PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN LATE QING CHINA: GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY’S PROSELYTIZATION STRATEGIES IN TAIWAN, 1872-1895

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a cultural, spatial, and historical study of the proselytization strategies Canadian Presbyterian missionary George Leslie Mackay (1844-1901) utilized in Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty. It explores the development of his proselytization methods that succeeded in resolving the multifaceted tensions and conflicts between the missionary, the religious community in Canada, and the local Taiwanese peoples.

The materials that this thesis utilizes are primarily from the abovementioned missionary (Mackay), who arrived in the Taiwan Prefecture (Taiwanfu 臺灣府) on New Year’s Eve in 1871. The main sources used within this study include Mackay’s diaries, journals, and other Western primary sources. Through these primary sources, I attempt to analyze Mackay’s personality, his understandings of the local context of Northern Taiwan, and the strategies he utilized for evangelizing, which discloses his complicated relationship with the Foreign Missions Council of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and yet simultaneously demonstrates his transformation from a “black-bearded barbarian” and “foreign devil” into a charismatic leader and pastor for the local peoples living in Taiwan.

In this thesis, I examine how Mackay's strategies for proselytization drew on his convictions of the critical importance of learning the languages and cultures of the local peoples. I seek to explain the reasons for Mackay's distinctive mode of evangelism in terms of his understanding of the demographic and cultural conditions of Taiwanese society in Qing China. I argue that Mackay had a multi-faceted approach to evangelization. On a foundational level, Mackay redefined traditional venues of communication, which offered Mackay a wider demographic range of visibility, and created various networks of interpersonal relations, which integrated the island’s diverse ethnic, socio-cultural, and political groups for a unified purpose.
Building on these two strategies, Mackay’s strategy was then to train local qualified converts to spread Christianity to the local population, to be leaders of local churches and the core missionaries of the Christian ministry in Northern Taiwan.
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

It was through Presbyterian missionary George Leslie Mackay’s mouth, hands, and feet along with his unrelenting personality and personal convictions that the gospel message of Jesus Christ was spread throughout Taiwan, also referred to as Formosa.¹ It is not an over-generalization to say that there was a significant and direct connection between the rapid expansion of Christianity in Northern Taiwan and Mackay’s missionary activities. Within his time as a missionary in Taiwan of almost 30 years (1872-1901), Mackay had overseen the establishment of and helped cultivate 60 churches within only the northern portion of Taiwan. One of the most astounding qualities of Mackay’s missionary activities is that he was consistently travelling. For Mackay, it was not incidental or coincidental that he was travelling this much; it was the execution of a well-designed strategy.

In an 1878 report to the Foreign Missions Council of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Mackay had summarized some of his methods as “travelling and dispensing medicines,” “travelling and preaching the gospel,” “travelling and training young men,” “travelling and appointing a trained helper to take charge of a chapel wherever opened.”² Mackay scholar Graeme McDonald notes an obvious yet overlooked point: “the key word is ‘travelling.’”³ In her work, McDonald quantitatively demonstrates this point by revealing that Mackay had only spent 3 Sundays in Tamsui in 1874, despite Tamsui being the first and main mission station in Northern Taiwan. Moreover, in 7 years, he had only remained in Tamsui for 175 days (which is

¹ Formosa, meaning “beautiful” in Portuguese, is another name for the island that was given by the Portuguese as they were sailing there and saw the eastern coast. Officially, it was called Taiwanfu during the Qing acquisition of the island. At first, the island was a prefecture of the Fujian province and later became a province of the Qing Dynasty (1684 – 1895). The present-day name of the island is Taiwan (台灣).
³ Ibid, 150.
an average of only 25 days per year). Why did Mackay travel around Northern Taiwan so much? What did he gain through travelling? How were his other strategies tied into this method of travelling and his ultimate mission? Were the different proselytization strategies that stemmed from travelling different from other Presbyterian missionaries? For Mackay, travelling was a central facet of his evangelization strategies – a means to an end.

In this thesis, I argue that the key to Mackay’s success in his missionary work in Taiwan was the result of his well-designed proselytization strategy. This thesis reveals that Mackay, who was known to be a strong-minded and persistent missionary, understood that there were many means in which the gospel could and needed to be spread to the locals in Taiwan. He believed that understanding the context and culture in which a missionary was evangelizing was critical for gaining converts. I examine how Mackay's strategies for proselytization drew on his convictions of the critical importance of learning local languages and understanding local cultures. Additionally, I attempt to elucidate the reasons for Mackay's distinctive mode of travelling to most effectively evangelize to the Taiwanese society.

In this study, I argue that Mackay had a sophisticated multi-layered approach to evangelization, where travelling and understanding the local languages and cultures served as instrumental components for successfully carrying out his proselytization strategies. On a foundational level, Mackay’s strategy is twofold: to redefine traditional venues of communication, which offered Mackay a wider demographic range of visibility, and to create various networks of interpersonal relations, which addressed the complexities of interacting with and evangelizing to the diverse ethnic, socio-cultural, and political groups and integrated the island for a unified purpose. Building on these two strategies, Mackay was then able to gain

\[4\text{ Ibid.}\]
native converts, who he considered to be the most qualified to spread Christianity to the local population, and train them to be leaders of local churches and the core missionaries of the Christian ministry in Northern Taiwan.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the content, including a discussion on the primary sources used as well as a general review of current scholarship on missionary activities in Taiwan. The second chapter focuses on Mackay as an individual and a missionary through tracing his personal, religious, and intellectual background. In this chapter, I also investigate the reasons why Mackay adopted an itinerant approach to his missionary activities, and how these core reasons led to dissatisfaction and anxiety within the Foreign Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (FMC) regarding Mackay. The third chapter demonstrates how Mackay utilized humanitarian means and different spaces to garner a more extensive audience, as he was able to move into the public space and minds of the local Taiwanese as well as into the personal space of individual homes. Chapter four explores the various kinds of local people and communities to whom Mackay attempts to reach out and evangelize for the purpose of establishing networks of relationships to build up the Christian Church. The chapter focuses on individuals of various socio-cultural background that reflect the ethnically diverse population on the island, women, and the elite class consisting of the gentry and Qing officials. The final chapter concludes with a summary of Mackay’s different proselytization strategies as well as an examination of his changing reputation during his time in Taiwan.
Current Scholarship on Christianity in Taiwan During the Qing Dynasty

This thesis addresses a number of issues in Qing Dynasty Chinese History, Taiwan Studies, and Christian Missiology. This thesis attempts to demonstrate Christianity in Qing China as a part of an international yet localized religion, considers Taiwan with its heterogenous culture and fragmented history, and seeks to expand our understanding of proselytization strategies utilized and developed by foreign missionaries.

Much of the recent scholarship on Christian missionary activity in late imperial China has focused more on the causes and experiences of religious conversion, interactions and conflicts between missionaries and locals, and different manifestations of Christianity within Chinese society. Moreover, scholars have started to draw attention to the social and religious influences of Christianity through changes within local communities and converts’ experiences and lives (e.g. Eugenio Menegon’s *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China*). Amidst the scholarship within the fields of study of Chinese History, Taiwan Studies, and Christian Missiology, there is a shortage of dialogue regarding the impact and activities of the Presbyterian missions in Taiwan. Fortunately, scholars like Murray Rubinstein, Clyde Forsberg, and James R. Rohrer are a few who have moved that discussion forward. They have started to see Christianity and Christian missions in Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty (and the periods following) as unique, though not disconnected, from the Christian-related experiences and phenomena happening in China Proper.

Major Chinese history scholars who have studied Christianity’s influence abroad, such as Paul A. Cohen, John K. Fairbank, and Bays, have attempted to shift the direction of narratives of the Christian missionary movement to understanding Christianity’s position and identity within
China. In Cohen’s *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870*, Cohen’s was motivated by a desire to shift the narrative of Christianity in China from being missions-based to focusing on Christianity’s place within Chinese history. Cohen’s work pushed beyond traditional research questions that assumed Chinese attitudes towards the West, and he sought to understand the “role played by the missionary in the introduction of Western secular thought and material culture, the evolution of modern Chinese education, the transformation of certain traditional Chinese social customs, the development in China of Western medical techniques and standards, and so on.”

The author also wanted to understand Christianity’s influence in antiforeignism and developments of anti-Christian sentiments during the nineteenth-century. Though not focusing specifically on a particular localized area in China, Cohen looks at Christian missionaries and China (during the tumultuous period between 1860-1870) as agents within international tensions, conflicts, and negotiations. In regards to Taiwan, Cohen demonstrates that the island, like other local communities of the Qing empire, became grounds where Christianity was the context and reason for many diplomatic conflicts (i.e. incidents in 1868 when gunboat diplomacy was utilized in Yangchow and Taiwan to gain redress for damages of churches). In Cohen’s narrative, missionaries were a representation of foreign influence, and “the missionary remained the most prominent source of Sino-foreign friction in the Chinese interior right up to the end of the Ch’ing.”

However, Cohen neglects to see the details of missionary activities within the local society and cultures within China, since his focus is on the larger international picture.

While Cohen’s book looks at local affairs through an international lens, Suzanne W. Barnett and Fairbank’s book *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*

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6 Ibid, 273.
incorporates a variety of narratives that highlight areas where Christianity and the Chinese public intersected. Barnett and Fairbank’s book is a compilation of chapters written by a diverse group of scholars of Protestantism and Protestant missionaries in China. This work’s unifying methodology and focus is its utilization and emphasis on Protestant missionaries’ writings. As Fairbank notes, “[missionaries] were the principle if not the sole link between village China and small-town American. Only they sought to change Chinese minds and hearts.” These Protestant missionaries regarded Christianity as a major aspect of Western progress, albeit I would not extend this statement to all Protestant missionaries, as Mackay often disregarded the notion that the West was more advanced.

By bringing Christian missionaries’ writings and literature to the forefront of the book, the authors of this work address their concerns that scholarship had mostly neglected the impact of Christian missions, focusing more on commercial motivations of the West. Thus, the chapters in *Christianity in China* serve to challenge previous academic research that rejected acknowledging that Christian sources had value in American history and that the Chinese church had made contributions to local society during the late Qing Dynasty. In one of Bays’ chapters in the volume, Bays argued that Christian tracts, specifically focusing on William Milne’s *The Two Friends*, dominated the direction of Chinese language Christian literature and played a critical role in the spread of Christianity. Bays argued that production and distribution of Milne’s *The Two Friends* expanded the doctrinal and theological truths of mainstream Protestantism of the nineteenth-century to local Chinese communities. The tract, which was perceived as an extremely effective source of evangelization from the missionaries’ standpoint, presented these theological points through a dialogue between two Chinese friends – one Christian gentleman.

and one non-Christian gentleman. Throughout the dialogue that extended over many parts and editions, Milne’s tracts attempted to respect Chinese culture yet not avoiding presenting Christian concepts that conflicted with it. The tract made efforts to address the questions of the local Chinese and false rumors being spread about missionaries and Christians while also attempting to be culturally sensitive (i.e. mirror Chinese styles of conversation).

Many Protestant missionaries in China Proper had focused on the distribution of tracts as the main method of evangelization, as the tracts were popular for elites as well as individuals with sectarian backgrounds. Yet, tract production and distribution was not practiced by Protestant missionaries across the Qing Empire. Though Barnett and Fairbank’s volume includes authors that mention certain missionaries who had used various means to convey the gospel message to the Chinese that surrounded them, the work treats Qing China as an entity juxtaposed with the West. It does not make distinctions of the diverse conditions and cultures that existed in Qing China that would, accordingly, affect missionaries’ proselytization strategies. In frontier areas of Qing China, like Taiwan, the social, cultural, political, and economic situation was not only vastly different from the mainland but also within the island itself.

This thesis also aims to shed light on Taiwan as a frontier territory during the Qing Dynasty as well as the impact of Christianity (through Mackay) in Taiwan’s history. Directly placing her work within Qing history and Taiwan history, Emma Teng’s *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* addresses the unique position of Taiwan within the Qing Empire through the perspective of Qing frontier travelers, literati, and officials. Teng’s work is “a study of Qing colonial discourse,” as she argues that Taiwan was under China’s colonial project, and seeks to understand Chinese perceptions of this frontier island. Yet while the author challenges the traditional understanding of colonial
discourse, Teng also treats Taiwan as distinct society that has its own history. Teng contemplates “the shifting space occupied by Taiwan and its indigenous people in the imagined geography of the far-reaching and multiethnic Qing empire.”

In focusing on the shifting discourse of the Qing scholar-elites and administration, Teng exhibits that the Qing were led to reconsider Taiwan’s place in relation to the empire as well as the boundaries of Qing China.

Qing writers debated on the topic of the Taiwanese indigenes as a “separate breed” (“racialist discourse,” considering them as barbarians) or essentially Chinese (“ethical discourse,” drawing on their human characteristics and, therefore, ability to be integrated into Qing society). Essentially by the time Protestant missionaries started going to Taiwan, the Qing Dynasty was focusing on “assert[ing] Chinese sovereignty over the entire island of Taiwan, paving the way for Taiwan’s promotion to provincehood.”

The discourse made a distinction between “cooked” and “raw” aborigines. By deeming the plains aborigines as “cooked,” the Qing was expanding and extending their colonial and imperial project to incorporate these indigenous Taiwanese.

