

in Asia are driving investment in Canada. The relationship is also growing to include a wide range of services, including telecommunications, financial services, landscaping, education and tourism.

As International Trade Minister Jim Peterson was leading the trade mission to China in January, the Canadian and Chinese governments were actively negotiating Canada's designation as an approved tourist destination to allow for group tours from China. The Canadian Tourism Commission, which recently opened an office in Beijing, expects a 20 per cent jump in visitors the first year after Canada receives its approved status.

The range of contacts made and contracts signed during the week-long mission attests to the scope of opportunities that Canadians are developing in China. Representatives of consulting firms, real estate developers, architects, schools and colleges, food manufacturers and mining companies penned a wide range of agreements.

Hongwen Zhang, Co-Founder and Chairman of Wireless Edge Canada Inc. in Calgary, Alberta, signed a contract with Surekam, China's largest information technology service provider, to offer its network security product to Surekam's corporate customers across China. The deal comes after Wireless Edge worked for more than a year to customize its technology to suit broadband telecommunications operators in China.

Doing business in eastern markets can be challenging. When RIM was exploring opportunities in India, it found the country's business practices, financial data and legal systems

more complex than those in other countries where it operated, says Spence, so it took longer to assess risk there.

Finding the right partner is also critical. Lingo Media, a textbook company in Toronto, saw two major China contracts fall through despite being paired with a market leader, says Michael Kraft, Lingo's President and CEO. The company found a new co-publisher, Kraft invested his time and money in building relationships and, to date, 94 million Lingo Media textbooks have been sold in China.

For companies looking to do business in the region, ITCan provides on-the-ground help with market intelligence, contacts and cultural briefings, says Madan. Canada is also negotiating bilateral agreements with Asian nations to ensure that Canadian companies are treated on a par with domestic or other foreign investors.

"These are some of the most dynamic economies of the world," says Yuen Pau Woo, Chief Economist for the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. "There is no region more important for the long-term growth of Canadian trade than Asia." 🍁

To read the latest news on investment and trade with Asia Pacific, see the April issues of *CanadExport*, International Trade Canada's biweekly trade and investment publication. Search the *CanadExport* archives for more Asian trade news at www.canadexport.gc.ca.

Growing connections

Hanfeng Evergreen Inc. is a Canadian company with deep roots in Asia.

When Xinduo Yu, a businessman from Dalian, a port city in northeast China, immigrated to Canada in 1994, he knew the Chinese government was eager to beautify and create greener, more livable urban spaces for residents. A former city planner, Yu established Hanfeng Evergreen in China to connect Canadian landscaping expertise and products with the thriving market back home. From landscaping, Hanfeng expanded into the ornamental tree business and fertilizers.

With a deep understanding of the local business culture, Hanfeng has encountered few barriers in relations with its 125 Chinese employees and its efforts to identify new opportunities in China.

Yuen Pau Woo, Chief Economist for the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, says that immigrants to Canada from the region can benefit from familiarity when doing business with their home countries. "The most interesting deals I've seen in China have Chinese-Canadians involved in them," Woo says.

The foundation has identified 148 associations that marry Canadian business with the region, such as the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber president Pradeep Sood says that through his organization, the strength of the market in India can be tapped by all Canadians, no matter their origin. "Our role is to connect people," Sood says.

Greener spaces: A cultural park in Haining, just southeast of Shanghai, is one of the many projects designed and constructed by Canadian Xinduo Yu's Hanfeng Evergreen Inc. in China.

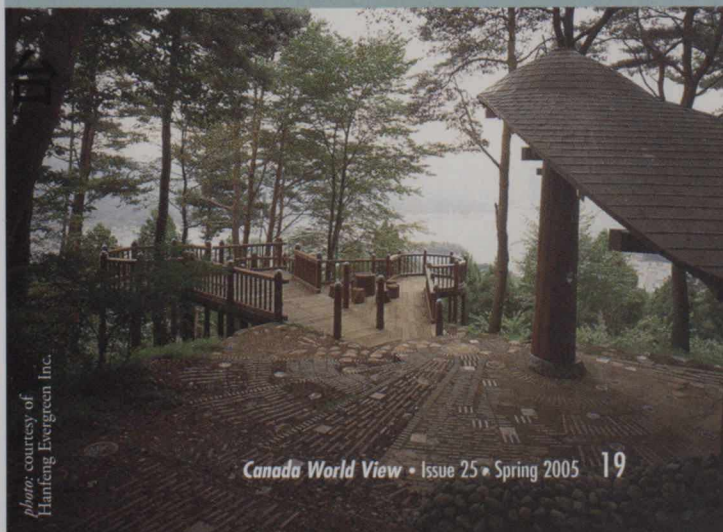


photo courtesy of Hanfeng Evergreen Inc.