

## The Friendship of New Zealand and China lasts forever

Dear Chairman of the New Zealand China Friendship Society

Mr. Eric Livingston

Dear Mr. Liao Hui, the distinguished vice chairman of the CPPCC National Committee

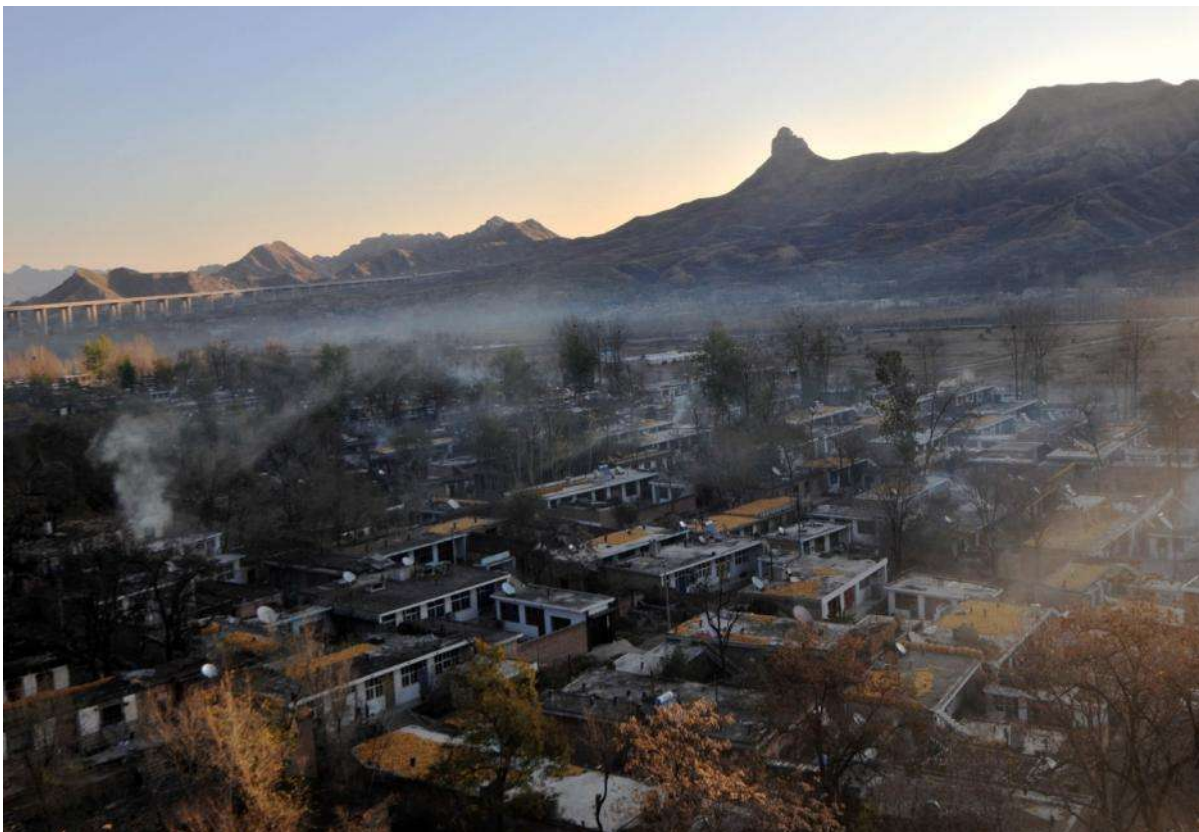
Ladies and Gentlemen:

A very important event is happening in 2012 that will go down in history this extraordinary year as a marvelous event. That is, under the spirit and guidance of international friend, Rewi Alley, we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New Zealand China Friendship Society. 60 years flowers of friendship sown by our predecessors, and now more and more full of vitality and flourishing.

I am so happy to attend the meeting as an honorary member of the society. I feel very honoured to once again come to this warm and vital country where everywhere the sky is blue, the clouds are white, the water is clear, I would also like to take this opportunity together with you warm and peace-loving people to re-visit the way we have come together to witness the 60-year friendship.

My name is Ma Baoru and I come from Baoding, Hebei, also Kathleen Hall's second home town in China. I am very grateful to the New Zealand China Friendship Society, I rejoice that I have worked together with you on the road of friendship of both of our peoples. On this occasion, I must respectfully mention a person's name: Mr. Tom Newnham.