But not only were Qing officials using that vocabulary, but Mackay had also used the same terminology for aboriginals based on geographical location and receptiveness to Chinese culture. While Mackay claimed that the Pe-po-hoan (“barbarians of the plains”) and Sek-hoan (“ripe barbarians”) were more receptive and eager to hear the gospel message of the various Taiwanese indigenous tribes, Mackay made it an effort to proselytize to all the communities across northern Taiwan. Moreover, Mackay was using and creating maps of Taiwan that detailed areas where the savage aborigines lived, locations of treaty ports and larger cities, and geographical landmarks. As Teng argues that the Qing shifted their perceptions of the Taiwan as

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9 Ibid.
a result of its commercial and militaristic utility, Mackay also saw the value in his missionary work on the island because of Taiwan’s increasing importance for the Qing empire and Chinese, who he considered the “advancing race.” The missionary had considered the inhabitants of Taiwan as closely connected to the Chinese, though not exactly bearing an identical culture or values. Mackay kept notes of the unique communities, cultures, and attitudes of the different groups of people across northern Taiwan, which translated into the realization that he could not simply have a single proselytization strategy. As a result, he recognized his limitations as a single missionary amidst a very diverse society in Taiwan, and he sought to make native converts into missionaries and church leaders of their respective communities. By developing a strategy that would encompass all peoples and cultures of Taiwan, Mackay was not a part of the Qing state’s project of imposing a political or cultural identity on the populace. Rather, Mackay, though not denying their ethnic identities, prioritized his spiritual convictions of wanting the native converts to be unified as the body of Christ (Christians from all local churches uniting together) and place their identities in Christ.

From the point of view of Taiwan Studies, the narrative of Mackay’s missionary activities and the development of Presbyterian Christianity on the island is one aspect of the larger matter of the (formation of) Taiwanese identity. In Rubinstein’s *Taiwan: A New History*, he notes that one of the themes, albeit controversial, that runs through the assortment of chapters written by various scholars studying Taiwan is “the development of a unique Taiwanese identity. […] What Taiwanese themselves have increasingly begun to assert is that, over time, they developed their own forms of economic enterprise, social structure, and modes of religious and

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cultural experience that reflect the multifaceted influences of their historical experience.”

Nonetheless, Rubinstein confronts the issue surrounding Taiwan Studies by questioning the extent of the Taiwanese identity and culture, asking if it was a conglomeration of Chinese and southern Min cultures with Western and Japanese influences or if it was distinctly “Taiwanese.” One of the purposes of Rubinstein’s compilation, then, is to answer that sensitive question: “The central theme of this book is that Taiwan is Taiwan, linked to China, yet forged out of its own unique historical processes.”

In the chapter “From Treaty Ports to Provincial Status, 1860-1894,” Robert Gardella comments on the parallel direction of commercial and religious expansion on the island during the late nineteenth century. During the 1860s-70s, the inhabitants of Taiwan were resistant to the Western merchants as well as the Christian missionaries. But, attitudes of the locals had changed to where Mackay, who Gardella uses as an example, was treated “as an honored member of the community [Meng-chia]” despite being “maligned, jeered at, and abused” less than 2 decades earlier. With time, the spiritual, medical, educational, and other impacts that Mackay had on his converts as well as communities he had visited indirectly carried long-term reverberations that can be seen even in contemporary Taiwan, such as the Presbyterian church’s involvement with the Taiwanese independence movement.

Finally, within Christian missiology scholarship, scholars have studied the nature, components, and results of missionary work. In the past, missiology concerned only Christian missionary activity and was a study of practical theology – understanding the intersection of the gospel, culture, and missions. Missiology was mainly studied at seminaries and Christian colleges, and its scholarship especially did not find much headway in Chinese history. However,

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12 Ibid, 539.
13 Ibid, 169.
especially for scholars studying Christianity in China, looking into missiology scholarship has become a supplemental method of understanding and analyzing the conflicts, experiences, and interactions taking place during the evangelization process. In this thesis, I utilize Christian missiology scholarship to complement my analysis of Mackay’s development of proselytization strategies that allowed him to carry out successful missionary work.

A work that closely deals specifically with my own research is Clyde R. Forsberg’s *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada's First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872-1901)*, which is a collection of 7 papers that are focused on some aspect of Mackay and/or his missionary work in northern Taiwan. The compilation of articles on Mackay has an interdisciplinary approach and draws methodologies from history and missiology, comparative literature, dramaturgy, historiography and cultural studies, and religious studies. While a portion of the book does have a spread of obvious praise for the missionary, the authors focus on this single missionary is more than just a praise for his legacy in the mission field (i.e. building schools and hospitals). Forsberg collects the various narratives surrounding the missionary as a means to investigate the interconnected nature of the missionary’s personal life, conflicts and interactions with locals, his approach to missions, and his lasting impact on Taiwan. Forsberg also uses Mackay to push back against the post-colonial criticism of foreign missions and the study of missionaries. Forsberg argues that Mackay did not fall into the category of people who were racist and had the greater imperial project in his mind when evangelizing. Rather, Forsberg brings to attention the details of Mackay that proved that he resisted and rejected the cultural and political project of the West, like his opposition to the head tax for Chinese immigrants in Canada or his marriage to and establishing a family with Tiu-Chhang-mia, a Taiwanese woman.
In this book, each one of the chapters is an independent paper that, when brought together, attempts to paint a more comprehensive picture of Mackay and his missionary activities. However, the work lacks a cohesive narrative, which this thesis endeavors to provide.

In Forsberg’s volume, Marguerite Van Die’s essay “Growing Up Presbyterian in Victorian Canada: Childhood Influences and Faith Formation,” details Mackay’s youth and his spiritual growth to explain his missionary style as a “transmission of the Scottish and Canadian Presbyterian culture of his youth, but adapted to a Formosan or colonial Taiwanese context.”

Also drawing on Mackay’s personal life, Michael Stainton (in his “More Treasures Preserved Abroad: New Mackay Letters in the Presbyterian Archives”) exposes a new archive of letters that portrays Mackay’s private affairs and personality within the family, which are hardly depicted through his letters, diaries, or autobiography. Stainton links analysis of Mackay’s personal life to the possibilities of more deeply understanding Mackay’s ministry. The author argues that after Mackay became a husband and father, his ministry, which started with much independent resoluteness and charisma, gave way to a more routinized and administrative style, due to the experiences he had from the changes in his personal life. Yet I disagree with this stance, because Mackay was continuously unwavering throughout his ministry and even took his wife on his often dangerous travels to the different chapels and mission stations, which she was willing to accompany him on. Mackay did not neglect his familial duties and was loving towards his family, but he prioritized his calling as a missionary and cared greatly for his spiritual family. For Mackay, starting a family did not alter his convictions nor did it change his evangelization strategies or missions.

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Rohrer’s chapter “Putting Taiwan’s People in the Center of the Story: Reflections on the History of Christian Mission in Taiwan” addresses issues that he finds with scholarship on Christian foreign missions, namely what Christianity meant to the locals in the context they were living in. Rohrer utilizes the concept “bicuture,” defined as “a localized society in which people from different cultures relate to one another according to clearly defined social roles.” For the author, he sees Christian missions as a trigger to new bicutures. This understanding makes the influence two-way: that not only did Mackay shape the Taiwanese and converts but the converts and Taiwanese shaped Mackay and the development of his missions strategies. Thus, I agree with Rohrer’s understanding that the missionary is but one agent in the process of evangelization: “Without denying that conversion is an essentially religious phenomenon, we must remember that every missionary encounter is shaped by a complex interplay of social, political, psychological, and cultural factors. The missionary is only one among many variables at work in the process of conversion, and not necessarily the most important.” For Rohrer, understanding the different methods of preaching, rhetoric, and conducting education means more than understanding Mackay’s approaches to evangelization through teaching but understanding what the local preachers were preaching as well. Apart from Rohrer’s chapter providing more questions than answers, it falls short of a detailed discussion of the factors that contributed to the development of as well as the broader organizational structure of Mackay’s strategies, which this thesis provides.

Mary Goodwin’s chapter “Heroic Memoirs from a Hot Country: Taiwan Missionary Life Writing” draws on Comparative literature methodology to analyze Mackay’s publicity and

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16 Ibid, 46.
“heroism” through studying *From Far Formosa*, which she claims is a “heroic memoir.”

Regarding another analysis of Mackay’s public image, Llyn Scott’s *The Black Bearded Bible Man: Flagship Opera. Formosan Epic, Emblem, and Enigma* explores the fictional Taiwanese opera about Mackay and its significance to Taiwanese society – that Mackay was a combination of the “East” and the “West.” Forsberg also included his essay “Pan Celtic Anglo-Saxonism, the Polar Eden, and Crossing Racial Divides: The Interesting Case of George Leslie Mackay” to enhance the book with a narrative that speaks to Mackay’s scientific interests and studies, especially focusing on Mackay’s stance against Darwinism and support of the Polar Eden theory (where the Garden of Eden was originally located at the North Pole). By examining Mackay’s scientific education and knowledge, Forsberg explains Mackay’s many views on race – where he paid little thought to the East-West binary – and, ultimately, his missions. Finally, Hugo A. Meynell’s “Prolegomena to Missiology: Reflection on Religious and Political Differences” approaches Mackay’s faith and intellectual thoughts through a Religious Studies lens. The entire book serves more as a snapshot of different facets and parts of Mackay’s life and missions in Taiwan, and it minimally attempts to make an underlying narrative.

Nevertheless, Rohrer has also published a few other articles that productively combines analysis on Mackay’s personality and background with the socio-cultural contexts of Taiwan during the late Qing Dynasty. In his “Charisma in a Mission Context: The Case of George Leslie Mackay in Taiwan, 1872-1901,” which I will draw upon later in the thesis, Rohrer considers that it was both the charismatic personality of Mackay as well as the circumstances of the mission field that allowed Mackay to become so successful and respected. Rohrer challenged Max Weber’s dichotomy between charismatic and institutionalize leadership, by proving that the paradigm did not suit many of the notable Christian missionaries, like Mackay. Rohrer also noted

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that Mackay’s charisma was also socially constructed. By the end of the article, Rohrer suggested that Mackay’s chapel and service model as well as his methods and organization were based off of Chinese sects’ practices. Rohrer is convinced that Mackay’s charisma, the key to his success, was most significantly enhanced by his “conform[ity] to Taiwanese expectations and adapt[ation of] his actions to the cultural baseline.”¹⁸ However, as I argue, Mackay was successful because, with his convictions that missionaries needed to be familiar with the language and culture of the local society, he travelled around Taiwan to establish channels of communication and relationships with a variety of people in order to gain local converts and train them to become missionaries and church leaders. He was impacted by Taiwan’s socio-cultural circumstances but was still the chief decision maker in the process of organizing and shaping the Presbyterian missions in northern Taiwan.

While focusing entirely on Mackay and how his life, upbringing, education, and virtues influenced his missions strategies would not be unproductive, I hope to form a narrative that links Christian/Presbyterian missions on an international and local level, Mackay’s personality and background, and the multifaceted socio-cultural circumstances in Taiwan. This thesis provides an alternative look at Protestant missionary activities in Taiwan by analyzing Mackay’s life and convictions, such as his devotion to studying the Amoy dialect of Chinese and local cultures, and how it prompted him to develop his peripatetic lifestyle. Travelling became a necessary means to finding a place within communities spread across northern Taiwan and amongst an variety of people. Ultimately, his goal was to produce local churches led by a native ministry comprised of trained and devoted local converts. Mackay believed that the inhabitants

of Taiwan had the agency, over Western missionaries, to promulgate Christianity throughout the island and maintain it past his death.

**Sources**

In this thesis, I mainly utilize Western source materials to gather information that pushes beyond the traditional narratives of the Western missionary as an extension of his country’s imperial project or glorifications of the Western missionary for introducing forms of modernity into China, albeit these narratives are not entirely unsubstantiated. It was not only that missionaries were agents of change within the context in which they were located, but the locals to whom and environment in which the missionaries evangelized had agency as well. Through reading sources written by Western Protestant missionary, I approached my research questions with an understanding that there were multidirectional relations and influences between the missionaries, the people they were engaging with, and the space in which they lived.

Additionally, I use a portion of Mackay’s collection of Chinese language records of individuals baptized at each chapel: 馬偕洗禮簿 (Ma Xie Xi Li Bu “Mackay’s Baptism Register”). These records include the name of the chapel, details of the baptized individual (e.g. name or position if a name was not recorded, gender, age, and the date of their death, if available), and the dates of the baptisms. The sheet was divided mainly into two portions: the top register and bottom register, with the occasional vertical division for dates of baptisms. The upper register was reserved for the baptized individual’s name/position (mostly for officials), age when they were baptized, and gender. The lower register provided the optional information of when the individual had passed away. The documents represented the existence of an established
institution with regularly attending baptized Christian believers, whose numbers continued to grow throughout the years.

Utilizing Mackay’s personal writings, specifically his letters, diaries, and autobiography, I identify Mackay’s proselytization strategies and priorities while also tracing his personal beliefs regarding Christianity as well as missionary activities. It is through his letters that I was prompted to investigate how this particular missionary was successful in communicating the gospel, gaining converts, disciplining/cultivating local church leaders, and establishing churches and other institutions. Despite the clear obstacles and disadvantages that Mackay had during the beginning years of his missions abroad, Mackay’s detail-oriented, intentional/purpose-driven, stubborn, and bold nature (as displayed through his direct and enthusiastic writing style) allowed him to carry out his own convictions and mission. His autobiography also reveals a more comprehensive picture of Mackay’s internal thoughts, as he processes the ways in which he could connect with the locals of fairly different backgrounds within an unfamiliar setting.

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19 *From Far Formosa* was supposedly written by Mackay as an autobiography and guide, since all accounts and reflections are in the first person as well as the fact that the geographical and environmental maps and details were drawn and detailed by Mackay. However, it is noted (by editor MacDonald himself) that Reverend James A. MacDonald helped edit the book and Rev. W. S. McTavish, B.D. assisted Mackay in gathering materials. Graeme McDonald notes in her endnotes that the book was “actually written by James A. MacDonald, a small-town newspaper publisher, from notes, diaries, and reports which the missionary had placed at his disposal.” Although this may be true, especially since MacDonald himself interjects that “[Mackay] would rather face a heathen mob than write a chapter for a book,” the literary style and content is very similar to Mackay’s style and experiences. MacDonald may have compile the book’s contents or helped improve the writing, but the experiences, opinions, actions, and words are still all Mackay’s. Additionally, Mackay himself still had a very integral role in the organization of the work, as he made the ultimate decision, against the proposal of the editor and publishing company, to keep the early chapters on the “geological, zoological, botanical and ethnological history of the island” as main chapters instead of in the appendix. Not to mention, since his name was on the book, he wanted the content to reflect his actions, choices, thoughts, and experiences and not have someone else misconstrue his intentions and goals.

