

introduction of the Western educational system had a great impact on the modernization of Taiwan. Dr. Mackay had a passion on Formosa Taiwan, married Taiwanese girl from Wuu-Guu, Taipei County, and lived in Tamsui until his death in June 1901. This statue was established on Nov. 1995"

This is George Leslie Mackay, a Canadian missionary nicknamed "the black-bearded barbarian," who has become a national hero of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan (also called Formosa). Everyone knows his name because of the Ma-Gai Bok-su [Dr Mackay] Memorial Hospital in Taipei, the largest and most modern in the country, which has birthed hundreds of thousands of babies in its 100 year history. In a millennial list of 20th-century Taiwanese, he came in 5th, even though he died barely a year into the new century.

On 2 June 2001, the centenary of his death, he was honoured with events on both sides of the Pacific. Taiwan issued a commemorative stamp, and the two presidents, Lee Tung-hui and Chen Shui-bian, opened a special exhibit at the Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines in Taipei. In 1894, when Mackay returned to Canada on furlough, he brought a collection of objects which he donated to Knox College; they came into the Royal Ontario Museum in 1915. This huge collection, over 1000 artifacts, sat in storage in the museum vaults for 80 years, unknown and unseen. Now that it has been studied, it is regarded as a Taiwanese national treasure, the best and most extensive collection of Taiwanese material culture collected before the Japanese period, particularly of aboriginal artifacts which have vanished from Taiwan itself.

The same day in Oxford County, his birthplace, the Ontario Heritage Foundation unveiled a provincial historic plaque recognizing this unique Canadian. It is in front of Knox Presbyterian church in the village of Embro, East Zorra township, where he grew up and was sent to China. It is fitting that 120 years ago Oxford County raised \$6125 to build Oxford College named after our Oxford, not the English one which has grown into Aletheia University, the prettiest campus in Taiwan. Now, Oxford County and Tamsui are officially twinned municipalities. Together, they sponsor the annual Mackay Memorial International Tug-of-War Competition, a high-school exchange which sends teams of Canadian young men and women to Taiwan and Taiwanese teams to the Highland Games at Zorra. This year Oxford sent ten bagpipers. May the best competitors win: the mighty men of Zorra or the smaller, well-trained Taiwanese!

How did a Canadian missionary, barely remembered in Canada, become a symbol of the Taiwanese independence movement? Mackay has been called the Norman Bethune of Taiwan and like Bethune, has been recognized by the government as a modernizer. More important, as Taiwan is searching for its identity in a difficult world, Mackay is remembered as a friend -- a Canadian friend -- from an earlier time: before the Japanese colonization (1895-1945) and the Kuomintang evacuation from the mainland after the Chinese revolution (1945-49).

Here Mackay leaves his role as a Canadian missionary, and becomes part of Taiwan's search for its real, often suppressed history, distinct from the mainland, and its identity as a modern, multi-cultural society. "China is not India, and Formosa is not China," Mackay once wrote to explain his unorthodox methods. This is one of those prescient, oracular statements which resonates in Taiwanese ears today with quite a different meaning.

Mackay was a true original, a larger-than-life legend. He married a Taiwanese woman (she was 17, he was 34), Tui Chhang-Mia, prosaically renamed Minnie, and thus became the ancestor of a prominent inter-racial, multicultural clan on both sides of the Pacific. His lack of racial prejudice is, today, a century later, his most endearing quality. Because of his marriage, he was aware of the inhumane Canadian immigration policies of the day and led the Presbyterian church to pass the first church-sponsored resolution against the head-tax.

Now, in the absence of formal diplomatic ties between Canada and

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