In August 1989, when I worked in the Foreign Affairs Office of Baoding prefecture as an English interpreter, I received NZCFS vice-chair Tom Newman. He told me that he had been entrusted by the Chinese people's old friend Rewi Alley to come to China to write a biography of a person called He Mingqing. At that time I was unfamiliar with the name of He Mingqing. It was only when I accompanied Tom to Quyang county, Songjiazhuang village to gather information, that I began to understand the link between Norman Bethune and Kathleen Hall, and his dying commemoration to her.



The village of Songjiazhuang today



During the interviews, we were surprised to find that the old people in this remote mountain area still remembered the person they called “Golden Haired Old He”, and further they could tell many moving stories about her.

Kathleen Hall, a New Zealander, had the Chinese name He Mingqing. Dr. Bethune referred to her as an "angel", and Rewi Alley praised her legend as the "real New Zealand heroine". She and Bethune and other international fighters were the same. They made tremendous sacrifices and outstanding contributions for the World Anti-Fascist War and the cause of Chinese national liberation. In 1990, 91-year-old Marshal Nie Rongzhen wrote an inscription for her: "to heal the wounded and rescue the dying she worked with selfless dedication. Her deeds in support of the War of Resistance against Japan will go down in the annals of history".

It is this Kathleen Hall real spirit of internationalism for the friendship of our two peoples that established a solid foundation, influenced, and inspired countless representatives from future generations to continue to promote and deepen the friendship between New Zealand and China and make it everlasting.

I did not expect that since the contacts with the deeds of Kathleen Hall from Tom in 1989, it would continue for 23 years. Kathleen Hall, the real spirit of internationalism has infected and inspired me, it is hard to break away but even more it has intensified. Her touching stories often appear in my dreams; it has become part of my life. Over the years, with a feeling of great devotion, I have made a lot of collections, and organized many major events to further the education, and extend more feeling of love and friendship beyond China's borders.





On my last trip to New Zealand in 2004, when Tom told me of his poor health, at that time I did not see anything wrong and responded to him jokingly. I still remember taking a picture under a big tree, and did not think this would be the last time we would meet; it would be the last photo of Tom and I together.



One day a few years later, another Vice President of the New Zealand China Friendship Society **Dave Bromwich** came to visit me and reported to me bad news that Tom's health was not so good. But when he mentioned Baoding and Songjiazhuang to Tom, he said a lot and also remembered the scene with me to collect information about Kathleen Hall, and other details very clearly. Clearly Tom's impressions of Kathleen Hall's second home Baoding were deep and profound. Long after, when the news came that Tom was dying I was deeply grieved. How I wished I could immediately fly to the hospital to visit my dear friend, my esteemed teacher, my like-minded comrade. Just a few weeks later, the relatives could not keep Tom, he passed away.

Mr. Tom Newnham made a great contribution for the friendship between our two peoples that coming generations can follow. Several times Tom visited Baoding, China at his own expense. We trekked through the mountains and rivers in Tang County, Quyang, Dingzhou, to accomplish the tasks: whether to complete the shooting of the large documentary "Angel, soldier, the love of China - Kathleen Hall" to commemorate He Mingqing's centenary birthday; to reconstruct the He Mingqing clinic, which are all saturated with the efforts of Tom; or to write his book "Kathleen Hall Biography, New Zealand Women in China": all have become testimony to our friendship, all are part of the history of the friendship between New Zealand and China.

I know in early years in Auckland, Tom had also established English Corner, and helped many Chinese people in New Zealand. Through him, I see the enthusiasm and kindness of the people of New Zealand. Tom and Kathleen alike are great friendly envoys expressing selfless love to consolidate and strengthen the story of the two peoples.

I have here some photos to show to everyone, let us work together to witness the new bilateral friendship of the people

"Lost time day and night." This is the ancient Chinese thinker Confucius, in the face of turbulent rivers, issued a sigh. Indeed, with the passage of time, people will lose their looks, their youth, their health, but people do not lose the faith, do not lose the pursuit of the spirit of Kathleen Hall

after she has died, but her spirit of internationalism lasts forever and will always inspire and touch future generations, forging new chapters in New Zealand and China friendship.

Time passes just like the flowing water, the years make us forget some things, but the Chinese people will never forget Rewi Alley, will never forget Kathleen Hall, will never forget Tom Newnham, just as all friends who have made great contributions for the friendship of our two peoples will not be forgotten!

How time flies! The tide of history flows fast ... Regardless, arriving at the great moment when the New Zealand China Friendship Society has achieved 60 years, I believe that the tide of history during these 60 years that has joined us together in friendship has washed increasingly more clear!

**Long live the friendship between our two peoples!**