20 McDonald, *George Leslie Mackay*, 171.
Regarding Mackay’s diaries, the entries were less about personal reflections of the day or Mackay’s sentiments about certain issues or events that took place within that day. Instead, Mackay’s style of writing diary entries was very straightforward. Recounting the day, Mackay would write a detailed recapitulation of the itinerary of the day, including a combination of the following information: different times of the day as markers of their travel times and schedule (as specific as 1 P.M. to as general as “before day break”), the names of the locations they visited (recorded in Romanized colloquial Amoy-dialect of Chinese, a subset of the Minnan language), a description of the size of the audience (if there was one that convened), observations (closer to the scientific meaning) of the events that took place, a note of the administrative, training, and preaching responsibilities that were carried out, and reports of the people, geography, and/or cultural practices of newly visited places.\textsuperscript{23} The collection of his diary entries perfectly portrays his infatuation with travelling as a means to evangelizing as well as simultaneously understanding the diverse population and the physical and symbolic environment they lived in.

\textsuperscript{23} George Leslie Mackay, \textit{Mackay, January 8\textsuperscript{th} -16\textsuperscript{th}, 1888. Trip to Kavalan}. Diary Entry. Elder John Lai’s Archives, \textit{Dr. Mackay’s Letter and Diary}, http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-diary/1888.01.08-16.htm.
CHAPTER 2: Mackay and His Mission

Childhood and Theological Background

George Leslie Mackay was the youngest son (of six children) of immigrant parents (George Mackay and Helen Sutherland) who emigrated from Sutherlandshire, Scotland to Zorra, Canada as a result of the Highland Clearances, also referred to as “Sutherlandshire Clearances” by Mackay.\(^{24}\) The year before Mackay’s birth (1843), the Presbyterian congregation in Zorra, under the leadership of Reverend Donald McKenzie, was still associated with the Church of Scotland despite its geographical location of being in Canada. Then, the following year, there were religious tensions between different congregations with different theological beliefs in Canada, and there was a division within the Canadian church. With the religious changes of 1844, Rev. McKenzie led the Zorra congregation to join the Free Church, a group of believers who removed themselves from the Church of Scotland and integrated themselves into the Synod.

\(^{24}\) Mackay, From Far Formosa, 14.
\(^{25}\) The Highland Clearances are a much debated topic, since scholars have not agreed upon these clearances’ “causes, methods, and results.” However, it is important to contextualize Mackay’s parents’ situation as well as the environment in which Mackay grew up, influenced by the social and political experiences of his parents. The Highland Clearances were initiated, in part, because of the initiation of agricultural, economic, and social reconstruction projects defined by the term “improvement.” In the late 18th century, the first Duke and Duchess of Sutherland had started enforcing changes upon the landscape, as the land passed from families with farms to landowners that employed farm tenants for the production of wool. The Highlands were being reshaped for commercial purposes and economic gain for the higher classes; thus, those that had previously owned farms were evicted and their property confiscated. The first wave started around the 1780s and the second wave around the late 1820s. Mackay’s parents had been evicted from Sutherland, which is one of the counties in the Highlands of northern Scotland, during the second wave (since they arrived in Canada in 1830). Sutherland experienced the majority of the expulsions from the local wealthy landowners, especially as, by the second wave, the small tenants working on the land were being evicted. It seems that Mackay’s parents were in the latter case, as they were smaller tenants that were emigrating out of the Highland region altogether.\(^{26}\)

\(^{27}\) The Highland Clearances, Scottish History Society, http://scottishhistorysociety.com/learning-resources/the-highland-clearances/.
of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Amidst this period of religious turmoil, Mackay was born.

Mackay’s parents were amongst the many other Highland immigrants that had flocked to northern Canada, and after relocating, the community kept to their religious traditions. As an extension of the Mackay clan of Scotland, which had produced many ministers, this family also believed very strongly in Calvinist Presbyterianism. Thus, the Mackay family in Canada had very close associations and involvements with the Free Church. Within his household, Mackay remembered the daily routine of different Christian practices, including daily prayer and family worship. Especially influential in Mackay’s development within the Christian faith was Mackay’s mother, Helen. Helen continuously and patiently trained Mackay, as she taught the Westminster Short Catechism by heart and recited the Scottish Paraphrases (e.g. “While humble shepherds watched their flocks/ In Bethlehem’s plains by night […],” which recounts the birth of Jesus) to Mackay while he was still a child. Thus, his mother’s teachings, his father’s long-standing involvement as an elder in the Zorra congregation in the Free Church of Canada, and, as Mackay claims, his grandfather’s “martial soul [that] went into [his] blood” were factors in encouraging and developing Mackay’s passionate Christian convictions.

At the age of 10, Mackay decided to become a missionary, as inspired by the Free Church of Scotland missionary William C. Burns. Burns had travelled to Canada, including a visit to

28 William D. McIntosh, One Hundred Years in the Zorra Church (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1930), 110.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Rohrer, “The Legacy of George Leslie Mackay,” 222.
Zorra, to encourage people to go on missions, as he went to China under the sponsorship of the English Presbyterian Church.\textsuperscript{34} Mackay notes that “his name was cherished in the home, and something of his spirit touched [Mackay’s] boyish heart.”\textsuperscript{35} For Mackay, Burns was not solely a spiritually-charged figure, but, more importantly, he was a missionary that led by example and paved the way for Mackay’s mission (albeit in his own way). In fact, the Great Commission was so influential for Mackay, that, even during his time in Taiwan, he was firm in his belief that “we [Christian believers] are all missionaries, the sent ones of the King, and not our fields, but our faithfulness, matters.”\textsuperscript{36} With this determined, bordering obstinate, mindset of becoming a missionary, he received theological education at both Knox College in Toronto (1864-1867) and Princeton Seminary (1867-1870).

During his years of training and studying, Mackay gained knowledge in a variety of subjects apart from biblical theology. Mackay’s studies at Knox strongly influenced his scholastic interests and character as well as the informational requirements that he was to require of the native Taiwanese converts later in his mission. At Knox, the curriculum focused on “Scripture, biblical theology, and natural science as the essential elements of Christian higher education.”\textsuperscript{37} At Knox, students were taught that science should be used to support the Bible and that it was a means for evangelism, which would become an essential component of Mackay’s training for the native converts. While in the Princeton Theological Seminary for 3 years, Mackay was able to meet many of the missionaries and professors that were exceptionally influential in his growth in biblical knowledge as well as missiology. One important figure was Dr. Charles Hodge, who Mackay highly revered for his teaching and preaching style, which was

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Mackay, \textit{From Far Formosa}, 16.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 17.
\textsuperscript{37} Rohrer, “The Legacy of George Leslie Mackay,” 222.
filled with passion and spiritual power. It was “Dr. Charles Hodge who most deeply impressed himself on [Mackay’s] heart and life,” which would result in a preaching style that would equally impress the local peoples in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{38} He joined the Committee of Inquiry, “a student organization that investigated mission theories and sponsored visiting missionaries from around the world,” which allowed his inquisitive and committed nature to search for the best methods for proselytization.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Convictions and Mission}

Between his graduation from Princeton Seminary and his official ordination as a foreign missionary, Mackay went through a transitional time of working and continual learning. Mackay’s decision not to begin his missions abroad immediately after graduation was largely due to the reluctance and lack of enthusiasm from the Presbyterian Church in Canada as well as the Foreign Missions Committee (FMC) to send out foreign missionaries. Technically, it was the Presbyterian Church in Western Canada that was relatively slower in sending out missionaries, since the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Canada (also, Maritime Provinces) had sent missionaries out to “foreign” fields, which basically consisted of other territories within Canada (e.g. Indian territories).\textsuperscript{40} However, for both the Eastern and Western Presbyterian churches, Mackay was the first foreign missionary on the whole that would travel outside Canada under the name and support of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. Thus, the Canadian Presbyterian Church in Canada, especially in Western Canada, had not prioritized foreign missions as had other countries during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{38} Mackay, \textit{From Far Formosa}, 18.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} R.P. Mackay, \textit{Life of George Leslie Mackay}, 7.
Consequently, Mackay spent the next year (summer 1870-summer 1871) working at mission stations in Canada and, a few months later, traveling to Edinburgh (Scotland) to find his former professor Dr. Alexander Duff. Duff became a sort of advisor for Mackay, and he took courses on Indian cultural studies, Brahmanism and Buddhism, and the Hindi language, since he was contemplating making India his mission field.41 After the end of the school year in March of 1871, Mackay decided to visit the Scottish Highlands, the place of his parents’ birth and the roots of his kinfolk. During that time, he was still waiting to hear back on his appeal to the FMC about being sent abroad to be a foreign missionary. Prior to leaving Canada, with the encouragement from the convener of the FMC, Reverend Professor MacLaren, Mackay expressed his personal desire and convictions of being “sent as a missionary to the heathen.” However, the response of the FMC was dismissive:

“[…] one member looked [Mackay] in the face and said, ‘Mr. Mackay, you had better wait a few years.’ Another argued for delay: ‘As he is going to Scotland, let him go, and on his return we can think over the matter for a year or two.’ A third suggested Madagascar as a field for future consideration.”42

Thus, by the spring of 1871, a little less than a year after his meeting with the committee, he was getting anxious about his future plans. His strong resolution to go abroad as a foreign missionary (preferably to Asia) prompted him to consider dropping his service to the Canadian Presbyterian church in hopes of getting more support from the Scottish or American Presbyterian churches, an alternative plan of which he had informed Rev. MacLaren.

Finally, in April of that year, Mackay received news from the FMC conveyed in Rev. MacLaren’s letter that the FMC had officially decided to accept Mackay as their first foreign

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41 Mackay, From Far Formosa, 20.
42 Ibid, 19.
missionary, and the FMC would recommend his service in China to the General Assembly of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. According Mackay scholar Graeme McDonald, it was Rev. MacLaren, who was in support of Mackay going on missions, that took matters into his own hand and authoritatively told a member of the FMC, Reverend Donald MacKay, to put all costs of Mackay’s first year in China under the account of his own congregation. She states that because of that, the FMC was much more willing to approve Mackay’s trip and recommend it to the General Assembly.  

With that recommendation, which suggested three possible mission fields of India, the New Hebrides (an archipelago off of western Scotland), and China, Mackay met before the General Assembly in June to present his case. The General Assembly accepted his supplication and decided that he would go to China. He was then accepted and spent the summer soliciting monetary, emotional, and prayer support from the different Canadian congregations, but Mackay was met with varying responses of a lack of interest, outright negative opinions, as well as encouragement. However, a notable characteristic of Mackay is his resilience, perseverance, and fervor in completing what he has set his mind and heart on, confident that he was doing God’s work. Despite the discouraging comments from within the Canadian Presbyterian Church, which should have been a source of support as his home church, Mackay was not deterred. This whole process reinforced Mackay’s independent nature and to be headstrong despite opposition, which was important for his pioneering work within Northern

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43 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 134.
44 Mackay, From Far Formosa, 23.
45 R. P. Mackay describes the stark contrast of the attitude of Mackay to that of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in his biography of G.L. Mackay: “After his appointment he visited many congregations and felt the chill; it was to his ardent spirit like a cold plunge. They called him an excited young man; he called them ‘the ice age’ of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.”
46 R.P. Mackay, Life of George Leslie Mackay, 8.
Taiwan as well as his communication with the FMC and Canadian Presbyterian Church during his 26 years as a foreign missionary.

Prior to leaving Canada for his long journey to China, even though the actual location for his missions was not yet determined, Mackay had already been thinking of the ways in which he would be proselytizing to the peoples in China. Despite not knowing the conditions he would be faced with, he desired that the mission stations and churches set up there would have certain characteristics, and the growth of his missions would have a certain trajectory. His ultimate goal for China was “the creation of a self-supporting and self-sufficient native church.” This meant that Mackay did not want mission stations and churches that were led by Western missionaries, as was practiced by the English Presbyterian missionaries in Southern Taiwan. He desired to see local pastors with local converts in a church spiritually and physically built by locals from the bottom up (albeit with his guidance and training). From 1872 and throughout the span of the rest of his life doing missions in Northern Taiwan, Mackay was dedicated to this vision, faithful to his beliefs, persevering, and passionate to see the locals convert to Christianity.

With this strong-minded kind of mentality, Mackay went on his journey to China, stopping at different cities to meet with different acquaintances and missionaries, like a fellow Princeton friend in Hong Kong and the English Presbyterian missionaries in China and Southern Taiwan. Even though he saw what the missionaries were doing in China and Taiwan already, he was not predisposed to utilizing their methods. For instance, the English Presbyterians’ church planting model, or the specific combination of practices and methods involved in starting a church, in Southern Taiwan was to develop a church in depth rather than concerning itself with breadth. On the other hand, Mackay prioritized preaching the gospel to as many people as possible and considered local converts to be an integral and necessary tool in the proselytization

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47 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 143.
process. Hence, Mackay let qualified and trained natives become preachers at locations he deemed suitable for building a chapel.

During his own travels around Northern Taiwan as well as through his own experiences with different people and situations, Mackay developed what he believed to be the most effective strategy to evangelize to the locals, understanding that there was a diversity of peoples, languages, and cultures there. For Mackay, having a firm grasp of the language and culture in the mission field was an essential means to preach the gospel effectively. Mackay believed that the Christian faith was applicable on a personal level to individuals of any background, but the missionary’s duty was to connect to the people on a common ground, especially through their cultural understanding and worldview. In this way, Mackay confidently approached locals from various backgrounds within different spaces to develop relationships with them that would allow them to hear the gospel message and for him to greater understand their situation.

