



# THE CAPITAL CHINA LETTER

## 新中通訊



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**NEW ZEALAND CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WELLINGTON BRANCH NEWSLETTER**  
PO Box 5423 Lambton Quay, Wellington. Website: [www.nzchinasociety.org.nz](http://www.nzchinasociety.org.nz)

### Next Branch Meeting

**Wednesday, 16 November 2016 at 5.45pm**

**Helene Wong**

Will speak on

### ***Being Chinese: A New Zealander's Story***

*This is the story of a quest I began three decades ago – the search for my Chinese identity. The path I travelled was not linear, and the years brought pain as well as joy. But, while this is a narrative about being Chinese, it is also about being a New Zealander.*

Writer, actor, director and film critic Helene Wong was born in New Zealand in 1949, to parents whose families had emigrated from China one or two generations earlier. Preferring invisibility, she grew up a young New Zealander. But in 1980 she travelled to her father's home village in southern China and came face-to-face with her ancestral past.



Drawing on her evocative memoir, *Being Chinese: A New Zealander's Story*, Helene speaks about her journey to discover her Chinese ancestry – and about New Zealand's growing cultural diversity.

An optional Chinese buffet meal, supplied by the Fujiyama Café, will follow the meeting at 7pm. Orders for the \$12 meal (please pay at the door) will be taken up till 6pm. If you think you may be arriving late, please let the Secretary know in advance.

### **Connolly Hall**

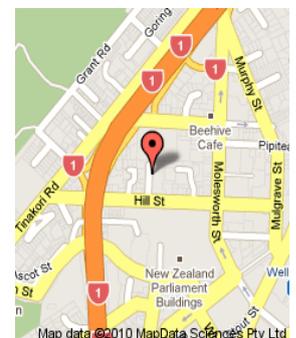
Guildford Terrace, off Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington (see map)  
(Car park up Guildford Tce beside Hall)

### **ALSO COMING UP THIS MONTH**

5 Nov Mandarin Corner, Seminar Room, Room 103, 24 Kelburn Parade, Victoria University of Wellington

### **2017 CHINESE NEW YEAR BANQUET**

Chinese New Year is on 28 January 2017, heralding in the Year of the Rooster. We have started organising the NZCFS Annual Chinese New Year Banquet, which will take place at Grand Century on Sunday 15 January 2017. The cost will be \$33 for NZCFS Members and families/ partners and \$35 for non-members. Additional information will be advertised closer to the time.



### **MEETING DATES FOR 2016**

There are no more branch meetings in 2016. Our first meeting next year will be the Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday 16 March 2017. We hope to see you all there.

## THE ART OF CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY: OCTOBER BRANCH MEETING PRESENTATION *by Gerard Coyle*

Our guest speaker for the October branch meeting was Mr. Shen Ming, the Director of Cultural Section of the Chinese Embassy in New Zealand. The purpose of Mr Shen's talk was to give a brief introduction to Chinese calligraphy.

Mr. Shen has been interested in Chinese calligraphy from a very young age. He is a member of the China Nanjing Municipal Calligraphers' Association, and many of his artworks have been displayed in calligraphy exhibitions in China.

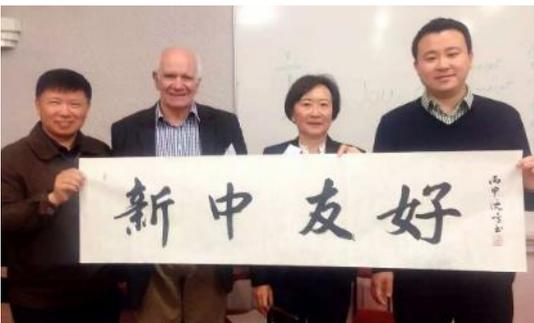
Mr. Shen began his talk with a brief sketch of the history of Chinese writing. He explained how the individual characters can be traced back to over 5000 years ago, and examples of actual writing back to 3000 years ago. He then detailed the five main styles of Chinese calligraphy:



- Seal script (篆書; zhuànshū) - the earliest style, not used much today except for the seals or stamps Chinese calligraphers use to mark their work,
- Official script (隶书; lìshū) - invented in the Han dynasty (200 BCE to 25 CE) for use in official documents,
- Formal script (楷书; kǎishū) – another script that was invented in the Han dynasty, but became popular in the Tang dynasty (618 CE to 907 CE),
- Running script (行書; xíngshū), and
- Cursive script (草书; cǎoshū)

Mr. Shen then gave a demonstration of each of these five styles by writing the characters for “Heaven” and “Earth” (天地; Tiān Dì ) in each style. He also kindly offered to write people's names in Chinese calligraphy; several members of the audience took advantage of his offer.

