and more contact with foreigners and foreign ideas in their own country, travelling abroad to study or conduct business, and through exposure to the western media. Economically, the change in the last few years has been nothing short of sensational.

Such rapid growth makes great demands on existing infrastructure and systems. It causes problems of dislocation. But this is all to be expected. China is attempting to do a great deal: create a market economy; dismantle much of its state support; and put its huge money-gobbling state-run and state-operated industries on a profitable basis.

As Canadians, we have many initial advantages in China. Generally, we are well regarded, thanks in part to Norman Bethune. (Until recent years, all Chinese school children were required to memorize four poems by Mao Tse-tung, one of which honoured the Canadian doctor.) We do not arrive with great power or ex-colonial baggage. Regardless, our future success as a nation, and as individual Canadians working in China, will depend on being sensitive to Chinese people and culture, and our willingness to accept that we are their guests. We must be observant and learn how Chinese systems work, how decisions are made, and how our Chinese counterparts make their own systems function. Most of all, we must understand that an attitude of superiority will not work and will lead only to frustration, perhaps even failure. With this in mind, a Chinese experience can be very enjoyable and rewarding.