

- The Chinese use intermediaries to make personal introductions, to carry bad news and to settle disputes. It is possible to carry on an acrimonious argument without ever facing your opponent. Everything goes back and forth through a third party who communicates each side's position without displaying the unpleasant emotions that may be involved (though these emotions may be reported). Result: the hard feelings and embarrassment that accompany a dispute and even threaten the underlying relationship are mitigated. This is a highly civilized system – explore it.
- Entertaining is a very important part of doing business in China. You should be prepared to spend more money on entertainment than would be normal at home. For your Chinese counterpart, entertainment is an important step in getting to know you and in establishing good relations – long before a letter of intent or contract is signed. In China, this entertainment commonly involves banquets, speeches, Chinese whiskey (look out!) and karaoke.
- Banquets are an integral part of deal-making in China. On these occasions, you can't go wrong by taking cues from your Chinese counterpart. Sit where your host suggests; try the food that is offered; make a reciprocal speech and toast. If karaoke is part of the evening, gather your courage and sing your favorite song. Your host will enjoy it! If you don't know any songs, learn the words to a couple of popular English songs before you leave for China. ('Red River Valley' is a great choice, since the melody is exactly the same as a very popular Chinese folksong. Your Chinese hosts will be stunned that you know Chinese folk-music, and in English translation to boot!).
- Canadians can expect a lot of goodwill from the Chinese. That being said, you can watch all of that goodwill go down the drain if you act inappropriately. It is all too common for visitors to China to give deep offence by seemingly innocent remarks comparing China unfavourably with Western countries. Chinese people are well aware that Canada is a wealthy nation compared to China and for some Chinese, China's economic level is a source of embarrassment. Be sensitive to this. Your Chinese friends may make disparaging remarks about China's "backwardness", but don't take this as an invitation to add your own criticisms. If you can think of a positive thing to say on such occasions, it will be appreciated.