His determination to spread Christianity in Northern Taiwan was evidenced by the fact that Mackay married a local Taiwanese woman Tui Chhang Mia (also known as Minnie and 張聰明 Zhang Congming), who would be able to assist him in his missionary activities. (Her roles will be discussed later in this thesis.) More than his own love for her, Mackay was much more concerned about finding “a Chinese lady to become my help mate and labor for these perishing thousands […] my great motive in this is TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN SAVING MORE SOULS [emphasis in original].” Primarily, as demonstrated through his strategies for proselytization as well as training converts, Mackay recognized that he could not succeed alone and had to rely upon the assistance of native converts, who understood their own culture. As Rohrer notes, Mackay’s persona was a key factor in the growth of Christianity in Northern

48 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 151-152.
Taiwan. “Some of the most successful Christian missionary movements have been historically linked to individuals who exercised charismatic authority, and who occupied a mediating position between larger transnational religious institutions and new local communities of converts.”

But Mackay’s success was the result of more than the charm of his character.

**Reputation in Canada: Relationship with the Foreign Missions Council and Canadian Presbyterian Church**

With Mackay’s seemingly free reign and jurisdiction over his missionary strategies and activities, the FMC and Canadian Presbyterian Church (and those associated with these two institutions) had criticism and varying degrees of discontent during the early years of the mission, with very few members offering consistent support for him. Even by taking into account only his personality as known through hearsay, other Canadian Presbyterian missionaries seeking for opportunities to go abroad and serve were unwilling to serve with him because of his apparently difficult personality, an extension and reflection of the FMC’s outlook as well. There were many of his acquaintances who respected his successes with the local Taiwanese, but they “found him to be aloof, private, eccentric, and given to extreme outbursts of anger.”

Mackay was perceived to be incompatible in working with other missionaries and Christian organizations due to his stubbornness in his decisions and convictions as well as lack of regard for the FMC’s authority.

Many narratives from Canadian sources about Mackay’s character highlight his difficult personality and the bitter conflicts that occurred between Mackay and the FMC but overlook the possible reasons for his persistence. As mentioned above, many felt that Mackay had established

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50 Ibid, 229.
for himself as the highest authority. Mackay was the one deciding who would be baptized, who could become his student and eventually trained to be a native preacher, and what the qualifications were. Despite the large audience listening to his messages and the great number of converts that attended the service on Sundays, Mackay’s standards for baptism were still high. As reflected in his baptismal records, Mackay would wait for a number of people to be baptized at one time. Yet, Mackay never baptized scores of villagers or locals, since he made a distinction between converts and baptized members, reserving baptism for converts that had confessed their faith in addition to passing an assessment of their biblical and theological knowledge.

The FMC was the symbolic, religious, and institutional authority for Canadian Presbyterian foreign missionaries, and the FMC was the council that ordained and supported missionaries abroad. With Mackay, who was the Canadian Presbyterian Church’s first overseas missionary, the FMC felt an anxiety and discontentment from Mackay’s disregard for their ultimate authority.

The conflict with the church was not necessarily because the FMC had issues with Mackay’s strategies in and of themselves, since distributing medicine, for instance, was a common tool for evangelization. Not to mention, the FMC and Mackay’s ultimate goal was the same, as Jesus instructed with the Great Commission: “‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’”\(^{51}\) Rather, the conflict arose from the power struggle created by Mackay’s rejection of the FMC’s suggestions and opinions, if they were not in line with Mackay’s own convictions regarding the supreme importance of mastering the languages and cultures of the local populations. One major disagreement between the FMC and Mackay concerned missionaries sent to help Mackay in Taiwan. In the first decade of his mission in Northern Taiwan, his letters addressed to Rev. MacLaren or the FMC repeatedly asked for more

\(^{51}\) Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 135.
workers and helpers in the mission field. Though not asking for missionaries to work specifically with him, Mackay did imply that he was disappointed that the FMC was not sending people to help with the mission, especially since the environment was not very receptive during the first few years he was there. He was not able to obtain assistants for several reasons. Apart from the fact that there was a sort of indifference to missions in East Asia amongst members of the FMC and Presbyterian Church in Canada at the time, Mackay’s own expectations and standards for suitable co-workers were also extremely high, and other missionaries were fearful of having to work under Mackay’s instruction. Dr. James Fraser and Rev. K.F. Junor had worked with Mackay before, and the FMC had thought of sending these two men back to Taiwan. However, “in both cases Mackay said that no one in Formosa thought they should return and that if they did he would resign.” The biggest issue with these two was that neither of them had a good grasp of the Amoy dialect language or the knowledge of the best practices of how to engage with the local Taiwanese or evangelize to them.

It was of utmost importance for Mackay that foreign missionaries learn the language of the people and understand the socio-cultural, political, religious, and even geographical environment of the mission field in order for them to proselytize effectively to the local peoples. In the first few months of arriving in Taiwan, when he accompanied the English Presbyterians established in the southern part of the island, Mackay’s primary task was learning and practicing Chinese, more specifically the Amoy dialect, a subset of the Southern Fujianese language. Even when left on his own when starting in Northern Taiwan, Mackay spent his days learning the language from his Chinese servant. When the servant got tired of being around Mackay, Mackay tried to engage in conversation and learn the language from local herd boys during the day and study at night. Within 5 months of studying, he had mastered the language to the point where he

52 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 162.
could deliver his first sermon in that dialect. With this understanding of his own dedication to learning the Amoy dialect, it’s no wonder Mackay had the same expectations for foreign missionaries sent to work with (or more so under) him.

From the perspective of the FMC and other missionaries, Mackay just did not want to work with others. However, his harsh attitude towards the other missionaries was mostly because Mackay felt like they were not qualified enough, and he became especially annoyed when many of the missionaries did not bother to improve their language (at least to Mackay’s standards) or engage with other communities within Northern Taiwan. As R.P. Mackay wrote in his biography of George Leslie Mackay, “Mackay believed that any missionary unwilling to undergo the labor of acquiring the language is a doubtful appointment.”

Mackay placed as much of a burden on himself to learn as much of the language as he could in a short amount of time as other missionaries who would come to work with him.

Along that same line of thought, Mackay, with influence from his mentors from seminary, regarded building up a native clergy and ministry as the most important task, because “China must be converted by her own sons.” This conviction of Mackay’s is logical in light of the value Mackay placed on knowledge of language and culture in proselytization. If Mackay was unsatisfied with other foreign missionaries, who would better know the language and culture than the local Taiwanese themselves? For the aboriginal Taiwanese tribes, Mackay saw the importance of Christians to grow there through a ministry of those particular tribes; for the Hakka living in Taiwan, Mackay had a vision for a Hakka church with a Hakka preacher; in larger cities, Mackay sought literati and gentry that became converts, who had intellectual proficiency to engage with scholastic and religious debates, to serve as church leaders of Hoklo.

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and increasingly Han Chinese communities. Thus, Mackay invested all of his time and energy during his time as a missionary to training and gaining native converts.

Additionally, because Mackay had the mission to establish a network of churches headed by, managed, and supported by native Christians, Mackay prioritized the care for and training of the local converts as well as the ceaseless attention for the unbelieving locals. Consequently, the foreign missionaries that had come to Northern Taiwan expecting to help with the proselytization and work alongside Mackay often times became disillusioned. Dr. Fraser and his wife, Jennie Fraser, portray an accurate example of Mackay’s low opinion about other missionaries due to his passion and whole-hearted dedication to converting the non-believing people living in Taiwan.

The Fraser couple arrived in Tamsui in 1874 and “soon found themselves marginalized from the actual life of the community, [as] Mackay [left] them alone in Tamsui to learn for themselves the language and to establish their own roles.”55 For Mackay, his time and energy was better spent proselytizing to the “lost souls,” learning more of the environment and culture he was living in, and traveling to other areas of Northern Taiwan. He did not have the patience or time to spend on training other foreign missionaries, who he though should have come more prepared or learn the hard way as he did. Moreover, since he already believed that it was more effective for the local Taiwanese Christians to share the gospel and preach to the other local Taiwanese, Mackay did not think it was necessary to be bothered by the other missionaries. Not to mention that “Mackay considered the Frasers, who had small children, a major nuisance.”56

With the entrance of the Frasers, Mackay also had to deal more with FMC, whose suggestions had become instructions and demands, since Mackay was in charge of matters involving the Frasers. Thus, the FMC “instructed him to build a Western-style home for the couple, to give up

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56 Ibid.
his ill-conceived efforts to go native, and to lodge with the Frasers until a ‘charming’ Canadian lady could be sent out to share his work.”

Understanding Mackay’s personality, these requests seemed preposterous, yet, the FMC was trying to rein in Mackay through the Frasers and help him regain his “sanity.”

His stubbornness would not have caused a problem had he not been opposing the requests, decisions, and preferred methods of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. As Rohrer notes, “Mackay always exhibited the characteristics of a religious dissenter who places his own sense of God’s will ahead of denominational loyalty.” With his emphasis on native leaders in the church, Mackay not only “demanded complete authority to select, train, and supervise all Taiwanese preachers without outside interference,” but he also “made it clear that any other missionaries would serve under the Taiwanese leaders, whom he had trained.” Evidently, he considered his own conviction that only the natives could most successfully evangelize to their own folks and that the local preachers and laypeople had greater capabilities and potential than the Canadian missionaries that the FMC had deemed qualified.

Initially, the FMC was discontented and concerned with the attitude of their first foreign missionary. It was troubled by the prospect of Mackay becoming a negative precedent that challenged the FMC’s authority. Many times, Mackay had not only pushed the patience and boundaries of the FMC with his obdurate insistence on the aptness of his own methods but also had the audacity to threaten the FMC with his resignation if they would not meet his demands (or if they would not stop pestering him with their own demands). As previously mentioned, even prior to his initiation as a foreign missionary, Mackay was already threatening disservice with the FMC and connections to Canada (when he did not hear an acceptance from them). One of the

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid, 222.
areas, apart from issues regarding foreign missionaries and having a more Western-style approach to evangelism, that the FMC and Mackay had many conflicts was his common request for money for himself and for the costs of missionary activities (like a medical clinic and chapel). Through his letters, one can see that he was very judicious in asking for money and including for what purposes they would be used. However, since there was not much financial support coming in from the Canadian institutions at first, Mackay often asked a fellow supporter from London for a fixed amount of financial aid: “Again I draw on Mr. Matheson, London, for £103 3s. 6d., i.e. £51 11s. 9d. for salary, and the same for mission expenses. I do not use one cent unless I consider it absolutely necessary.” Mackay would write these kinds of letter as a method to shame the FMC for not giving funding to Mackay, as he was actually sent out as a missionary from FMC of Canada, and for him having to resort to the English Presbyterian Church or other sources: “I am sure the Church in my beloved Canada will not see the cause suffering for lack of funds.” Within 1874 alone, he had written 3 letters to Mr. Reid and the FMC requesting money and had already asked Mr. Matheson on those 3 separate occasions. Nevertheless, as a result of Mackay’s refusal to listen to the FMC, it is no wonder the organization was hesitant to fully support him.

Despite all the unease he brewed, during his time as a missionary, Mackay was actually able to avoid getting in serious trouble or punishment with the FMC because of his respectable successes with conversions of the local Taiwanese as well as the steadily increasing number of chapels he was able to establish. Especially after his home visit during his first furlough in 1880,
which he had vehemently tried to get out of, he gained a lot more support and monetary contributions, making it even more difficult for the FMC to have power over him. Nearing the end of his life and missions in Taiwan, the FMC had come to recognize his accomplishments, and, in 1894, the FMC collectively elected him as Moderator of the General Assembly – the highest position within the Canadian Church (despite the fact that he had never been to a General Assembly meeting). Both the FMC and general Presbyterian Christian populace respected him and popularized him, calling him “a great missionary pioneer – the famous ‘Mackay of Formosa.’” In the end, it was the positive results and lasting impact of the Presbyterian Christian community in Northern Taiwan that bore the greatest witness to Mackay’s efforts and effective strategies.

63 John C. Walker, “The Early History of the Presbyterian Church in Western Canada From the Earliest Times to the Year 1881” (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1928), 97.
CHAPTER 3: Humanitarian and Spatially-Driven Proselytization Strategies

In order to understand the different strategies that Mackay had utilized and the results that stemmed from them, I want to highlight the agency of both Mackay (as an individual and a missionary) as well as the Taiwanese (or locals living in Taiwan). Avoiding the overemphasis and focus on the missionary as the sole agent of change in Taiwan, Rohrer’s concept of “biculture” demonstrates the hybridity of the influences of both cultures (of the missionary and local communities). A biculture emerges when there is a culture (e.g. the Christian Presbyterian faith) that seeks to be introduced to and integrated into an existing society or community with its own culture, which may incorporate other cultures and/or subcultures. As these “cross-cultural innovators engage the local people, they trigger diverse reactions, often reflecting existing tensions and conflicting interests within society. Over time some people choose to embrace the innovation (in this case missionary teaching), thus bringing into existence a new type of community that is composed of people from two or more different cultures.”

Though Rohrer seeks to understand the Taiwanese converts’ experiences and the elements of Mackay’s training and preaching that native pastors’ implemented into their native ministry, he utilizes the study of Christian missions and missionaries (specifically, Mackay and his missionary activity) to demonstrate his points.

Despite the ideality of having equal amounts of the impact from both sides of this “place of exchange between two worlds,” Mackay’s dominant character had an inarguably significant influence on Christian/Presbyterian missions, converts, and any locals that came into contact with him in northern Taiwan. Not discounting the significance of the local environment and

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64 Rohrer, “Putting Taiwan’s People in the Center of the Story,” 47.
65 Ibid, 48.
66 Ibid.
culture, Mackay was still the overriding figure making the decisions, training native converts to be effective pastors, engaging in dialogue with people from local herd boys to officials (including Liu Mingchuan, the first provincial governor of the Taiwan Province in 1887). While the context of his missions unquestionably shaped his strategic development, Mackay is a peculiar case of a charismatic spiritual/religious leader who prompted a relatively swift expansion of Christianity in spite of the conditions he was placed in.

