

有办法 You Banfa! There is a way

NZCFS Nelson has chosen this theme for Conference 2015 because it captures the historical foundations of our friendship with China through Rewi Alley, and also the current drive of NZCFS for fresh initiatives under the 2014 Action Plan. For the first time, significantly, the conference theme is primarily expressed in Chinese characters.

Yo Banfa! is the title of a book by Rewi Alley, first published in 1952, and subsequently extended to a third edition. The copy in a number of NZCFS libraries was published in Auckland in 1976, by The New Zealand-China Society and The Progressive Book Society. In the form of diary entries, the author records aspects of his work in China from 1950 in Shandan to 1955 in Beijing. It was written before standardised pinyin was adopted, so Rewi used 'yo' where we are using modern pinyin, 'you'. The book contains remarkable stories of Rewi Alley's kiwi 'can do' attitude. He, and his students and colleagues overcame huge difficulties to forge ahead using the resources available and the belief that there is always a way to achieve the goal.

In the front of the book, Rewi Alley explains his title under his own calligraphy:

有办法

THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS HIS TITLE

In the old China, in the exploited, ruined villages and cities, subject to perpetual wars, to floods, famine, pestilence, there was a cry, accompanied by baffled and angry eyes, the cry of a people who could see no way out.

It haunted, it spread like an infection. A truck would limp to a stop and the driver get out, look at the decrepit engine, hurl his wrench at it and mutter savagely, "Mei-yo banfa!"—No way! Refugees with hungry children, soldiers dying of their festering wounds, would murmur desperately, "Mei-yo banfa . . ." It was the cry of the defeated, the hopeless.

Then there began to appear men who changed the tune. As the Japanese Imperialists penetrated, these men fought back. The "mei-yo banfa" changed to "yo banfa!" We *have* a way! It can be done!

Those who changed the tune were not well-armed, they were not well-fed, they were not well-clothed. But they had something else. They had confidence born of a new understanding and in that confidence they pushed forward, gave leadership.

Then as the years passed and the savage, degenerate old order was rent with more and more contradictions, the new life began to enter and take hold. Everywhere men began to look with hope at their tasks, at difficulties overcome, began to turn to one another and say, "Yo banfa!"

The idea spread. The little groups became larger groups until they swelled into an overwhelming tide that engulfed the old, swept away its rottenness and cut new, clean channels.

So many achievements have already been made that the chroniclers of events find it hard to keep pace with them. But to one who lived so long under the old, the thing that gets one is to see the light in two lads' eyes when, as they complete a job, they look at each other and say, almost with one voice, "Yo banfa!" In this lies a whole new world of respect for themselves, for one another, for the endless potentialities of their people and for the glorious future that now faces their country.

REWI ALLEY