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Canada and the

People's Republic of China



Although the total land mass of the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) is less than Canada's, it has 40 times Canada's population. With over one billion inhabitants, it is the world's most populous country. China is headed by a President, a National People's Congress and a State Council (Cabinet) under a Premier.

Canadian missionaries and merchants provided Canada's earliest contacts with China in the late nineteenth century. In 1906, Canada opened a commercial office in Shanghai, and by 1941, an ambassadorial exchange had taken place. Eight years later, when the People's Liberation Army entered Nanjing, then China's political centre, Canada closed its embassy. For 20 years, Canada had no official relations with China; in 1969, however, talks on recognition were initiated and formal relations with the People's Republic of China were established in 1970.

Today, Canada maintains an embassy in Beijing and a consulate general in Shanghai. China's embassy is located in Ottawa, and consulates general are situated in Toronto and Vancouver.

POLITICAL RELATIONS

Increased Chinese involvement in world affairs is now a significant factor in international politics. Canada's 1969 decision to seek renewal of diplomatic relations reflected not only changed public perceptions but an interest in strengthening relations with Asia in general.

Talks which began in Stockholm in 1969 resulted in a joint communiqué issued in 1970. As a result, however, diplomatic relations were severed with the "Republic of China" (Taiwan). Though Canada maintains no official contacts with Taiwan, private trade and "people-to-people" contacts are encouraged.

Regular and high-level visits are exchanged with the PRC, and an

exciting framework for economic co-operation has been established.

Important agreements were reached in such areas as trade, family reunification, and scientific and cultural exchanges.

There are ongoing exchanges on foreign affairs, development assistance, communications, energy, agriculture, justice, trade and health.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

China is Canada's 5th largest export market and Canada's 11th largest supplier of import products. In 1987, its Gross Domestic Product was C\$300 billion and its per capita income C\$300. Industry has taken over from agriculture, contributing the highest percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) with 45 per cent as compared with 37 per cent. As a percentage of expenditure, education exceeds defence with 17.4 per cent to the latter's 11.9 per cent.

Economic reform has provided both opportunities and challenges for companies entering the Chinese market. Canadian companies can now negotiate with a wide range of contacts at the provincial, municipal and even factory level.

Although foreign exchange availability remains a major constraint, some larger centres have more streamlined trade approval processes and trade-enhancing reforms are being implemented. Further, the legal and regulatory environment is becoming more sophisticated, a trend that is reflected by a growing number of China-based legal, financial and accounting specialists, many of them Canadian.

In 1985, Canada targeted China as a priority market in the National Trade Strategy. Consequently, it established (1986) a consulate general in Shanghai; the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) development program was doubled; and a concessional financing facility (1986) for China through

the Export Development Program was established.

Twinning

Visits by provincial premiers to China have significantly enhanced bilateral relations. Alberta is now "twinning" with the province of Heilongjiang. Calgary is linked with Daqing and Edmonton with Harbin. Agriculture, oil, gas, sports, science, technology and education are subjects of brisk interchange.

British Columbia's (B.C.) task force on China supports private enterprise. The Port of Vancouver is twinned with the Port of Dalian, while Vancouver itself is twinned with Guangzhou and Victoria with Suzhou. B.C. focuses on communications, transportation, agricultural technology and hydro-electric resources.

Saskatchewan is twinned with the province of Jilin, Saskatoon with Shijiazhuang (Hebei) and the University of Regina with the University of Shandong. Exchanges include sports, culture, agriculture, mineral resources, biotechnology and fibre-optics.

Ontario's twin is the province of Jiangsu. Together, the two provinces have constructed a science and technology centre in Nanjing, which Ontario will use to promote cultural exchange. In 1986, a research and development agreement was signed with the Chinese Ministry of Hydro-Electric Resources.

Relations between Quebec and China, long limited to education, are now taking an economic turn. Montreal, twinned with Shanghai, has sent a mission to China to identify areas of potential co-operation.

Manitoba and Newfoundland are pursuing an industry-specific approach,

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perhaps in the areas of energy and mining, but for now, neither has plans for twinning.

Science and Technology

A number of Canadian missions have visited China with interests in agriculture, telecommunications, forestry, geology, fisheries, seismology, meteorology, economics, oceanography and veterinary medicine. Chinese delegations to Canada have covered petroleum, surface coal mining, laser research, permafrost, biological insect control, mapping and engineering, transportation and telecommunications.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

One of Canada's greatest unofficial diplomats was a lone Canadian doctor who established one of the most important ties between the two countries. From January 1938 until his death in November 1939, Dr. Norman Bethune provided crucial medical services to the Chinese army during the war with Japan. Bethune is now one of the most famous non-Chinese historical figures in the PRC. The respect with which he is held is responsible, in part, for the generally favourable disposition many Chinese have toward Canada.

Medical exchanges are now frequent between the two countries. Chinese doctors have studied neuro-physiology, urology and organ transplantation in Canada, while Canadian physicians have studied acupuncture techniques.

The Canada-China academic links are very diversified. External Affairs provides visiting Faculty Enrichment and Faculty Research opportunities for Chinese academics to develop new courses or scholarly articles about Canada, and gives books to Chinese universities in support of these activities. Chinese academics have formed an Association for Canadian Studies in China. There are now well over 2 000

Chinese students studying in Canada; many are under CIDA auspices.

Sino-Canadian agreements on "family reunification" have enabled about 25 000 Chinese to emigrate to Canada to rejoin long-separated relatives. This exchange has enriched the cultures of both countries.

Arts

China brought to Canadians an exhibition of ancient scientific inventions at the Ontario Science Centre in 1982 and in Montreal in 1986. The renowned Shanghai Ballet made a highly successful visit to Canada on its first tour of the West. The famed Peking Opera Troupe and two different circuses, one with a performing Panda bear, have dazzled thousands of Canadians.

Canadian culture has received commendable exposure in China. Inuit art exhibitions, landscape paintings and photography, and performances in

Beijing by Les Grands Ballets canadiens and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra have delighted the arts-oriented Chinese people.

In 1988, China loaned rare giant pandas to the Calgary Zoo for a few months. Another exciting exchange is the "dinosaur" project, which provides scientists with an opportunity to cooperate in studying fossils in the Gobi Desert and in the Drumheller Badlands of Alberta, two of the world's richest fossil fields.

Canada appreciates Chinese receptivity to all of the above initiatives. Mutually beneficial relationships are being forged at many levels.

Sports

Sports also play a key part in the joint exchange program. Exchanges include competition in table tennis, badminton, basketball, swimming, gymnastics, soccer, volleyball, hockey, speedskating and water-skiing.

	CHINA	CANADA
Area	9 560 000 km ²	9 970 610 km ²
Population	1.06 billion (1988)	25.6 million (1987)
Capital	Beijing	Ottawa
GNP	C\$353.1 billion (1987)	C\$537 billion (1987)
GNP per capita	C\$333.6 (1987)	C\$20 963 (1987)
Life expectancy at birth	69.4 years (1984)	76.4 years (1987)
Languages	Mandarin, Cantonese, and several other minority languages and dialects	English, French
Urbanization	20 %	75 %
Chinese exports to Canada	C\$770 million (1987)	
Canadian exports to China		C\$1.4 billion (1987)

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Canada. Dept. of External Affairs.
Canada and the People's Republic of
China. ---
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Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

(Publié également en français)
Canada, 1989



External Affairs / Affaires extérieures
Canada / Canada

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