In an earlier article, Rohrer points out that many successful Christian missionaries, like Mackay, were individuals “who exercised charismatic authority, and who occupied a mediating position between larger transnational religious institutions and new local communities of converts.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mackay had defied the authority of the FMC and neglected to follow essentially any of the administrative decisions, especially when being financially and institutionally supported by them. The FMC in Toronto “repeatedly urged Mackay to accept and expanded [foreign] missionary presence and to establish formal Presbyterian government among the Taiwanese Christians.” However, because of Mackay’s own convictions of the supremacy of language and culture in the process of transmitting the Christian faith to the locals in Taiwan, which affirmed for Mackay the necessity of the nurturing of a native clergy and church-based Christian communities, Mackay refused to allow the FMC to establish institutional control over the (or more fittingly, his) missions in northern Taiwan. Hence, though there is a biculture that was created, Mackay’s personality and leadership played a great role in shaping the direction of his missionary activities and the growth of Christianity in Taiwan.

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67 Rohrer, “Charisma in a Mission Context,” 227
68 Ibid, 230.
Therefore, these next two chapters demonstrate the ways in which these meeting places of communication and relationships between different peoples develop. This chapter will explore the ways Mackay uniquely utilized humanitarian efforts as well as redefined pre-existing venues of communication within the public and private aspects of local lives that gained him a wider range of visibility, which ultimately helped him establish his mission.

**Mackay’s Utilization of Medicine and Medical and Dental Services**

Missionaries for countless of decades have been utilizing humanitarian efforts, especially through provision of medicine or medical services, as a means of reaching out to the local community as a demonstration of good will and cordiality. The English Presbyterians in southern Taiwan had also been providing medical services, as missionaries like Reverend Ritchie in Tacao (modern-day Kaohsiung 高雄) and Dr. Dickson and Mr. Campbell in Taiwanfu (modern-day Tainan 台南) had established hospitals in these major cities. Therefore, Mackay’s decision to proselytize with the facilitation of humanitarian efforts was not what made him distinct from the English Presbyterians or what made the FMC anxious. In actuality, this evangelization strategy that Mackay utilized was probably one of the more conventional means of evangelizing. Rather, it was Mackay’s autonomy in making decisions regarding his missions that distinguished him from his contemporaries. When Mackay started his missionary activity with the English Presbyterians for the first couple of months in southern Taiwan, he had noted he “expect[ed] to begin the study of the language in the beginning of the week, and to attend the hospital as often as convenient.”

English Presbyterians: Mackay prioritized learning the language, yet he also participated in providing medical assistance and recognized the importance of such duties. Thus, while he engaged in humanitarian efforts that drew people to the English Presbyterian missions, Mackay’s immediate objective during the beginning of his own missions was to gain knowledge of the language, which even exceeded the importance of going to the hospital.

While other missionaries, especially in China Proper, and missionary institutions had developed competitive or disapproving attitudes towards other missionaries and their respective denominations, Mackay largely removed himself from the politics between different religious institutions while also establishing a clear sense of distinctness. In his autobiography, Mackay notes:

> No two missions [the Canadian Presbyterians and English Presbyterians] could possibly be more friendly; and although we have not touched each other except remotely, and although our methods of work differ very materially, we are “one in hope and doctrine, one in charity.” They have a larger foreign staff, while we throw greater emphasis on a native ministry; but God has no fixed method by which his servants must work, and each according to his ability and his circumstances must serve our common Master.\(^{70}\)

Mackay’s observation of the disparity between the missions’ strategies and priorities should be brought to light, as it bears on the concern of the FMC during the nascent of Mackay’s missions in northern Taiwan—Mackay’s fixation with a native ministry. Thus, ultimately, the evangelization strategies that Mackay spent his time on during his stay in Taiwan were for the purpose of gaining a diverse group of converts and, ultimately, church leaders.

In terms of medical missionary practices, Mackay integrated medicine and medical services into his proselytization strategies. He utilized his medical knowledge and rudimentary

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\(^{70}\) Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 324-325.
skills to diagnose people’s illnesses, dispense medicine, and carry out the necessary medical procedures, if necessary. Yet Mackay did not have medical degree, medical certificate, or any training accredited by a medical institution. Rather, Mackay’s medical knowledge came from the common volumes of *materia medica*, a collection of frequent diseases and bodily issues that an individual could refer to in order to diagnose and treat oneself.71 This volume of medical information was widely available in Canada, and was a self-help publication for poor families that could not afford to see doctors for every ailment that needed attention. In the rural households of Upper Canada, Mackay had gotten his hands on a copy (plausibly owned by his family). From his teenage years, when he had already committed to becoming a missionary, he began to study the *materia medica* as a tool to help him evangelize abroad. Mackay did not see the necessity of a formal medical education, but he saw the importance of having medical knowledge and was a man of books. Thus, in addition to studying *materia medica*, he studied books on anatomy and physiology.

In the environment that Mackay grew up in, trained doctors were not the only practicing medical personnel; Canadians were also supplemented by various other methods of healing – the largest group being the Eclectics, “medical pragmatists who freely used whatever concepts and therapies seemed to achieve practical results.”73 This eclectic style of medical practice is very

71 *Materia medica* was a volume compiled by Frederick Porter Smith, “a British medical missionary in Central China.” He had included both “common western drugs such as Quinine, but primarily focused upon traditional Chinese herbal remedies that could be secured readily by missionaries in local shops.”72 One aspect that Rohrer did not include in his analysis on Mackay’s ministry in Taiwan was the connection between the production of *materia medica* and the usage/consumption of the volume in Canada. It is interesting to ponder the methods of distribution, but these questions go beyond the scope of my thesis. Rather, during the 19th century in Canada, there was an increase in self-help medical literature, which is an environment in which Smith’s work would be welcomed. For Mackay, he considered this work, written through experiences by a missionary from the mission field, a valuable resource for his own missions in the future.

72 Rohrer, “Putting Taiwan’s People in the Center of the Story,” 52.
73 Ibid.
similar to Mackay’s own methods, as he saw medicine and healing as a practical (and humanitarian) means to the greater goal of preaching the gospel to the locals to save them spiritual suffering and not just physical suffering. Mackay would often first take care of people’s physical condition in order to soften their hearts and attitudes towards him (since he was often labeled as the “Barbarian”) and then preach.

In January of 1875, during a Daoist celebration of sacrifice to “Giok-hong Siong-to,” or “Pearly Emperor, Supreme Ruler” (玉皇上帝 yuhuang shangdi), Mackay had started to preach in the house in which he was dwelling at Sin-tiam (新店 Xindian). Amidst the squeals and cries of hundreds of animals being sacrificed, the locals had gathered in the house as well as on the streets out of curiosity. At one point, there was a man who “struck a little boy with a piece of iron on the head; the blood flowed in a stream. The crowd withdrew a few yards and left the poor little fellow crying, covered over with blood.” In that moment, Mackay took the opportunity to dress his wound, put in stitches (3), and bind up the affected area before taking his leave from the situation. Through this instance, Mackay’s compassion for the local people was represented through the medical work he practiced, and it did not go unnoticed, as the local men had approached Mackay to thank him. The medical attention Mackay gave to the boy had began to change the reputation of the missionary in the minds of the locals. Moreover, moments later, a “poor old man was severely injured from falling on a heap of stones,” and was carried to Mackay to be treated. After taking care of the injury, Mackay began to preach, and he noticed a different attitude than before – markedly, the locals were attentive and lacked the resentment that Mackay had seen earlier. During that service, a few individuals had even approached Mackay to

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75 Ibid.
“worship the true God.” Though Mackay questioned the conversion of these individuals, leaving the judgment to God, he rejoiced in the simple opportunity to preach to a non-threatening and large audience. (In the next couple of sections, I will go into the details of the ways in which Mackay’s medical work helped him gain greater access to various individuals and, eventually, a broader range of converts.) In a sense, his medical work in the town was a platform on which he could perform as someone who could heal the physical body, and he simultaneously used that platform to preach the Christian faith and present himself as an individual who lives it out. Mackay’s use of medicine and medical practices were a practical method for him to gain (positive) awareness to the locals and soften the hearts of the locals so he could preach to them.

Additionally, Mackay was well-known around the island for his dental procedures, which only consisted of pulling out locals’ teeth with his forceps. His rudimentary dental skills were insufficient for Western standards, but, for the locals on the island, his procedures were sought after for many reasons. For one, a portion of individuals on the island had the habit of chewing betel nut and cigar-smoking, which slowly affected their teeth to the point of decay. For them, mostly from aboriginal tribes or lower classes, this was a very practical means of immediate relief, as Mackay (and students) could pull teeth at any location. On the other hand, the majority of people sought out Mackay’s simple dentistry because of toothache, one of the symptoms of malarial fever, which was common in the humid and disease-prone environment of Taiwan. Additionally, the dental procedures utilized by the natives were both “crude and cruel. Sometimes the offending tooth is pulled with a strong string, or pried out with the blade of a pair of scissors […] Jaw-breaking, extensive hemorrhaging, fainting, and even death frequently result

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76 Ibid.
from the barbarous treatment." Thus, Mackay’s dental practices found much use for the distraught and sick peoples spread across the island.

In Rohrer’s article on Mackay as a charismatic spiritual leader, he notes that “tooth extraction became the special trademark of his movement, with Mackay on some days publicly extracting as many as one hundred teeth.” There was the general statistic that he had extracted around 40,000 teeth in his lifetime and during his missions in Taiwan. This number, though seemingly exaggerated, is plausible, as lay dentistry became a routine part of his travels and was closely integrated into his evangelization strategy. Mackay found that his teeth extraction practices attracted attention from a great number of people who were suffering, and the relief his patients felt afterwards won him an audience willing to listen to him preach his message. Despite the fact that others in the foreign community had thought his method as strange and unconventional, “he had the courage to be odd, and the results justified the method.” As mentioned earlier, medical services were a practical tool that Mackay utilized to facilitate his proselytization. Similarly, his amateur dentistry work was a tool that Mackay realized could address a widespread need. And so, he included his makeshift dental procedures into his evangelization strategy.

For his students, Mackay required them to receive medical and dental training from him, so that they would understand the heart and reasons behind providing these services. Mackay had a curriculum of different subjects that he wanted his students to know in preparation for being a church leader in one of the chapels that was established or would be set up in the future. Amidst lessons in church history, theology, biology, geography, and astronomy, Mackay had spent a

80 Ibid, 47.
good amount of time instructing his students with “Materia Medica of the most useful medicines,” physiology, anatomy, and basic surgical techniques.\textsuperscript{81}\textsuperscript{82} Even though Mackay well-understood the dangers, criticisms, and plausibility of being associated with quackery, especially since he was never formally trained in medicine, he still wanted to train his students to take care of the medical needs at the various stations spread across northern Taiwan in his stead while he was travelling. He defended his position on his teeth-extracting ministry (and his medical practices as well) by drawing on the authority of Jesus:

Perhaps some dear aged Christian in Canada will say, “Extracting teeth is not preaching the Gospel.” I reply, it is! It is relieving human misery, and thus it is “doing good.” I recognise [sic] only Christ Jesus as my Master; so that if I can in some humble means endeavour to follow His steps who went about “healing all manner of diseases,” I will

\textsuperscript{81} In Mackay’s diary entry from February 10-16, 1873, Mackay recounted the schedule of his teachings to the 5 converts who became his first students. These 5 had just been baptized on February 9\textsuperscript{th}. On Monday, Mackay had his students wake early to start studying the Bible during the day; during the night, they dissected “parts of goats, hens etc.” before sleeping late at night. On Tuesday, they studied the Bible as well as church history during the day, and medicine at night. On Wednesday, it was studying the Bible (the Epistles and Christ’s life) while also medically caring for some people, and physiology at night. On Thursday, they studied from the Bible (Genesis and Timothy) during the day, and, at night, church history and dissecting pigs’ lungs. On Friday, Mackay taught from the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, and geography, astronomy, and church history at night. On Saturday, it was an explanation of the Lord’s Supper, and then the rest of the day was spent in “long & careful Review which lasted till near Midnight.” And on Sunday, he preached at noon—surprisingly in English, since he had previously preached in Chinese—and had communion in the afternoon with the 5 converts who were baptized. Within one week, he had spent the large majority of his time focused on training his students in subject matters of both Christianity as well as a wide range of sciences. This one week was an intense period of studying, which mirrors Mackay’s own enthusiasm for learning as well as his conviction of the effectiveness of his proselytization strategies. He had taught about creation in Genesis during this initial training period, because he believed that demonstrating God’s design and the natural world to his disciples was a clear way of confirm the existence of God, which he hoped would translate to the locals’. However, his methods of training his students were different than the strategies he developed to more effectively proselytize to the locals’.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{82} George Leslie Mackay, \textit{Lords Supper. The First Time}. Diary Entry. Elder John Lai’s Archives, \textit{Dr. Mackay’s Letter and Diary}, \texttt{http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-diary/1873.02.10-16.htm}. 
rejoice and care little about the world and its judgment. It is a glorious thought that we have only to labour to please Jesus – not men.\textsuperscript{83}

During the time of his peripatetic school, where he would bring the batches of students with him in his travels for evangelization, Mackay’s students would receive applied training in dental, medical, and spiritual work. He trained the students to become helpers and future preachers, and each of these positions required knowledge of medicine, medical practices, and dental procedures.

Nonetheless, he did respect and value trained, professional doctors and utilized a few of them to sustain his own medical missions, as he never wanted to stay in one station for long. Yet, even when looking for medical assistance from professional doctors, he had a desire that they would share the same vision as him: to spread the gospel and expand the kingdom of God. At first, there was an English doctor that was helping him, who was not Christian. But medical practices were only a supplementary benefit to what Mackay wanted to present to the people living in Taiwan. Not only was medical knowledge an important tool, but spiritual knowledge and training was a desired and critical aspect for Mackay. Regarding the doctor, Mackay lamented that the doctor working with him was not a Canadian Presbyterian Christian medical missionary: “His sympathies cannot be like those of a medical missionary. In the meantime I am thankful for the assistance; but I hope a doctor will come from Canada before long. It is altogether best for him to take a course in theology.”\textsuperscript{84} Distributing medicine and treating

\textsuperscript{83} George Leslie Mackay to Rev. Wm. McLaren, \textit{Letter from Mr. Mckay, Kelung, May 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1876. Letter. Elder John Lai’s Archives. Presbyterian Record V.1, 242, \url{http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-letter/1876.05.08/PR.htm}.}

\textsuperscript{84} George Leslie Mackay, dated May 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1873, \textit{Intelligence from Rev. G.L. McKay. Letter. Elder John Lai’s Archives, The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, 225, \url{http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-letter/1873.05.05/H&F.htm}.}
patients was a simple means whereby Mackay could get closer to the people to be able to evangelize to them as well as understand their circumstances and culture.