After this, Mr. Shen resumed his talk. He explained how the brush has been used for Chinese calligraphy from the very beginning, but because the brush is soft, it is difficult to control, and it requires a lot of practice to use it properly.



Chinese calligraphy is meant to be written quickly, accurately and beautifully, and this was especially important in Imperial China, where it could determine your ranking (and your future career), in the famous Imperial Examinations. Because of this, many famous people in the history of China were known for their calligraphy. This was also the reason the skill went into a decline with the fall of the Qing dynasty. As the new Republican government abolished the Imperial Examinations, skill in calligraphy was no longer a key to a government job or career advancement.

Mr. Shen then detailed some of the basic strokes in Chinese calligraphy, and how they could be used to build the character for “everlasting” (永; yǒng). He emphasized the importance of doing the strokes in the correct order, spacing, how to build the character and ensuring the character fitted within a square. He also explained that any force used had to come from the wrist, not the elbow. He concluded his talk by drawing a comparison between Chinese calligraphy and Tai Chi, in that breath control was important in both, and as such, Chinese calligraphy could have the same health benefits as Tai Chi.

## NZCFS PROMINENT PERSONS AND LEADERS DELEGATION (2015)

Each year, the New Zealand China Friendship Society (NZCFS) is invited by the National China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (known as Youxie) to send a delegation of Prominent People and NZCFS Leaders to China. These delegates comprise both people from the community, such as teachers, local politicians and media people, as well as Society representatives. As the 2015 delegation focussed specifically on medicine, it comprised mainly doctors, a nurse and leaders in the health sector. The purpose of the delegation's visit is to build relationships and friendships between our two peoples, to visit some unique parts of China, and to give the delegates a positive perspective of modern China.



Rear: Dr Ben Gray. L-R: Debbie Chin, Ann Chapman, Allison Hobbs, Christine Gaul, Jan McLeod. Front: Dr Bernard Fanning

The delegation began the tour in Beijing where they visited a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) hospital, which was established by top traditional medicine practitioners in the 1950s. In this hospital, and similar hospitals across China, there is a strong focus on the interaction between TCM and Western medicine. Contemporary doctors working in these hospitals train in both areas to broaden their understanding of medicine and health. During their time in Beijing, the delegates also visited Rewi Alley's apartment [Ed: now part of the offices of Youxie], the Peace Park and the Great Wall.

Following their time in Beijing, the tour visited Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province. The city has approximately 13 million people, and a key focus of their health initiatives involve providing healthcare for rural villages, including immunisations. Within Shijiazhuang, there is health insurance for most people, with five different levels of cover. The local government in the city aim to continue to improve access to healthcare within the province, as well as those with access to insurance. In addition to visiting hospitals in Shijiazhuang, the delegation also spent time in a number of museums, including the Hebei Regional Museum. Members of the tour also noted a number of similarities with New Zealand and Māori culture in the city, such as similar koru patterns and the prominence of greenstone compared to jade.

The delegation then visited Anguo, a city of nearly half a million people also in Hebei province. They visited both the old and new main hospitals, with the new hospital employing approximately 700 staff (compared to 5,000 in the Wellington hospital), and includes both traditional and western medicines. Following this, they visited the largest wholesale market of 'materia medica' for TCM [Traditional Chinese Medicine] in China, which provides a huge range of traditional medicines from across the country, including herbs, roots and dried sea life. For more information on their experience, please visit: <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/25328/ppl-delegation-2015-with-focus-on-health/>.

### **NZCFS ENVIRONMENTAL DELEGATION 2016**

On Friday 7 October, the NZCFS Environment Delegation left New Zealand for China and they have recently returned. The purpose of the delegation was to build new relationships between environmental professionals in NZ and China and to share and exchange environmental knowledge and experience. It has been supported by Beijing Youxie and the New Zealand China Council, with members also being supported by the Asia New Zealand Foundation, Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira, Te Pune Kokiri and Otago University.



From left: Kirk McDowall, Shreejan Pandey, Mr Li (Biotech), Deborah Robertson, Emma Hill, Leana Barriball and Marc Schallenberg

The delegation travelled around the Yunnan Province, spending time in Kunming, Dali and Dongchuan, before travelling to Beijing, Tianjin, Baoding and Shanghai. We met with a number of environmental focused organisations, including speaking with the Centre for Biological and Indigenous Knowledge, and visited some of their project sites in rural Yunnan. We also discussed air pollution with the Beijing Municipal Local Government and gave presentations on New Zealand's biodiversity and freshwater lakes to a number of universities and research institutes around the country. We also visited the world's largest solar panel manufacturing company, Yingli Solar, as well as Goldenway Biology Tech, a waste disposal company in Beijing, the Sino Singapore-Tianjin Eco City in Tianjin, and two wetland reserves in Yunnan and Shanghai.



