

This furlough was extremely busy, for he brought back two things which were the summation of his career. The first was the manuscript for his book "From Far Formosa: The Island, its People and Missions," which was published in 1895. One scholar has called it "the most valuable of the missionary works on Taiwan" before the Japanese period, which "best conveys the love of Taiwan." Reprinted several times since 1991, it is recommended by the South China Post (2 May 1996) as "essential reading" for newcomers seeking "a solid orientation" to Taiwan. As if Mackay's world of head-hunters and pigtailed Manchu literati has any resemblance to Taiwan today! "From Far Formosa" shows the two sides of Mackay's character, the scientist and the missionary. Half the book is a compendium of the flowers, trees, rocks, animals and butterflies of Taiwan; the other is a "Boy's Own Adventure" story of the missionary Crusoe storming his tropical isle.

The other thing he brought was his museum collection from Oxford College. He couldn't bring everything, of course, but he packed 14 crates. He took some things on his speaking tour: when he spoke to the General Assembly, the table in front of him was covered with little idols. When he returned to Taiwan he donated his collection to Knox College, his alma mater. He had little labels printed, which he attached to each artifact:

Presented to Knox College, Toronto

by George Leslie Mackay, Formosa, China.

And then below, he would fill in one or two line description, usually in romanized Taiwanese.

Now Mackay's collection has come to life, it is breathtaking. He collected scientifically both the natural and human history of the island. There are 250 tiny matchboxes, for example, each carefully labelled, containing samples of herbal medicines, rocks, plants and insects there are even stuffed animals. His ethnological or anthropological artifacts represent the Chinese, Japanese and aboriginal cultures. The Chinese are represented by several dozen little gods, Matsu and Kwanyin, and on the bottom of each he wrote, Worshipped 127 years. Japanese posters, Meiji propaganda pieces of marching soldiers, prefigure the Japanese presence in the island. Finally, as the exhibit in Shung Ye Museum shows, he collected clothing, jewellery, weapons, agricultural and fishing implements from each tribe he came into contact with, Pingpu [Pe-po-hoan], Ami and Tayal. Included are some gruesome relics of head-hunting rituals.

#### Better to Burn Out than Rust Away

In 1895 Mackay returned to Taiwan with his family in 1895, after the Sino-Japanese war was over. The island, which had been part of mainland China for 300 years, was by a stroke of international politics a Japanese colony, and the people would learn to speak Japanese, by force if necessary. Although there were a few problems with the Japanese authorities, Mackay welcomed the orderly Japanese administration compared to the corrupt Qing officials. He noted with surprise that the Taiwanese looked to the church for guidance in this new situation. Hatred for the Japanese induced friendliness to the religion of the foreigner, he wrote. He launched a new movement among the Pe-po-hoan aboriginals along the Ilan peninsula and east coast, far from his base in Tamsui.

Although Mackay frequently suffered from malaria, in 1900 he was diagnosed with cancer of the throat and sent to Hong Kong for an operation. Then, he returned to home to die. His death was an emotional experience, the passing of a spiritual father. As word spread from church to church, a sea of mourners moved to Tamsui from the far-off villages to see his glass-faced coffin. Eighteen elders carried his body to the grave Mackay had selected years before in the foreign cemetery. His best friend Rev. Giam Chheng Hoa (A Hoa) gave the eulogy. Jesus left his throne and came down to this world to teach us and suffer for our sins, he said, and Dr Mackay was like Jesus. He left his home so far away ... to preach for us and suffer many things. Now my brothers and sisters we must work as well as well can for others and tell them about Jesus our Saviour.

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