As a final point, the culmination of the proof of the effectiveness of treating the afflicted during his travels was the fruition of a hospital, as compared to a small clinic that was attached to his home or haphazardly set up. In 1880, Mackay received $3000 as a gift from Mrs. Mackay of Detroit, previously from Windsor, to establish a hospital building in memory of her husband Captain Mackay. And thus, Mackay Hospital, named after the deceased Captain Mackay, was established, bringing medical aid to thousands of people during its existence during Mackay’s life and even in present-day Tamsui. The hospital provided free services, as was all of Mackay’s medical and dental services to anyone who needed them. Mackay noted that during his second furlough in 1894, the hospital had treated 3,156 new patients and 7,580 old patients in that single year.85 Mackay himself had mixed opinions about the hospital. The hospital was simultaneously a place associated with Mackay’s missions and where doctors and native preachers worked alongside each other, yet also a place where patients need not feel obliged or heed the Christian teachings or faith that founded it if they chose not to. Though Mackay acknowledged the many patients that converted because of the kindness and care of the hospital and medical personnel, Mackay had still preferred the intimacy and connection that individual treatment provided, as he was able to understand the conditions and culture of the peoples who were in need of both physical and spiritual attention.

**Evangelization in Public Spaces**

Because of his peripatetic proselytization strategy, Mackay had a limited amount of time he would spend at each location he would stop at. Thus, when he would arrive at cities and towns, 

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85 Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 316.
he started off in the most public of spaces: streets and temple fronts. “He [Mackay] and his students would take their stand in an open place, extract teeth and then preach the gospel.”

Especially during the beginning of his missions, when hardly accepted by the locals, Mackay would only be able to have access to these “open places,” or spaces that the general mass had access to as well. By going to and utilizing these public places, Mackay was able to experience and learn directly the culture in which he would be looking for various converts as well as allow for more locals to learn about his presence and services he provided. Particularly with the latter, Mackay was not selective with gaining only positive responses to his presence, since he understood the unlikelihood of that happening immediately. Rather, any form of spreading his name to people (physically seeing him or by word of mouth) gave Mackay the advantage of gaining people’s curiosity and/or publicity without much effort.

On the streets, Mackay was able to conjure a diverse audience as well as a space with a great amount of exposure. It was through the use of the pre-existing venue of communication of the streets and roads that Mackay was able to begin and maintain his missions. As scholar Di Wang notes in his study of street culture, “city people, no matter what their social status was ‘still enjoyed relatively free use of public space.’ Thus, public space is the best location to observe social relations, the place where various people, especially the poor, conduct daily life.”

A public space, one that is “accessible to all” or “open to general observation,” like the streets of Northern Taiwanese cities, towns, and villages was where Mackay started his missionary activities of distributing medicine, healing, and proclaiming the gospel. When training his first 5 students, newly baptized believers, in early February of 1873, he commanded

86 R. P. Mackay, Life of George Leslie Mackay, 46-47.
them to “go forth into the ‘lanes and streets.’” When Mackay would go to a new location to start evangelizing, he started with the simple strategy of going to a public place, or one accessible and visible by the general mass, extract teeth, sing hymns, preach, and, occasionally, distribute tracts throughout the streets as they walked out of the settlement.

In one diary entry from January 14, 1888, Mackay noted: “All cloudy, wet and damp we started off and got to San-kiat-a-koe (modern day Yilan) where I spoke in the street and extracted many teeth then hurried through the rain to Sin-a-han…” As a means of quickly and memorably getting his presence and image to the general public, the streets, in which the poor, artisans, and commoners would gather for recreational, commercial, or socializing purposes, became a common space in which Mackay could access hoards of people. When he was seen in the streets, he would be doing his medical and dental work and publically evangelizing. This method was successful in spreading his name from the lowest levels of society to some of the higher levels, since even the mandarin or other wealthy individuals travelled in palanquins on the streets and would sometimes ask for Mackay’s services.

One issue, however, was that the streets were a double-edged sword, as it gave Mackay and other Christians greater visibility but also provided a means for locals to publically humiliate or attack Mackay and his converts. When A Hoa, Mackay’s first convert and a young scholar, had converted in May of 1872, a local bully, Go Ek Ju, publically harassed and insulted A Hoa: “First alone, then with others, he would jerk A Hoa’s cue, slap him in the face, stand right before him in the street, and insult him in other ways.” Nevertheless, for Mackay and Christians throughout history, persecution had never stopped people from converting; rather, it garnered curiosity, interest, and/or sympathy – attention at the very least – which still helped demonstrate

88 George Leslie Mackay, Lords Supper: The First Time.
89 George Leslie Mackay, Mackay, January 8th -16th, 1888. Trip to Kavalan.
90 Mackay, From Far Formosa, 140.
the persistency and faithfulness of Christians. In the case of Go Ek Ju, upon treating A Hoa and even others who went to listen to Mackay poorly for a while, the painter Go Ek Ju eventually converted. In regards to punishments placed on Christian converts by the local government, usually the streets were utilized as a venue to communicate warnings to the locals of what would happen if they were to convert and follow “the barbarian.” In one case, a corrupted magistrate in the yamen had collaborated with the local constables to accuse the local converts in Chiu-nih of attempting to assassinate the magistrate. They were imprisoned, tortured, taken on a week-long journey to Taiwanfu (modern-day Tainan) paraded through streets and roads, and then executed. Subsequently, the heads of some of the converts were put in a bucket with a poster inscription – “Jip kon-e lang than” (“Heads of the Christians”) – that was shown publically, again, through the streets in attempts to incite fear among the locals.\footnote{Ibid, 110-111.} Furthermore, the heads were staked on the gates that led to the entrance of Bangkah (萬華/艋舺 Wanhua/Mengjia), the largest city in northern Taiwan at the time with 45,000 people, according to Mackay’s statistics.\footnote{Ibid, 114.} Thus, though the streets allowed Mackay to rapidly gain a reputation and have more opportunities to evangelize to a greater number of people, these venues of communication were utilized by the locals and government for their own purposes as well. But it was in both the positive and negative results that came from associating with the streets that Mackay and Christianity was able to spread.

Another public space in which Mackay utilized was the temple front, the courtyard in front of the temple that offered “popular spots for itinerant peddlers and folk performers, who attracted many customers and spectators.”\footnote{Di Wang, Street Culture in Chengdu, 28.} These public spaces, which were saturated in
religious and social meaning, were, apart from entertainment, also a popular gathering place for religious rituals and public gatherings. For similar reasons, Mackay found that he could gain attention, especially from religious devotees or individuals who practiced religious rituals, without having to look too far for a different kind of platform from which he could speak from. One key instance that points to the importance of temple fronts to Mackay is through a trial given to A Hoa to test his faith and commitment to Christianity. At Keelung, Mackay brought A Hoa to the “stone steps of a large heathen temple, sang a hymn or two, and immediately the crowd gathered, filling the open space and the street. It was a mob of angry idolaters. Some of them were A Hoa’s old acquaintances and companions, and when they saw him stand beside the hated ‘foreign devil’ their contempt for the Christian missionary was nothing compared with their feelings toward the Christian convert.”

In this chaotic moment, Mackay told A Hoa to profess his faith to the crowd. This very public declaration was not an easy feat, especially since it was in 1873, only 1 year after Mackay started his missionary activities and the locals were not familiar with Westerners or Christian missionaries. But after singing another hymn with Mackay, A Hoa proclaimed: “I am a Christian, I worship the true God. I cannot worship idols that rats can destroy. I am not afraid. I love Jesus. He is my Saviour and Friend.” By requiring that kind of statement in front of a temple, Mackay was forcing A Hoa to realize the necessity of being able to shamelessly proselytize in this public space, which directly challenged indigenous religious beliefs and cultural traditions of the locals.

As a demonstration of the quantity of people that Mackay encountered at one location, Mackay, 4 helpers, 7 students, and 1 servant had travelled to “the market town Kim-pau-li [金包里 Jinbaoli], where [they] stood near a large temple. The people procured a torch-light, and as

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94 Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 146-147.
95 Ibid, 147. .
[Mackay] had [his] forceps with [him], [he] extracted 25 teeth, and then [they] sung and preached the Gospel of [the] Risen Saviour to upwards of 400 people, who listened attentively.”

Even amidst the late hours into the night, a large crowd had gathered at the temple front. At the hour in which Mackay and company were doing evangelical work, it would have been past dinner or the time when people were leisurely gathered, as it was dark when they arrived at a Junk harbor near Keelung (基隆/雞籠 Jilong) and had to walk another mile to get to Kim-pau-li. Therefore, the 400 people who had gathered not only those who may have inadvertently been there but mostly those curious about Mackay’s dental work and the faith professed.

Like with proselytizing on the streets, Mackay and his students expanded their venues of public proselytization to dispensing medicine freely, extracting teeth, and preaching at temple fronts. By proselytizing on the streets and temple fronts, Mackay was able to most readily engage face-to-face with locals, experience their living conditions, and better understand their culture. In addition, through public evangelization strategies, Mackay could gain more diverse set of converts, which would be useful in trying to place native preachers in different chapels across northern Taiwan.

**Evangelization within the Home**

One of the means in which Mackay also attempted to increase the range of visibility was through relationships that would allow him entrance into the home, welcomed or unwelcomed, to evangelize or aid converts in evangelization. These private spaces were venues that were more

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96 Mackay, “,” Presbyterian Record V.1 (1876), 242.
George Leslie Mackay to Rev. Wm. McLaren, Convener, Letter from Mr. Mckay, Kelung, May 8th, 1876.
Letter. Elder John Lai’s Archives. Presbyterian Record V.1, 242, [http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-letter/1876.05.08/PR.htm](http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-letter/1876.05.08/PR.htm).
difficult to get access to, as Mackay would need an individual that would allow him into the household, usually as an intermediary or secondary support figure in the evangelization process. After the conversion of Go Ek Ju, his mother had heard of the conversion of her son and became furious to the point where his 2 sisters told him to refrain from returning home. Relationships within Go’s family were very closely bound to Confucianism, and converting to Christianity was seen as a rejection of one’s own cultural values and family. Especially for the parents, they saw it as a betrayal, since the convert would not care for them in their afterlife through ancestor worship. However, not only was Go Ek Ju’s mother upset, the entire community in which he was associated with became angry with him for converting to the foreign religion. At first, A Hoa, a fellow convert who shared similar cultural backgrounds, went with Go Ek Ju to endeavor to assuage the conflict, but the mother was no more pleased to see another local convert. Thus, by way of knowing Go Ek Ju, Mackay accompanied the two converts on a second trip to his natal home. Despite the fact that the possibility of further angering his mother due to a male foreigner entering her home, especially concerning the danger of inciting rumors, Mackay entered the private space of the family and tried to explain the situation and gospel to her. However, she was resistant, refused to talk much, and almost beat up her son. But Mackay “intercepted her, grasped the mallet, and threw it outside.”

It was finally through Mackay’s diagnosis and medicine for one of Go Ek Ju’s sisters that contracted malaria that softened Go Ek Ju’s mother’s heart. She had desperately utilized all other local sources to treat her daughter’s malarial fever, but none could help: “Sorcerers, doctors, and idols were consulted in vain.” Through his medical practice, Mackay was able to successfully utilize the opened venue through Go Ek Ju into his

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97 Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 140.
98 Ibid.
house to convert his mother, who eventually became a “Bible-woman” and mother of one of the early Taiwanese Presbyterian preachers.

One facet of the strategy of evangelizing within the home beneficial to Mackay’s mission, and the conversion of various individuals practicing ancestral worship, was that Mackay was able to redefine the center of the household, physically and symbolically moving it away from the ancestral tablet. Mackay noticed that the most serious religious worship happened at the ancestral tablet and not in the “shrines of idols.” With the fear of being left uncared for by converted children, parents of converts felt as if their children were unfilial and ungrateful to them. The ancestral tablet was one of the most sacred ritual objects of the family as well as one of the most respected items and spaces in Chinese culture, which had penetrated into the lives of the Taiwanese.

Mackay’s strategy of attempting to convert family members of converts was not to “denounce or revile what is so sacredly cherished, but rather to recognize whatever of truth or beauty there is in it, and to utilize it as an ‘open sesame.’” If he were invited into a home, he would use the fifth commandment (of the 10 commandments) of honoring one’s father and mother to gain the parents’ attention, turning it to explain people’s relationship with God the Father in light of the relationship and duties of the child to his/her earthly parents. By drawing a parallel between Christianity and Confucianism (or any of the various religions that incorporate Confucianism), Mackay was able to demonstrate that the Christian faith was not a practice that encouraged the renouncing of one’s parents. For the many cases where Mackay did not enter into converts’ private homes, he taught his students to patiently communicate this aspect to his/her parents. Nonetheless, this was probably the most difficult hurdle that Mackay and Christianity had to jump, as this practice was “so engrained in the nature, and appeals so touchingly to the

99 Ibid, 133.
heart, that it requires the strongest conviction and the finest moral courage to break its thralldom and brave the scorn of friends and relatives, to whom neglect one’s ancestors in the spirit-world is the most inhumane and cruelest of crimes.”