We are very thankful for the support from the NZCFS and the number of organisations who supported and meet with us. Our time in China gave us excellent insight into the current and previous state of China's environment, as well as initiatives and challenges in the future. We will produce a number of reports on the delegation, including key findings and opportunities, as well as a video, which will be available on the NZCFS website. As a result of this experience, we hope to organise future Environment Delegations and assist in other delegations to China.



### **VISIT TO NATIONAL LIBRARY**

As part of New Zealand Chinese Language Week, 12 – 18 September, the National Library of New Zealand invited about 12 people from various organisations, including the Wellington Branch, to a display at the National Library in Wellington of a viewing of material about Rewi Alley. We were shown through the display by Senior Advisor Winston Roberts and Curatorial Services Leader, John Sullivan.

Although there were only about 20 items on display, they were enough to have us all quickly fascinated by this window into the life of an amazing man. His diary was there for 1929, and I was able to read of how a man had been killed the day before in a Shanghai factory by a piece of dangerous machinery (Rewi was a factory inspector at the time). After he had discussed



John Sullivan showing us some of Rewi's photos

it at some length with the factory manager, the manager finally agreed to put a safety device on the machine – but only because he knew it would keep Rewi happy; no thought given to the saving of future lives! That entry was followed by several exclamation marks!

There were three photos albums on display from a collection of over 50. Some had belonged to Rewi, some to his sister Gwen and others from various family members; all fascinating. Other items on display were letters, a school text book and report (?!), a book of poems and various sketches.

Rewi's presence was with us; you could sense him there, watching us with a bemused look on his face; 'what's all the fuss for?'. I think one day we need to make another appointment to revisit our old friend; maybe they will extend the invitation further next time.

<http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/27866/christchurch-branch-newsletter/>

### MANDARIN CORNER 汉语角 Saturdays 3.15-5pm

Room 103, 24 Kelburn Parade, Victoria University of Wellington.

Mandarin Corner (Wellington), established in 1995 by NZCFS, is a weekly event where students learning Chinese meet with native speakers of Chinese for conversation and cultural activities in a friendly, relaxed setting, and is open to all level. Come along if you are interested, and attendance is free. Mandarin corner does not run during school holidays. For more information contact Yinghui Li at [Yinghui.Li@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Yinghui.Li@vuw.ac.nz).



### A CHRONOLOGY OF REWI ALLEY'S LIFE

Alley, Rewi, 1897–1987: Farmer, teacher, social reformer, peace activist, writer

Excerpt written by Roderic Alley and was first published in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Volume 4, 1998

Rewi Alley was born in Springfield, Canterbury, on 2 December 1897 to Frederick James Alley, a schoolmaster, and his wife, Clara Maria Buckingham, who was active in the temperance and women's rights movements. He was christened Rewi on the wish of his father's childless sister, Amy, who had great admiration for Rewi Maniapoto, a Ngati Maniapoto leader.

Out of curiosity about China, he first went there in 1927. He intended only to visit but stayed for the rest of his life. For the next decade he worked in Shanghai, first as a fire officer and then as a municipal factory inspector. Within a year of his arrival he formed a friendship with Joseph Bailie, an Irish-American missionary, whose ideas about the primacy of village-level education and training were an inspiration to Alley. Another significant friendship began in 1933 when he recruited to the Shanghai municipal council an American public health expert, George Hatem. Other early formative friendships included those with the Americans Edgar Snow, a journalist; Anna Louise Strong, a left-wing writer; and Agnes Smedley, a writer and revolutionary. Alley adopted two boys within five years of his arrival in China, Mike (Li Xue) and Alan (Duan Simou). From his Shanghai base, Rewi Alley became involved in government-sponsored flood and famine relief work, activities that were gaining international support. For more on Rewi's life, please visit: <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/27317/a-chronology-of-rewi-alleys-life/>.



### NZCFS EXPLORE CHINA: THE NORTHWEST/SILK ROAD TOUR – OCTOBER 2017, 21 DAYS IN CHINA

The latest NZCFS educational tour in the "Explore China" series is a first to travel deep into Xinjiang, skirt around then cross the Taklamakan desert to explore the ancient civilisations as well as the dynamic cultures in this area. Follow the silk road west through Gansu to enjoy the legacies left by diverse travellers on the road, ending with NZCFS' own connection to Bailie schools and cooperative through Rewi Alley.



Xi'an to Kashgar: Explore the ancient historical civilisations and buried cities in the vast Xinjiang Province. Enjoy the culture of the Uighur and other peoples, and travel through dramatic landscapes as we journey east by train and coach along the Old Silk Road into Gansu. Follow the legacy of Rewi Alley and the Bailie school he founded. For more information on our tours, please visit: <http://nzchinasociety.org.nz/news/tours-to-china/>.

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