Thus, in this aspect, Mackay was not always the agent of conversion for the household. Unlike his approach to evangelizing in public, Mackay would intervene and evangelize only if presented with interpersonal relationships that allowed him to enter into private spaces. Another occasion that allowed Mackay to enter into the home was with the presence of an ill person in a household. In this way, he was allowed, usually after exhausting other methods, to enter the home to treat the sick. Other than that, Mackay had not felt it as effective to serve as the primary missionary and allowed for the convert to minister and proselytize to his/her own family, with Mackay taking on a secondary role as supporter in prayer and advising. With this approach, Mackay also allowed the convert to practice proselytization to his/her own people, as Mackay desired to see a native ministry grow in Taiwan.

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100 Ibid, 134.
101 Compared to public hospitals that made it more difficult to establish relationships with each of the patients, as a result of the vast number of patients as well as the unwillingness of some patients to get too familiar with Christianity, Mackay preferred the advantages of medically and spiritually ministering individuals at different mission stations and within people’s homes.
CHAPTER 4: Relationally- and Culturally-Based Proselytization Strategies

Due to Mackay's convictions of the supremacy of language and culture as a crucial part of his proselytization strategies, Mackay chose an itinerant mode of proselytizing in order to learn more about the diverse environments and conditions in which the people he would be preaching to lived. Through his travels, Mackay created various networks of interpersonal relations, which connected the island's diverse ethnic, socio-cultural, and political groups together for the purpose of gaining native converts. It was in these native converts that Mackay regarded as the most qualified to become local church leaders and provide critical support for the Christian ministry in Northern Taiwan. Mackay understood that different places and peoples had different circumstances, and, thus, transmission of Christian values and faith would be different across Taiwan:

“What would be reasonable and effective in one field would be absurd and useless in another. What would succeed in Europe or America would fail in Asia. China is not India, and Formosa is not China. […] I was at first convinced that the hope of the mission lay not in foreign workers, and every year only confirms that opinion.” ¹⁰²

As Mackay travelled, he increasingly recognized his, especially other foreign missionaries’, inability to successfully understand the culture and/or preach to every individual in northern Taiwan. This chapter will expand Mackay’s approaches to proselytizing to the locals of assorted backgrounds – of various ethnicities, specific communities, and political associations – through the organization of a network of connections with people who could be the extensions of his vision and ministry. Eventually, these individuals, male and female, were to become important leaders of local chapels that would become the self-sufficient native ministry that Mackay hoped for.

¹⁰² Mackay, From Far Formosa, 285-286.
Immigration: Changes within the Social and Cultural Environment

Various groups of people living in Taiwan had undergone changing social, economic, and political situations, whether they were those who had lived there for generations or those who had immigrated and integrated themselves into the local communities. The most numerous ethnic groups are the Hakka, Hoklo/Fujienese, aboriginals, and other Han Chinese immigrants. Instability and rapid changes after the Opium Wars and prior to the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, provided favorable grounds for Mackay to come in and start his ministry, as the Christian faith provided a collective community, support, and a common goal. Through his travels, Mackay was even more convinced of the direction of his proselytization methods as leading towards a native and self-supporting ministry.

The majority of Hakka that had immigrated to Taiwan after the Manchu defeated the Cheng regime. Many of the Hakka migrants who went to Taiwan during the first century of the Qing Dynasty had emigrated from Guangdong. They settled in the “fertile western plain after driving the head-hunting and often cannibalistic aborigines into the mountainous central and eastern parts of the island.”103 The Hakkas seemed to be consistently migrating, befitting their name “guest families.” Having settled in Taiwan, they did not completely disassociate themselves from that status, and “Mackay was particularly successful in early years among that one-eighth of the Chinese population in northern Taiwan which was of Hakka extraction (perhaps 100,000), who were anxious to better their living conditions and social status.”104

Subsequently, the Hoklos had originated from the Fujian Province, and by the 18th and 19th centuries, the Hoklos had started moving into the cities and fertile areas of the Hakka

103 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-century Taiwan,” 136.
104 Ibid, 136-137.
settlement. When Mackay visited certain villages, some were filled with Hakka and Hoklo individuals, amongst others, while other villages were Hakka but were displaced some distance away from the city. In one village of Hakka Chinese, Mackay had noted that during their day at the chapel he established there, “three hours were spent in listening to their recitations of psalms, hymns, and Bible selections, some in the Hak-ka dialect and others in the Hok-lo.”\textsuperscript{105} This chapel was still considered to be located far away from the urban areas, as it was located amongst the hills.

For the Hakka and the Hoklos, Mackay sought to find suitable native pastors to minister amongst their own peoples, especially for the Hakka due to its linguistic divergence. Geh-bai is an example of the development of a chapel that developed because of the unique characteristics of the Hakka that made a native ministry more effective for evangelization. Geh-bai is a “Hakka village” located “ten miles from Tek-chham [竹塹/ modern-day 新竹 Zhuqian/Xinzhu], toward the mountains.”\textsuperscript{106} Initially, the Hakkas from Geh-bai had travelled to Tek-chham to attend the Sunday services there. At one point, Mackay and those with him travelled to the village, because the local Hakkas desired that a church be established there. There were both practical and spiritual reasons for why Mackay agreed to comply with their wish. Practically, the physical journey for the hearers and converts would be eliminated, making attendance easier and allowing a greater possibility for an increase in attendance. Spiritually, the content of the sermon would be more accessible to the listeners, and the language of the sermon would be in Hakka, which would allow for more villagers to understand and grasp the gospel message. Thus, “the congregation became organized, and when a native preacher was sent among them, four months of his salary

\textsuperscript{105} Mackay, \textit{From Far Formosa}, 178.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 157.
was paid in advance.”\textsuperscript{107} Thus, this Christian congregation was able to provide a community specific to their ethnic identity, and the people were willing to support and sustain its own chapel and pastor. Mackay would have sent his Hakka student-become-preacher to this village, as he was the ideal individual to proselytize to the village and serve as a native preacher.

Even in northern Taiwan, there had been a transition in administration and development, as the port cities of Tainan, Tamsui, and Keelung expanded economically and demographically after the First Opium War. At the time when Taiwanfu was still a prefecture of the Fujian Province, the island was divided into 4 counties (縣 hsien) and 2 subprefectures (廳 ting), or maritime/coastal divisions in Taiwan’s case. The northwestern area around Tamsui was one of the subprefectures, and “when it was organized, the Tamsui t’ing consisted of 1 town, 132 farms, and 70 native villages; there were no Chinese villages.”\textsuperscript{108} However, by the time Mackay establishes his first mission station in Tamsui, Mackay noted the pervasiveness of the Han Chinese, which he claimed to be key to evangelization for the mainland as well: “All the inhabitants of this region are Chinese, and I feel truly thankful to the Lord of the harvest for this beginning in their midst, as I have never changed my views regarding the empire of China. […] we should never lose sight of the great work which is awaiting the Christian world. Viz: the evangelization of China, of which this is an exceedingly important part. […] the Chinese [are] the advancing race.”\textsuperscript{109} Thus, it was clear that Mackay had sought for the evangelization of the Chinese, since “the Christian world should give her energies to advancing races and nations which will exist when scattered tribes are no more. […] Now the Chinese occupy this Island, and at present are opening it up, making roads, building large forts &c., and inducing hundreds to

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-century Taiwan,” 137.
come from the mainland. Whilst the poor, lazy, thriftless aborigines have to go to the wall and back again into the woods to seek homes.”\textsuperscript{110} For the many scholars, including Rohrer, who had noted that Mackay’s priority was to convert the aboriginals, it is clear that he wanted the impact to be felt amongst the Han Chinese. Yet, though Mackay recognized the influence and control that the Qing had over the island and the importance of converting the Chinese, there were practical barriers to his thinking.

The attitudes of the Chinese were possibly more hostile than the head-hunting aboriginals, as they not only despised foreigners and foreign culture but also continuously harassed and rioted against Mackay. The anti-foreign sentiments that locals and magistrates demonstrated to foreign merchants in port cities remained a vivid memory, and Mackay encountered hostility in 1872 when he arrived in Tamsui either. Secondly, the Chinese were constantly creating disturbances for Mackay and his ministry as a demonstration of their resistance as well as a means to show other locals of their disapproval. In various cities, the Chinese hostile to foreigners attempted many things: stoning, ripping off the Commandment sheets Mackay secured on his front door, making disturbances and riots in front of his house, sending literati and religious men to challenge Mackay’s beliefs and knowledge, or cooperating with local officials to impede Mackay’s activities and influence. Bang-kah, which was ruled by the headmen of three large clans, was the largest city and was “thoroughly Chinese, and intensely anti-foreign in all its interests and sympathies.”\textsuperscript{111} Mackay referred to the city and the “Gibraltar of heathenism in North Formosa.”\textsuperscript{112} In 1872, Mackay had visited with A Hoa, and they were both severely rejected from that point onwards. Mackay was much on the Bang-kah

\textsuperscript{110} George Leslie Mackay to Rev. William McLaren, \textit{Letter from Dr. Mackay, Tamsui, January 13th, 1876. Letter}. Elder John Lai’s Archives, \textit{Presbyterian Record} V.1, 131, \url{http://www.laijohn.com/Mackay/MGL-letter/1876.01.13/PR.htm}.
\textsuperscript{111} Mackay, \textit{From Far Formosa}, 164.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
government’s radar, as the authorities “issued proclamations calling on all citizens, on pain of imprisonment or death, not to rent, lease, or sell either houses or other property to the barbarian missionary.” However, in 1877, Mackay did acquire a place, though it was “by law” removed from his authority. After that, any building or residence that Mackay and his students entered to stay in, mobs had physically torn down the building; any action that Mackay wanted to take in rebuilding a chapel or staying within the city of Bang-kah, the magistrate and officials had excuses to reject. However, after seeking property a second time, from an old man willing to rent Mackay land, Mackay had not only established a local connection, who was not adamantly anti-Christian, but was also able to officially purchase and legally own a plot of land. This proved to be a small but firm stepping stone towards establishing a chapel and proselytizing in Bang-kah. By 1887, local religious leaders and practitioners were no longer seeking to kill and dispose of Mackay and his students. And before his furlough in 1873, those in Bang-kah, by invitation of the headmen ruling the city, had paraded him and his students in sedan chairs, treated with esteem, and given tokens of honor.

As Mackay’s name and actions gained interest and as the number of Christian converts increased, the Chinese and others attempting to hinder their progress found that Mackay, and consequently his followers, were immovable. For churches around Taiwan, Mackay’s routine travels to the different stations and chapels were beneficial for the churches that sought guidance and support from Mackay as well as a reminder of the gospel and commission (to evangelize) that connected all congregations across Taiwan and the world. But for Mackay, his travels were able to keep him updated on church progress and the congregation, as the pastors would give him regular updates, as well as maintain control over the institutional, administrative, and

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113 Ibid, 165.
spiritual/theological components of all the stations and chapels established by/associated with him.

Navigating through Northern Taiwan

Through his travels around northern Taiwan, Mackay had developed a better understanding of the conditions of the peoples, their needs, and various evangelization methods to gain more converts. In the beginning of his wanderings around Tamsui, Mackay had very quickly established stations and purchased properties that would serve a combination of functions: a residence, clinic, and chapel. There were many communities that he had not initially intended to develop a ministry for eventually extended his missions geographically across the whole of northern Taiwan and demographically across different age groups and genders. In this section, I will focus on his strategies of developing ministries amongst the aboriginal Taiwanese communities and women.

Mackay, like the Qing officials and Chinese who immigrated to Taiwan, distinguished between the more developed areas of the northern and western coastal regions, where those emigrating from China had settled, and the “interior,” or the land in which the various aboriginal tribes lived. Cartographic depictions that Mackay had charted out and included in his biography demonstrate a clear physical area demarcated as “savage territory” as distinct from the different districts (e.g. Tamsui District and Gilan District) surrounding it. Geographically, northern Taiwan was also divided by a mountain range, another factor that further separated the “interior” and exterior, the latter a term which he does not use but will used as a juxtaposition with his terminology. The spatial disconnection mirrored a representational disjuncture from the mainstream Chinese culture. The journey between the exterior and “interior” proved to be a
difficult passage, as not only did Mackay and his students have to cross a mountain range but also avoid being killed by more antagonistic aboriginal tribes. Most of the students had travelled barefoot across the Northern terrain, including the mountainous areas as well as the plains, making it even more of a physically challenging journey. Many times, Mackay would use the travelling time to train and instruct his students.

The various communities of aboriginals had their own specific identities, cultural practices, religious affiliations, ethnic dress, and other characteristics. However, from the perspective of the Chinese, all Taiwanese aboriginals were considered “barbarians.” But depending on their geographical location as well as cultural tendencies toward Chinese culture, they were given different names. The Chhi-hoan, or “raw barbarians,” were the head-hunters that were “unsubdued mountaineers.” The Sek-hoan, or “ripe barbarians,” were aborigines that “settled among the Chinese in the West” and had accepted Chinese culture. There were two groups of plains aborigines that had “acknowledged Chinese authority and adopted their mode of worship” but did not live in the same vicinity as the Chinese in the cities. The Lam-si-hoan were the “barbarians of the south,” and the Pe-po-hoan, who came into more contact with Mackay and his students, were the “barbarians of the plains.”

Though Mackay had not intended to do much work with the aborigines, he found that proselytizing to the Sek-hoan (“ripe barbarians”) and Pe-po-hoan (plains barbarians) was still beneficial, as they had accepted Chinese culture and rule and were considered subjects of the Qing empire. Through the first few years of Mackay’s missionary activities, “Mackay faced unremitting hostility from the xenophobic Chinese, particularly the scholar gentry, who would foment riots to evict him. Consequently his early converts were illiterate, rural outcasts […]

114 Ibid, 93.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
Mackay made perilous trips into the mountains to convert the headhunters, but only among the Pe-po-hoan, the Sinicized aboriginals who saw the missionary as a potential protector, did he have any success.”117 Thus, Mackay had established connections with different communities of aborigines during the beginning stages of his missions. He often found that the tribes were usually very willing to listen: “On Sabbath we visited Bu-loan and Sin-a-han, two large villages of aborigines, and found them very ready to listen to the tidings of salvation.”118 The aborigines were willing to listen, as the missionaries were a source of protection for them with the backing of their home countries. Also, seeing that Mackay had not kept a queue, aborigines tribes that did not relate as closely to the Chinese assumed that he was in support of them. Mackay reported the aborigines’ attitude towards him in one of his travels through several aboriginal villages: “They called me their kinsman, but I don’t recognize any such distinction as I consider myself as much the kinsman of the Chinese as of any other race out here in the far east.”119

One issue that he found within his ministry early on during his time in Taiwan was the lack of women attending his services or approaching him for conversion. In fact, he found that many of the women were at home, while the men were at the services: “I have been for a long time grieved at heart to see the women here despised and left within their homes, whilst husbands and brothers attend services. I have pleaded and prayed and wept. Sometimes amongst 200 hearers only two or three women are present.”120 For Mackay, his missions was his life, as he committed his life to serving God as a foreign missionary. Thus, for the practical purposes of proselytization, Mackay decided to marry a Pe-po-hoan native Taiwanese woman, Tiu/Tui

117 Alvyn J. Austin, “MACKAY, GEORGE LESLIE.”
119 Ibid.
120 R.P. Mackay, Life of George Leslie Mackay, 33-34.
Chhang Mia, in May of 1878. Also known as Minnie (張聰明 Zhang Cong Ming), Mackay’s wife was seventeen when she was married to Mackay and was the adopted granddaughter of Mackay’s first female convert, Thah-so. Through the rest of Mackay’s life, Minnie continued to be a critical and supportive pillar in his missions; she provided a relationship that he most needed to supplement his missions, enabling him to reach out to the women in all the locations where he had already established chapels and stations.

This deliberately went against the desires and requests of the FMC and the foreign community, as they had previously prompted him to find a Canadian wife to be his helper in the field: “Brother R. just sent me a note saying there are ‘charming ladies in Canada, one of which would come out as my helpmeet [sic].’”¹²¹ For the many disputes and controversies that went on between Mackay and the FMC, his marriage decision seemed to be one of the most shocking and unsettling. For the foreign community in Canada and even in Taiwan, his choice to have an intercultural relationship and marriage was unheard of, and was looked down on by other missionaries and Canadians, a typical response from the ethnocentric and racially separated Canadian society. Fellow Canadian missionary Kenneth F. Junor had boldly stated that he thought Mackay’s marriage was “a mistake,” and that he believed that there were suitable and devoted Christian women “who can and will suffer as much for Christ as any Chinaman who ever breathed.”¹²² However, Mackay’s independence from the influence and opinions of the foreign community allowed him to disregard the storm it caused back at home.

Nevertheless, Minnie was the manifestation of Mackay’s convictions of the supreme importance of the mastery of languages and cultures as the most effective method of the evangelization of the Taiwanese from the natives themselves. Mackay exceedingly respected her

¹²¹ Ibid, 34.
¹²² McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 152.
for her devotion (to the ministry he was committed to), unwavering faith, unashamed proclamation of her testimony, perseverance amidst trials and harassment, and equally bold character. The respect she was given by Mackay, by proving to equal his expectations, was also paralleled when she had visited Canada during his first furlough. When travelling to different congregations in Canada with Mackay during that time, Minnie had “helped raise $6,125 in Oxford County for the construction of Oxford College in Tamsui. [... And] Mrs. Mackay became matron of the girls’ school.”¹²³ Not to mention, their honeymoon trip consisted of a challenging tour of his mission stations in the north through pounding rain and blistering feet. Yet Mackay married Minnie knowing that she would be able to endure the trials that would come about.

Through this unconventional matrimony, many local women were converted through listening to Mrs. Mackay’s testimony, as the women came out from within the homes with the reassuring presence of a local Christian woman. She would go about from house to house and encourage the women to attend Mackay’s services. For Mrs. Mackay, going into the private homes of the locals was less of an issue, because the home was considered a place where women stayed. Thus, what Mackay struggled with was easily overcome with the strategic marriage with a local Chinese woman. “Women also who meekly attended formerly took their places boldly by her side at the front.”¹²⁴ By introducing Minnie into his missions, Mackay was able to unite families into the Christian faith, as women usually had not converted for lack of understanding of the gospel. Demographically, after Minnie started proselytizing alongside him, his services became filled with not only women but also families, as the couple would come to have 3 children (2 daughters, married to native preachers, and 1 son).

¹²³ Alvyn J. Austin, “MACKAY, GEORGE LESLIE.”
¹²⁴ McDonald , “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 152.
Qing Official Perceptions: Shifting Political and Economic Environment of Taiwan

In Teng’s *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*, one of the author’s arguments is that representations of the frontier regions, like Taiwan, played an important role in incorporating the frontier into a “new imagined geography of the expanded Qing empire.” Teng detailed the changing perceptions of the Qing (officials), similar to the initial perceptions of the missionary, regarding the island of Taiwan as well as Taiwanese aborigines throughout the Qing’s acquisition of Taiwan. Mackay, with a similar mentality, initially did not plan to develop a ministry for the aboriginals. Rather, as mentioned in the previous section, Mackay wanted to focus on the Chinese, though not entirely neglecting the aborigines. As the Qing’s perceptions of Taiwan shifted from an attitude of not wanting to annex the island to the understanding that it was a lucrative source of resources and profit, the political situation throughout the island had gradually changed. For that reason, Mackay’s knowledge of legal matters and procedures as well as having good relationships with politically powerful individuals became one of the most strategies that he had to adopt in order to win arguments over property, conversions, conflicts, and other issues that arose.

With the Qing’s conquest of the island in 1684, the island was politically administered as a prefecture. In 1887, the status changed to that of a province, but the governmental system in this frontier society allowed for the governor to have much control over policies and justice. As a result, official corruption spread “from the highest to the lowest, every Chinese official in Taiwan [had] an ‘itching palm,’” corrupted with money bribes. With Mackay’s experiences in dealing with the local government, he notes the lack of “trial by jury,” but rather “the financial

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125 Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography*, 5.
126 Mackay, *From Far Formosa*, 105.
strength of the litigants and of their friends [were] inquired into, and the one who sent in the largest amount of sycee-silver [was] certain to get the verdict in his favor.\textsuperscript{127} There were multiple cases regarding Mackay, his chapels, and converts, where injustice was clear. For the times that Mackay could legally counter, as with the case of obtaining property in Bang-kah, it was very effective in allotting him the necessary resources and space to continue proselytizing.

Mackay found this strategy to be useful in establishing and maintaining his ministry, he devoted efforts to understanding the treaty structure and contents, which “would be advantageous in dealing with the natives,” or locals.\textsuperscript{128} Mackay’s method of using the treaty structure, and at times the British consul, won him a “reputation for fairness and shrewdness among the mandarins who attempted to interfere with the growth of the mission.”\textsuperscript{129} Mackay had learned to respect and abide by the Chinese laws, which helped him stand out as an upright individual and a Christian.

However, Mackay preferred not to utilize the backing of the consul when possible and sought to develop close relationships with high officials and people with local political leadership (or who held power over a particular locale). In one instance, the village headman Tam Phauh of Go-kokhi (五股坑 Wugukeng) had prevented a “gang of rowdies” from attempting to prevent the chapel, Mackay’s first chapel, from operating. Originally, the first female convert Thah-so had invited Mackay and A Hoa to Go-kokhi to observe whether they should open a chapel there. Upon their first meeting, Tam Phauh had denounced idol worship and stated that he would only follow the Ten Commandments. He then “gave a plot of ground opposite his own house for a chapel site,” securing property to start building the chapel as well as

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 106.
\textsuperscript{128} McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 148.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
garnering the support of the local leader. In Mackay’s words, “the missionary who would truly be a success here must realize who and where his enemies are, and take great care not to earn the enmity of the powerful social leaders when that is unnecessary. It is the devil-worshipping shamans, the idol-selling ‘priests’ which we must undertake to displace, not the literati and mandarins.” Mackay understood that, as a missionary, his position challenged authorities (local and provincial) politically, socially, institutionally, and personally, enhanced even more so when paired with his personality. Thus, he was astute in allying with the gentry and Qing officials when possible.

During the periods of political transition for parts of northern Taiwan, many territories were still in control by a single family, and “once the partial support of this family had been won, there was virtually no organized opposition to the mission.” An important example of this case was with the Lim family of Pang-kio-thau (板橋頭 Banqiaotou), who controlled their territory so that Mackay was not able to preach within it nor were the peasants allowed to go to a nearby chapel. The Lim family was the “wealthiest family on the island […] worth perhaps $10,000.” From the beginning of Mackay’s missions in northern Taiwan, Pang-kio-thau was off limits to Mackay, and it stayed that way for 7 years. However, the head of the Lim family passed away in 1877, and with a new leader, who formed a good relationship with the missionary, Mackay was able to gradually able to establish his missions in the village.

One individual with whom Mackay continued to stay on close terms with was Liu Mingchuan, the first governor of Taiwan. The French invasion in 1884, an extension of the Sino-French War of 1884-1885, caused great chaos and hurt Mackay’s missions, as many chapels and

130 Mackay, From Far Formosa, 149.
131 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 144.
132 Ibid, 155.
property were damaged. The chapel at Tao-liong-pong (大龍峒 Dalongdong), Pat-li-hun (八里坌 Baliben), Bang-kah (萬華/艋舺 Wanhua/Mengjia), and other chapels were destroyed, torn to the ground, and looted. However, because of his valuable and established connection with Liu, Mackay presented claims for all his damaged property and insisted reparation costs of $5,000. Receiving the indemnity granted by Liu, Mackay went forth to build a small number of “strong and artistic churches” at the major stations where chapels were destroyed as a display of the permanence of the church and Christianity. The church at Pat-li-hun (八里坌 Baliben) was destroyed, and no one was able to be baptized for a few years. Only until March 1, 1887 were 12 people baptized, and 9 people the year after.\textsuperscript{133}

With the rapidly changing political environment during the years of Mackay’s activities on the island, Mackay, amongst other issues, had to balance his position amongst various groups of people and differing administrative systems and governing structures. Through the strategies of being familiar with legal stipulations and maintaining good-standing connections to those in power, Mackay was able to have the support and protection of local and higher officials. While this did not necessarily directly correlate with his proselytization strategies, these strategies were crucial to the success of his missions, uniting the churches and converts under the protection of not only his Canadian (and British) support but also, arguably more importantly, under the security of the local control.

\textsuperscript{133} John Lai, 馬偕洗禮簿 - 八里坌教會, \textit{Mackay’s Baptism Registry (Ma Xie Xi Li Bu 馬偕洗禮簿)}, 9-12.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Because Mackay saw the local Taiwanese peoples as the most appropriate individuals to receive the gospel and live out the Christian life within their respective communities, Mackay prioritized gaining native converts and training selected Taiwanese men to become preachers within local chapels. To be able to reach across Northern Taiwan, his best strategy was to travel around to engage with individuals in the community to better understand their culture and language as well as make himself visible to the largest number of people and establish connections with them. By the time of Mackay’s death in 1901, obstacles slowly started to arise with the Japanese colonialization of Taiwan. However, the different institutions that Mackay had established (including schools and hospitals) as well as the Christian leaders that Mackay had trained and disciple continued the legacy that Mackay left behind.

Reputation in Taiwan: From Avoidance to Respect

There is a dichotomy between how Mackay treated his home church and foreign partners (or those he represented) and the local peoples in Taiwan. Though he had a distant and unsatisfied relationship with the former, he strongly loved his fellow Taiwanese friends, converts, and even strangers, which was why he was so devoted to his missions from the moment he decided he would conduct his missions in Northern Taiwan to the end of his life.

Yet, the converse was not true when he began his mission. The locals living in Taiwan were very cautious and most were initially hostile towards Mackay from the start of his missionary activities in 1872 and a few years afterwards. Anti-foreignism was a critical obstacle to Mackay’s mission from the very beginning. Anti-foreign sentiments expressed in names like “the black-bearded barbarian” and “foreign devil,” both of which were often used to address
Mackay. Even by the Sino-French War (1884-1885), anti-foreign sentiments had not completely dissipated, despite increasing trust and respect shown to Mackay by Taiwanese Christians and non-Christians. With the French invasion, the locals, in response to bombings and disruption of their daily lives, started to destroy and loot the churches and Mackay’s residential properties. Despite the fact that Mackay was Canadian and the foreigners attacking were French, the locals only recognized a monolithic foreigners from the West posing a threat to their society.

However, prior to those events, by the time Mackay established his first school, a college in Tamsui (Oxford College), on June 26, 1882, he had a good amount of respect and popularity amongst the foreign and native locals on the opening day: “the entire foreign population of Tamsui, now perhaps forty, attended, as did the two magistrates of northern Formosa and a deputation from the taitai’s [道台 daitai] yamen.” The locals living in Taiwan as well as the foreigners, most of whom were merchants, all knew of Mackay, and his prominent reputation spread throughout Northern Taiwan. The image of Mackay changed from “foreign devil” to a spiritual leader and educated man with healing powers. Even if people despised him and was wary of him, it was difficult not to have heard at least rumors of Mackay. Even the wealthy Lim family of Pang-kio-thau (板橋頭 Banqiaotou) could not prevent curious and eager peasants from “[giving] up their fields and follow[ing] Christ.” As Mackay gained more converts and students, the ministry in which he started alone in 1872 began to have more impact on individuals, families, and communities. Initially, Mackay’s evangelization strategies seemed to the FMC disorganized, improvised, and stubborn, as he travelled all over northern Taiwan and avoided its suggestions. But, Mackay was meticulously scouting out the landscape, the peoples,

134 McDonald, “George Leslie Mackay: Missionary Success in Nineteenth-Century Taiwan,” 154.
135 Ibid, 155.
their cultures, and the diverse environments he would be working in. Despite the outward appearance and reputation as an obstinate, independent, and difficult figure to work with, his passion and devotion to mission work, as well as his multilayered strategies, made him one of the most influential missionaries in Taiwan, with institutional legacy in contemporary Taiwan.
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